

Significant Roles Of Children's Literature In Efl

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ABSTRACT

This article describes about the concept of children's literature, the genre and the role of children's literature in teaching English as a foreign language. In Indonesia, English as a foreign language because Indonesian use Bahasa Indonesia for communication. Children's literature is a kind of literary texts such as picture story books, fable, novel, short stories etc in order to make students interested in reading especially for English as a foreign language. Sometimes they feel bored and lazy to learn English because they think that it is a difficult subject therefore, English teacher in Indonesia usually teaches the students with language combination between Indonesia and English in teaching and learning process in order to make their students understand what they learn. Not only that, teachers always use textbook as material in teaching and learning process without introducing new material like literature text and usually the use of teacher-centered strategy in classroom without involving students. One solution for solving this problem is introducing literature in teaching and learning process. Motivating students to learn English Literature is one of the best approach for teacher in teaching of English language skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) because it can make students enhance their knowledge from story that they read in literary text.

Keywords : *Childrens' literature, genre and role of children's literature*

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini akan menjelaskan tentang konsep sastra anak-anak, macam-macam dan peran sastra terhadap anak-anak dalam mengajar bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing. Di Indonesia, Bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing karena orang Indonesia menggunakan bahasa Indonesia untuk berkomunikasi. Sastra anak-anak adalah jenis teks sastra seperti buku cerita bergambar, dongeng, novel, cerita pendek dll supaya siswa tertarik membaca terutama untuk bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing. Terkadang mereka merasa bosan dan malas belajar bahasa Inggris karena mereka pikir itu adalah pelajaran yang sulit oleh karena itu guru pelajaran bahasa Inggris di Indonesia biasanya mengajar siswa dengan menggunakan bahasa campuran antara bahasa Indonesia dan bahasa Inggris di proses belajar mengajar supaya siswa mengerti apa yang mereka pelajari. Tidak hanya itu, guru selalu menggunakan buku paket sebagai bahan ajar di proses belajar mengajar tanpa mengenalkan bahan ajar baru seperti teks sastra dan biasanya menggunakan strategi yang berpusat pada guru tanpa melibatkan siswa. Salah satu solusi untuk mengatasi masalah ini adalah memperkenalkan sastra dalam proses belajar mengajar. Memotivasi siswa untuk belajar Sastra Inggris adalah salah satu pendekatan terbaik untuk guru dalam mengajar keterampilan bahasa Inggris (membaca, menulis, berbicara dan mendengarkan) karena itu dapat membuat siswa meningkatkan pengetahuan mereka dari cerita yang mereka baca dalam teks sastra.

Kata kunci : *Sastra Anak- anak, macam sastra dan peran sastra anak- anak*

1. Introduction

Nowadays, all of people in the world use English as their communication because English is an international language. As Coleman (2010) describes the important roles of English in some fields like education, tourist, information, and culture. In Indonesia, English as a foreign language because Indonesian use Bahasa Indonesia for communication. Therefore, English teacher in Indonesia usually teaches the students with language combination between Indonesia and English in teaching and learning process in order to make their students understand what they learn. Not only that, teachers always use textbook as material in teaching and learning process without introducing new material like literature text. Hismanoglu (2005) says that there are some problems faced by language teachers within area of teaching English through literature. The first is very few pedagogically-designed appropriate materials that can be used by language teachers in a language classroom. The second is there is lack of preparation in the area of literature teaching in TESL/TEFL programs. The third is there is absence of clear-cut objectives defining the role of literature in ESL/EFL. The last is many teachers try to include literature in classroom but lack the background and training in that field. Hence, students are lazy to read anything especially in English text. It means that, there is a problem of Indonesian in reading. Parallel with the above matters, Musthafa (2001) states that the other reasons for the problems are: limited time allocated for teaching English, students do not have enough time to actually learn to speak English in class because the teacher is more concerned to teach the grammar and syntax, the absence of good and authentic learning materials, the absence of the social uses of English outside the classroom.

In line with Ivone (2005, p. 196) said that learning English in Indonesia is just a set of grammar rules and a bunch of vocabulary items that students need to memorize along with the same textbooks.

It was proved by Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (2011) found that the average reading achievement score of fourth graders in Indonesia was 428 although the test was written in Bahasa Indonesia. It is in line with the study conducted by Program for International Student Assessment (2012) showed that Indonesia was at number 64 out of 65 countries and also a study done by Diem (2011) found that literacy skills achievement in English of the fifth graders in Palembang was still in the poor level.

From the data above, it seems that teachers do not really care about the exact way how to teach English subject to make their students interested. English teachers in Indonesia can solve their students' problem through children's literature. It can be useful for EFL learners. Cooper's study (1997) on literature-based instruction is the type of instruction in which authors' original narrative and expository works are used as the core for experiences to support children in developing literacy. The types of activities done with the literature

are the natural types of things children and adults would do when reading and responding to any good book. For example, it is natural to share and talk about a good book after reading it; it is not natural to answer ten questions about the book. The teacher's role becomes one of planning and supporting authentic learning experiences. Literature gives many benefits for learners if teachers use in teaching and learning process. Literature is seen not only as an entertainment but also as an art of language (Zhen, 2012, p. 35). As an art of language, teachers can use this as a powerful source in teaching English and the meaning of the language itself. Literature offers many opportunities for the students in developing their skills, vocabulary, and linguistic competence as the whole process in English language acquisition (Turker, 1991; Lazar, 1993; Liach 2007).

According to Collie and Slater (1990), there are four reasons for using literature in the classroom:

- a. Valuable Authentic materials. It means that, literature is authentic material. Through reading literary texts, students will familiar with many different linguistic forms, communicative functions and meanings.
- b. Cultural Enrichment. Through reading literary text such as novels, short stories, etc students know the characters background, traditions, feeling customs, how they speak and behave in different setting.
- c. Language Enrichment. Through literature, students become familiar with many features of the written language, reading a substantial and contextualized body of the text.
- d. Personal Involvement. Through reading literary text, students become enthusiastic to find out what happens in the end of the story, students feel close to certain characters and shares their emotional responses. In this process, students can develop their introvert person to become extrovert.

Many experts said that literature should be integrated in teaching and learning process. According to Morrow et al. (1997), integrating literature in all content areas shows an increase in language skills development as well as content area knowledge improvement. The integrated language arts perspective involves incorporation of reading, writing, listening, and speaking into content areas and using literature as the major source of instruction. It was proved by Dogrul (2007) who found that the using short stories from children literature give positive effects in developing success in language. This is in line with Collie and Slater (1987) one of our aims in teaching literature is to encourage learners to feel that they can read and enjoy books on their own.

Study conducted by Chang (2004) explains that children's literature being classified as literature that is designed to help children to understand, and emphasize with, the world views and experiences of others, including other children. Belsky (2006) states that in the classroom where the children's literature was used as a base for instruction, the participants' motivation increased and their willingness to read authentic children's books in English was evident.

According to Takenaga (n.d). First, children's literature is a potentially useful material for English language education because it can enhance learners' motivation. While they enjoy good stories, English learners can also increase their English proficiency. Second, children's literature is useful for cultivating global citizenship in young readers. While they enjoy good stories, young readers can learn the importance of cooperation among people from different cultures. Literature can help students understand the real life through characters in the story and the moral value from it. Hence, literature is the best approach for teacher to improve their students' knowledge especially for English as foreign language because many researchers done a study about it so in this article, the writer will define the concept of children's literature, the genre and the role of children's literature in teaching of English as foreign language.

2. Discussion

A. Definition of Children's Literature

The term of literature is used basically in two different meaning. The first, it is used to any written material on a subject and the second is one of the subject will be studied by the students in a university. This paper will describe literature as a written material. Clandfield and Foord (2006) states that the use of literature in ELT classrooms since 1980s has attracted a great deal of interest among EFL teachers. In other words, literature has been known and used for teacher and parents many years ago as an approach to teach their children or students. Collie and Slater (1987, p.3) explain that the reason for teacher should use literature in classroom, they are valuable authentic material, cultural enrichment, language enrichment, and personal involvement. From literature, students or children will know the culture and language from another country so their knowledge about it will improve well.

Literature is divided into three kinds : adult literature, young adult literature and children literature. Adult literature written especially for people 18 up years old. Young adult literature written especially for people 13-18 years old. Children's literature written especially for children 0-12 years old.

Children's literature began in 1865 when Charles Dodgson wrote a novel especially for children with the tittle Alice's Adventure In Wonderland. He designed children's literature in order to make children enjoy in reading a text because it related with their ages and live. Tomlinson and Lynch-Brown (1996/2002,p.2) define children's literature as " good quality tradebooks written especially for children frombirth to adolescence, covering topics of relevance and interest to children through prose and poetry, fiction and non fiction". McDowell (1973) states that children's literature is applicable to books written for, and read by, that group referred to as children by any particular society. In choosing and selecting children's literature for our students, we should consider everything like the

language, the length, the topic, the picture of the story and etc. According to Brumfit (1981) The first, the texts should include works of different genres. The second, the texts should include works of familiar, established writers, or works with classic status. The third, the texts should have a connection with students' here and now learning context. It would be motivating for students to study the literature which is currently being discussed in their society, particularly when that literature has been interpreted through other media, such as movies or musicals. Experiencing the 'here-and-now literature' would help students understand that literature is neither useless nor faraway, and that literature is part of our life.

B. The Genre of Children's Literature

According to Baruah (2013, p. 20), children literature can broadly be classified into two genres. They are Traditional and Modern children literature. Both can be original or translation work, divided into many sub-genres :

- a. Traditional children literature contains folktales, folksongs, riddles, folklore etc. This genre can be further divided down into myths, fables, legends, fairy tales, tales of tricksters, folk-songs, lullabies etc.
- b. Modern children literature includes : (1) Fiction, including fantasy, realistic fiction, science-fiction, historical fiction etc. (2) Non-fiction. (3) Biography and autobiography. (4) Travelogue. (5) Poetry and verse (6) picture story book,comic strype,etc.

This paper focuses on traditional children literature like fables and folktales while in modern, children literature are picture story books, novel, short stories, poetry and biography.

1. Fable is a narrative story and the characters are usually animals which able to talk and act like people while retaining their animal traits. The benefits from this, the students or children will know about animal and get easy to understand the story. Traditional story that educates the readers with the values of good behavior through mostly animal characters is called Fable (Anderson, 2006, p. 8; Young, Tueaia, & Ward, 2010). This type of Traditional Literature is also popular among readers especially children who like animals with its humorous climax (Norton, 1991, p. 258). Lenaghan (1967) cited in Norton (1991, p. 257) described that fable is poetic fiction story which has purpose to entertain the readers with its stories and educate them with the moral lessons. Some examples of fable are Kancil and the Giant Story from Indonesia, Tortoise and the Hare from Greece, and The Crow and The Fox from French.

2. Folktale is a tale or legend originating and traditional among a people or folk, especially forming part of the oral tradition of the common people. Folktale is simple story which is set in the past without knowing the author and most often involve magical things or animals who can talk like human (Barone, 2011, p. 60). Any belief or story passed on traditionally, especially one considered to be false or based on superstition. It is potential for

children and students to enlarge their cultural awareness from the story and make them appreciate of their own cultural heritage. The example of folktales from Indonesia such as Toba Lake, Malin kundang and Kemarau Island, etc. According to Norton (1991, p. 232), folktales has its own characteristics. First, folktales is opened with the common opening, like "once upon a time" and it will always involve the conflict and action of good and evil in the plot of the story. By using the same characters of good and evil, straightly simple style, and universal themes, folktales will create a meaningful time of reading literature for the students (p. 236).

Another characteristics is the motifs that are written in the stories which create the folktales are recognizable easily. Supernatural Adversaries (e.g. ogre, troll and giant) and Helpers (e.g. fairies, fairy godmother, and jinn), Magical Objects (e.g. magical lamp or magical clock), Power (e.g. granted wishes or humans with extraordinary power), and Transformations (e.g. prince to beast or bird to human) are some common motifs in folktales (p. 237).

3. Picture story book is a story that provides some pictures in order the readers or students get easy to get the meaning from the story. Chinh (2006) state the use of pictures story books suggest that the educational value is generally seen through three areas :

a. The linguistic value

Story from picture book can provides a meaningful context for language learning that conveys its messages through two media, the art illustrating and the art of written text. According to Brewster et al (1992), at lexical level, stories allow students to review word they have learned previously or encounter new words and at the contextual level, the varied, memorable, and familiar contexts that become integrated into learners' linguistic knowledge and become their output.

b. The value of the story

The value of the story from cultural aspects and believe that reading literature provides EFL learners with an opportunity to understand the target culture and to acquire a feel for codes and preoccupations that structure a society. Kuhiwczak (1999) when looking into the aspect of a translation and inter-cultural transfer indicates that when literature such as picture story book is used as one aspect of teaching language, teachers should not only pay attention to the linguistic content but also be aware of the potential difficulties and opportunities offered by its cultural strangeness.

c. The value of the picture context

Picture are considered an efficient tool limited English proficiency learners to increase their understanding. When using picture story books in an EFL context, the way that picture can facilitate the understanding of the story is considered the primary value of picture (Smallwood, 1988). The meaning of picture that seem transparent to viewers sharing the same cultural background as the illustrators may not

be at all obvious to readers from other cultural background.

4. Short story is a simple story of fiction that consists of characters, theme, setting, problems, and solution. The benefits of short story are to make the students read the story easier to get the meaning of the story, improve their knowledge about different cultures and different group of people, promote their critical thinking because their curious about story happened. Short story as one of literary works is a very helpful reading resources to help the students easier to read since they may have experienced stories and can relate to them (Sage,1987,as cited in Ziya,2009).

5. Novel is a story that the characters reflect what people really perform and happen in daily lives. The benefits of novel are to improve students' motivation in reading, develop their knowledge about culture, habit, people's problem, live in daily live of another country. Novel is oe of literature genre. Melon (1994) observed that novels are excellent sources of plenty of comprehensible input. According to Melon (2012) there are three basic reasons for using novels in EFL classroom:

a. Content Continuity

Using novel or short novel becomes lesson continuity.

b. Motivation

Students showed their curiosity when using a famous novel.

c. Vocabulary development

It is a well-known fact that there is a strong correlation between the amount of reading individuals do and the size of their vocabulary.

d. Language improvement

In addition, during novel reading, students become familiar with various linguistic forms, communicative functions and meanings that are intended for native speakers.

e. Cultural awareness

Literary text such as novels and plays serve as a window to the target culture, showing ESL/ EFL learners how native speakers think, communicate, and live.

6. Poetry is a story with rhythm. The benefits of poetry is to make students (familiar with figures of speech like simile, metaphor, irony, personification and also to make them express their feeling and thought in their heart and mind. According to Tomlinson (1986), there are seven criteria for selecting poems to exploit the potential value of poetry, were:

a. Universal appeal

Special topic might have great appeal in selecting a poetry for a few students but universal topic as youth, old age marriage, birth, love, education, friendship, etc mostly closer with students experience.

b. Surface simplicity

It is especially important for ability of the students that poems used are linguistically accessible for the weakest students and that there is nothing in the title

or opening lines which might frighten off such students.

c. Potential depth

Potential depth also very important that poems are used have a potential depths of meaning and can thus challenge the brighter the students who have no problems in responding to the linguistic surface of the poems.

d. Affective potential

Poems which express strong emotions, attitudes, feelings, opinions or ideas are usually more productive than those which are gentle descriptive or neutral.

e. Contemporary language

This is also important for most non-literary learners because the language of the poems they are asked to read resembles the language they are being asked to learn.

f. Brevity

Some learners will capable of enjoying long poems, but it safer to use short poems because it can be minimize the risk of losing people.

g. Potential for illustration

It means that the good poems can give many interpretations for every reader. The readers can illustrate the meaning of the poems, so the learners or readers can discuss it from different prespective.

There are many reasons for using poetry in language class, some of them was stated by Tomlinson (1986). He stated there are six positive gains in using poetry in language classes and in particular in those classess which are heterogeneous in ability:

a. Educational value

Poetry can open and enrich the content of language lessons can provide useful opportunities for gaining experience of the world, and can contribute to development of the "whole person" as well as the "learner of language". It means that poetry can support the educational value by the content of poetry. It can also provide the content of poetry to gain the language skills of the learners.

b. Affective value

Poetry can build the response of the learners actively and also the learners' language activities. Because the content of the poetry can motivate the learners, open the learners' language intake and the learners most eager to use language when their emotions, feelings, and attitudes are engaged.

c. Achievement value

Poetry can fulfill the achievement of the learners when the poems are met as parts of larger communication activities and if teacher helps the learners to make them accessible through pre-reading activities focused on content rather than language, then many learners are able to give valid response to poem.

d. Individual value

Poems have the great potential value of appealing to each individual reader in different ways of being accessible on many different levels of meaning. If the teachers help the learners to focus on the content of the poems, the learners can get the brightest that can gain the great satisfaction of imaginative and individual insight into the potential meaning of a poem.

e. Stimulus value

Poems which affective responses from learners can stimulate the learners' unusually intelligent and creativity used by language in follow-up activities. This achievement can bring great satisfaction and pride, and it can even lead to more accurate appropriate use of language in follow-up activities which challenge and engage the new-found pride.

f. Skills development

Poems more than any other type text can give valuable opportunity for learners to use and develop such important skills as deduction of meaning from linguistic and situational context, prediction, relating text to knowledge and experience of the world reading creatively and the recognition and interpretation of assumption and inferences.

7. Biography is the factual story about real people.

Usually teacher use biography as a material to know the known people in the world like presidents or hero in more specific

C. *The Role of Children's Literature*

Children's literature plays an important role in teaching and learning process especially for basic language skills such as reading, writing, speaking and listening because when the teachers use literature in classroom automatically all of skills are integrated. For example, a teacher introduces children literature text like folklore to the students after that teacher asks the questions such as do you know the story? What is your point of view from the picture and title? In order to know the students prior knowledge, teacher asks students to read the story after that teacher invites students to discuss about the story such as the characters, setting, problem, theme, etc in oral language. For writing, the students make a summary from the story by using their own words and tell in front of the class so their friends will listen.

Before teacher introduces new materials like children's literature, he/ she should consider the appropriate material for their students because it is a source of authentic text to make them interested in reading. It becomes a challenge for teacher in choosing effective and appropriate material. Allen (1994, p.112) suggests that materials should encourage children to choose to read, help children to discover the values and functions of written language, permit children to use written language for a wide range of purposes, be appropriate for the age and interest level of the children, take into account the children's cultural background, make use of the children's native language when possible, support the children's acquisition of English,

offer a rich array genres, have text structures that will support children's understanding and take into consideration the children's background knowledge.

In other words, reading is very important things for students in order improve their knowledge about everything especially English language. According to Mikulecky and Jeffries (1998), reading English is important for some reasons, such as (1) reading in English helps students learn to think in English, (2) reading in English helps students build their English vocabulary, (3) reading in English makes students more comfortable with writing in English.

Not only that, children's literature also plays an important role in developing children's psychology. Children's literature presents an image or picture of children's around them, an image of their feelings and the problem and the solution so from it, the students' knowledge and belief acquire in the story will affect them in their whole life. There are books which talk about other cultures, other customs, or there are books about diversing cultural characteristics. Each of these literatures carries a message and a specific perspective to the children. Hence, their knowledge will improve and the inner qualities of human being like, love, sympathy, empathy, honesty, concern for others can be inculcated in their minds.

Children's favorite characters can affect their young minds and their effect may remain in their whole life because they like imagining him or herself as his favourite characters. Autobiography and biographies present vivid descriptions of great personalities, thinkers etc. So, these can inspire children to emulate the personalities. Children's literature also makes students more creativity in thinking and doing anything.

D. The Literary Elements of Literature

There are five important elements in literature which involved in the story. The first is character, the people which act in the story or who involved in the story. It might be people and animals. In other words, characters is people's behaviour in their live. The second is point of view, the perspective in a story from an author. The third is setting, where and when the story of story or place and time. The fourth is plot, the procedure of events in a story. The last is theme, the moral value from the story that represent by an author. They are very important in story because from them, the students will understand and comprehend the story well.

3. Conclusions

Children's literature is a kind of literary text written for children to make them interested in reading especially in English as foreign language because it provides simple words and colorful picture. There are many kinds of children's literature such as fable, folktale, picture story books, novel, poetry, bibliography, etc. Children's Literature can be good as a material in teaching and learning process because through literature it can improve the students knowledge

about characters, people's problem, culture, people's live, etc. It is in line with Lazar (1993) who summarizes that using literature in language classroom can be very motivating and stimulus for language acquisition, understanding another culture, developing student's interpretative abilities, expanding student's language awareness and encouraging students to talk about their opinion and feelings

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