

***CREATION NOVELS BASED ON CHARACTER EDUCATION AS
SUPPORTING MATERIALS FOR LITERACY ACTIVITIES OF
INDONESIAN CHILDREN IN SABAH MALAYSIA***

**PENYUSUNAN NOVEL BERBASIS PENDIDIKAN KARAKTER
SEBAGAI BAHAN PENUNJANG KEGIATAN LITERASI ANAK ANAK
INDONESIA DI SABAH MALAYSIA**

Aswan

Program Studi S1 Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia,
Fakultas Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia
Jl. Dr. Setiabudhi No.229 Bandung 40154

hikayatashwansha@upi.edu

Abstract: This research offers a solution that can help the government realize the 4th pillar of the Sustainable Development Goals, namely strengthening character education through novels as supporting material for literacy activities for children of Indonesian migrant workers in Sabah Malaysia. The method used in this research is the literature study method. Researchers used a systematic literature study method from references in the form of trusted newspaper web pages, journals, previous research, and relevant books. Based on the results of problem analysis, the novel was developed in 16 chapters which are divided into 3 main parts. The first part is the orientation or character introduction, the second part is the conflict which describes the conflicts that occur in the novel, the final part is the completion of the story. Based on the 16 chapters that have been developed, the values of character education that are most highlighted are the values of curiosity, national spirit, and love for the country. The three values of character education are based on the social situation of the children of Indonesian migrant workers who are in Malaysia. It can be concluded that the design of this character education-based novel has been adapted to the conditions of the children of Indonesian migrant workers and can be used in supporting literacy activities for children of Indonesian migrant workers who are in Sabah Malaysia.

Keywords: *Character Education, Novel, Indonesian Migrant Worker, Literacy Activities*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini menawarkan solusi yang dapat membantu pemerintah mewujudkan pilar ke-4 dari Sustainable Development Goals, yaitu penguatan pendidikan karakter melalui novel sebagai bahan penunjang kegiatan literasi untuk anak pekerja migran Indonesia di Sabah Malaysia. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode studi pustaka. Peneliti menggunakan metode studi pustaka tersistematis dari referensi berupa laman web koran yang terpercaya, jurnal, penelitian terdahulu, dan buku-buku yang relevan. Berdasarkan hasil analisis masalah, novel dikembangkan sebanyak 16 bab yang dibagi menjadi 3 bagian utama. Pertama bagian orientasi atau pengenalan tokoh, kedua bagian konflik yang memaparkan konflik yang terjadi di dalam novel, bagian akhir adalah penyelesaian cerita. Berdasarkan 16 bab yang telah dikembangkan tersebut, nilai-nilai pendidikan karakter yang paling ditonjolkan adalah nilai rasa ingin tahu, semangat kebangsaan, dan cinta tanah air. Ketiga nilai pendidikan karakter tersebut didasari pada situasi sosial anak pekerja migran Indonesia yang berada di Malaysia. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa perancangan novel berbasis pendidikan karakter ini telah disesuaikan dengan kondisi anak pekerja migran Indonesia dan dapat digunakan dalam menunjang kegiatan literasi untuk anak pekerja migran Indonesia yang berada di Sabah Malaysia.

Kata kunci: pendidikan karakter, novel anak, pekerja migran Indonesia, kegiatan literasi

1. INTRODUCTION

Quality education in Indonesia is currently one of the goals of sustainable development or what is often referred to as the Sustainable Development Goals. There are 17 main points that are carried in the goal of sustainable development and one of them is quality education. Quality education ranks 4th out of 17 pillars carried out by the Sustainable Development Goals. The Central Bureau of Statistics revealed that the 4th goal in sustainable development is to ensure and ensure that all people have access to quality education and have equal learning opportunities throughout their life. In general, these objectives focus on the acquisition of basic skills at all levels of education. Greater and more equitable access to quality education at all levels serves to contribute to the social world (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2016).

Seeing this urgency, character education is the basis of quality education that is carried out in sustainable development (Sustainable Development Goals). Agreeing with this, the Indonesian Minister of Education said that, "First, the most important thing is character education. Now, with the large role of technology, if youth do not have character, integrity, and strong analysis of information, it will be eroded by various kinds of incorrect information" (Puspita, 2019).

Judging from the assumptions of the Indonesian Minister of Education Nadiem Makarim, it can be said that to achieve quality education, a strong character must be built so that young people as the nation's successor do not sink from the changing times. Therefore, character education is a very basic thing that must be considered in all elements of education in Indonesia to realize quality education as an effort to build this country.

Seeing the urgency of education at this time, this paper aims to translate the meaning of the 4th point of the Sustainable Development Goals, namely quality education. Researchers see unequal education for all Indonesian people. As a result of this unequal education, there are still many Indonesian children who do not yet have the right to continue their studies at university.

The children of Indonesian migrant workers are an example. Children of Indonesian migrant workers who are born and live in Sabah Malaysia must continue their parents' dream of becoming migrant workers in other countries because they do not believe in education. Even so, the government continues to make efforts to be able to penetrate the education of the children of Indonesian migrant workers so that they want to continue their education to a higher level. Currently, non-formal educational institutions that are managed by the community are called Community Learning Centers or abbreviated as (CLC). From 2006 to 2019, there were 294 Community Learning Centers located in Sabah Malaysia. Data revealed by Kompas.com on November 3, 2018, said that approximately 100,000 children of Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia had not been served their education, especially at the advanced level. (Kristian, 2018).

If you look at this figure, it can be said that this is not a trivial problem. The government's efforts to achieve equal access to education for all Indonesian citizens everywhere must be supported by all parties. The sending of teachers every year and the opening of many non-formal schools still cannot answer the problems in the field. One problem that is very important to find a solution to is the lack of trust in the children of Indonesian migrant workers to continue their education in Indonesia. This is due to the lack of character that is built from an early age so that they do not have a handle on life because from birth they are given a stigma to continue their lineage as Indonesian migrant workers in other countries, most of which are illegal.

Research related to the education of the children of Indonesian migrant workers is still very rare. Based on the literature review by researchers, research related to the education of the children of Indonesian migrant workers has been conducted from three perspectives. First, from teaching materials or literacy materials, Nuralim and Aswan (2019) studied the impact of

Hikayat Ashwan Sha's short story in their own country on Student Learning Interest in the Community Learning Center. The results of this study reveal that teaching materials or reading materials that are following the context of their social situation are more attractive for them to read a book. The results of this study form the basis for the preparation of character education-based novels that will be carried out in this study. Besides, the use of dictionaries as media and learning references for children of Indonesian migrant workers has also been applied. However, more concrete efforts are still needed in realizing quality education for the children of Indonesian migrant workers (Aswan, 2019).

Based on the perspective of literacy programs that have been implemented, it is stated that reading material is still needed that can support literacy activities for children of Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia. Limited reading material hinders the development of cognition for children of Indonesian migrant workers who live in border areas. This is unfortunate if it continues in the long term. This research is also a basic reference in the preparation of character education based novels for children of Indonesian migrant workers (Aswan, 2020a, 2020b).

Not only from the point of view of teaching materials and literacy programs which are the basic references in this research. Based on the teacher's point of view, Aswan (2019) has also studied the title "Portrait of Teachers in realizing a Literacy Culture for Children of Indonesian Migrant Workers: A Case Study at the Community Learning Center Pontian Fico, Sabah Malaysia". The research reveals that teachers play an important role in realizing the literacy movement for the children of Indonesian migrant workers in Sabah Malaysia. This is based on the limited access and facilities that schools have in providing reading and teaching materials to the children of Indonesian migrant workers in Sabah Malaysia. The theory and findings from these studies also serve as a framework for the preparation of this character-based novel.

Seeing the problems and previous research spurred researchers to come up with new ideas, namely strengthening character education through novels as supporting material for the school literacy movement for children of Indonesian migrant workers in Sabah Malaysia. The novel-reading material was chosen because it saw the urgency of literacy activities which are very important in the education of the children of Indonesian migrant workers. The novel-reading is chosen based on the consideration that it is a reading that can make migrant workers' children think and imagine in the long term. Novels are also still relevant and popular across all generations today. This is in line with the opinion of Aulia et al. (2020) which states that to prepare a great generation, great reading skills are needed as well.

Departing from this, the values in character education, especially the character of curiosity, love for the country, and a sense of nationality will be instilled in the novel and adjusted to the social conditions of the children of Indonesian migrant workers. The adjustment is expected to be able to attract their interest in reading literacy activities. Through the research that has been done, it can be said that there are no ideas, novels, or similar research that has been done so that it can be said that this research is originality.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

The method used in this research is literature study method. In simple terms, the literature study method is a model of analysis from various literature sources. The literature study method used is by collecting data and information and then analyzing the data to achieve the purpose of writing. Researchers used a systematic literature study method, namely getting references from trusted newspaper web pages, journals, and books that were obtained through keywords. The keywords used are character education, children's novels, children of Indonesian migrant workers, and the School Literacy Movement.

The data obtained is then selected to obtain data that is relevant to the topic of discussion. After the data is selected, the data is analyzed and synthesized to answer the formulation of this

research problem. This is in line with the theory stated by Zed (2004) that library research or referred to as library research is a series of activities related to methods of collecting library data, reading, taking notes, and processing data. The composition of the character education-based novel is based on literature study data obtained from the research results of researchers. These data become the basic assumptions in the formation of the designed character education-based novel pattern.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Education of the Children of Indonesian Migrant Workers in Sabah

In the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, Indonesia is obliged to provide education to all Indonesian children both at home and abroad. This is to create the right to education for all Indonesians everywhere. However, according to Notoprayitno (2015) in practice the Constitution is not very materialized for the entire nation, especially for the children of Indonesian migrant workers, especially for children of migrant workers who live in remote areas of oil palm plantations in Sabah Malaysia. It is difficult for the children of Indonesian migrant workers to access formal education. As time goes by, the Indonesian government continues to strive to make education for all nations evenly distributed. One example is the opening of non-formal school Community Learning Centers which spread throughout Sabah Malaysia. The Indonesian curriculum is the basis for establishing access to education for the children of Indonesian migrant workers and the cost of education is borne by the Indonesian government.



Figure 1. 2019 Pamong Teacher Documentation - Indonesian Flag Ceremony

In the picture above, it can be seen that the children of Indonesian migrant workers in getting to know Indonesia are one of them in the activity of raising the red and white flag. The government has offered several solutions to open non-formal schools close to the majority of Indonesians in oil palm plantations. The non-formal school is named the Community Learning Center which is equivalent to a Junior High School Education Unit. Seeing so many non-formal Community Learning Center schools that have been built by the Indonesian government, it is unfortunate if there are no efforts that can help realize the motto of education for all.

3.2. Novel Design as Supporting Material for the School Literacy Movement

The novel that is designed is a character education-based novel that is adapted to the problems that have been described. The inculcation of character education values into the novel is stated in Permendikbud Number 20 of 2018. Character education values in the novel are

based on 18-character education values. The process of translating the values of character education into novels is based on the storyline and the needs of this research problem.

The language used is standard Indonesian which is adjusted to the General Guidelines for Indonesian Language (PUEBI). The Indonesian language is used as a medium to trick readers, namely the children of Indonesian migrant workers who are in Sabah Malaysia to get to know Indonesian. In addition to character education which is the main target, the introduction of standard Indonesian language needs to be introduced to the children of Indonesian migrant workers to support Indonesian language learning when learning activities are carried out.

The novel that was developed is entitled *Selamat Pagi Cikgu!* The title was chosen based on the story content and the main theme of the novel. The novel that was developed consists of 16 chapters starting from the flow of introduction, conflict, and conflict resolution (end). The novel's pages are approximately 80 pages on A4 paper, normal margins, Times News Roman typeface, and 1.5 spacing.

3.3. Synopsis and Novel Storyline

This story tells the life of the children of Indonesian migrant workers (*Tenaga Kerja Indonesia*) who live on the border between Sabah Malaysia and Indonesian Borneo. Acok, Azman, and Merry are children of migrant workers who have never seen their own homeland, namely Indonesia. They live without a dream, they don't even have dreams. Sometimes they are jealous of children their age who can go to school. In their minds they just want to be like their parents, that is, to become immortal TKI. However, all that changed when the figure of a teacher sent by the Indonesian government to educate the lives of Indonesian children came to the palm oil plantation of Sabah Malaysia. The teacher was greeted by three of his students as *Cikgu*. The presence of a teacher from Indonesia has made three friends who live in the middle of an oil palm plantation dare to dream.

They are brave children of TKI who are always eager to meet a bright future. As time goes by, nothing can stop them from learning. The presence of the figure of "*Cikgu*" from Indonesia has made them dare to move forward even though they are lacking. The old school is a silent witness where they learn to meet their dreams. So that one day they ventured to participate in competitions in big cities. They are the children of TKI who have never seen tall buildings, thanks to their courage, they can see the outside world and compete with other urban children.

It was thanks to their courage and their efforts that their school became famous and opened the eyes of the TKI community that they could also compete with urban children. The end of this story is that they can take the test and are declared to have passed the exam. However, one of them could not continue his schooling and had to continue their chain of ancestry, namely becoming Indonesian Migrant Workers in Sabah Malaysia.

3.4. Description of the Value of Character Education in Novels

Table 1. Orientation Section Description

Chapter	Title of Chapter in Novel	Description	Value of Character Education
1.	<i>Orang-Orang TKI</i>	An introduction to the setting and the main character in the novel.	responsibility, curiosity, hard work
2.	<i>Sepotong Dongeng Untuk Anak TKI</i>	Pak Cik Nurdin tells the story of the Red and White fairy tale to his son.	spirit of nationality, love for the country, curiosity
3.	Hari yang Cerah	The character Pak Cik Nurdin persuades his adopted son Acok to go to school.	work hard, curiosity, love the homeland

Chapter	Title of Chapter in Novel	Description	Value of Character Education
4.	<i>Ada Apa Hari Ini?</i>	The character Pak Cik Nurdin brings his adopted son Acok to enroll in an Indonesian school.	curiosity, love for the country, the spirit of nationality
5.	<i>Sekolah Indonesia di Malaysia</i>	The process of introducing a teacher from Indonesia to Pak Cik Nurdin and Acok.	curiosity, creative, love the homeland
6.	<i>Akhirnya Kami Bisa Sekolah</i>	The registration process for the children of TKI, amounting to 3 people, Acok, Azman, and Merry.	curiosity, homeland love, honest
7.	<i>Hari Pertama Sekolah</i>	Description Acok, Azman, and Merry walk towards school on the first day.	curiosity, love of the homeland, national spirit, honest, independent
8.	<i>Sepasang Pohon Mangga yang Mendengar Cita-Cita Anak TKI</i>	The process of introducing three friends, Acok, Azman, and Merry with a teacher from Indonesia whom they called Cikgu.	curiosity, love the country, love to read, religious
9.	<i>Menyanyikan Lagu Indonesia Raya</i>	The first lesson was carried out by introducing the dreams of three friends and continuing to sing the song, Indonesia Raya.	spirit of nationality, love for the country, curiosity, democracy, discipline

It can be seen in the flow of the introduction section, the flow of the introduction section consists of nine chapters that tell the beginning of the introduction of a character up to entering the flow of the conflict. In the orientation section, it starts with the introduction of the setting, the introduction of the characters through dialogue, and descriptions of supporting other themes. In this orientation section, the values displayed are 11 out of a total of 18 values carried in the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation 2018. The most highlighted value in this recognition path is the value of curiosity and the value of love for the country. In this flow of introduction, the two values are related to each other, namely to raise curiosity about the Indonesian homeland. It is hoped that this flow of introduction will attract the children's reading interest of Indonesian migrant workers in completing their reading. The value planting is adjusted to the social conditions of the children of Indonesian migrant workers.

Table 2. Description of the Conflicts Section

Chapter	Title of Chapter in Novel	Description	Value of Character Education
10.	<i>Ketika Anak TKI Mengikuti Lomba</i>	After months of schooling, the three of them joined a dance competition against urban children	curiosity, respect for achievement, love to read
11.	<i>Imajinasi Tidak Muncul</i>	Acok's character did not come up with an idea to enter the competition. However, he didn't want to just give up.	respect for achievement, friendly/ communicative, social care, responsibility, hard work
12.	<i>Pahlawan Tiga Sekawan</i>	This chapter tells about the character Acok who has come up with the idea of joining a dance competition.	creative, communicative, responsibility, hard work, respect for achievement
13.	<i>Si Bangau Oh Bangau</i>	The journey of three friends carrying the name of the school and the names of the TKI children competing in urban areas.	hard work, the creative, spirit of nationality, friendly/communicative, responsibility, discipline, love the country

It can be seen in the flow of the conflict section, the flow of the conflict section consists of 4 chapters that explain the introduction of conflict to the height of the conflict. The conflict that was presented in that section was when they wanted to compete in urban areas. The peak of conflict occurs when they can compete with students who are left in urban areas. The value of character education that is most highlighted in that section is the value of responsibility and hard work. Two values of character education highlighted in the conflict are supported by nine other values that are present in certain chapters.

Tabel 3. End of Section Description

Chapter	Title of Chapter in Novel	Description	Value of Character Education
14.	<i>Sebuah Piala yang Bernyawa</i>	Three friends get school uniforms from the Indonesian government and write about their dreams.	honest, national spirit, friendly/communicative, responsibility, discipline, love the country
15.	<i>Bertempur dengan Pensil</i>	Three friends, the children of the first TKI to take the Package A.	honest, national spirit, friendly/communicative, responsibility, discipline, love the country
16.	<i>Selamat Jalan Kawanku</i>	Azman and Merry continued their education in Indonesia, while Acok remained a TKI child because he looked after his sick father.	spirit of nationality, love of the homeland

It can be seen in the final flow of the problem, solving the problem ended by taking the Package A exam by three friends and continuing their education in Indonesia. The value of character education that is most highlighted in the end is love for the country and the spirit of nationality. These two values are supported by other character education values that build themes in the novel.

3.5. Strengthening Character Education through Novel Literature

Reading books in the form of novels are chosen based on a stipulation in the National Literacy Movement guidelines which state that generally reading materials that can be used are non-textbooks with positive contents, namely books in the form of magazines, storybooks, comics, novels, and so on. Novels were chosen because novels can represent a story that is longer than other prose texts so that students need a long time to read. Through the novel, strengthening character education for the children of Indonesian migrant workers in Sabah Malaysia will be very useful for their future.

Regarding the problems and research that have been described, the right solution is to create a novel by cultivating the values of character education and adapting it to the educational conditions of the children of Indonesian migrant workers in Sabah Malaysia.

4. CONCLUSION

The government sets 18 values of character education that can make humans excel in the future. To translate these values into life practices is the duty of all elements of society. A novel is a form of literary reading that can hold a lot of character education values. Nowadays, even though the world is getting more sophisticated, novels as reading material are still in demand by all generations of the nation and are one of the fictional readings that are of interest to various generations. Strengthening character education through novels is a solution that can help the government translate character education values into fictional storylines. Character

education values embedded in fictional reading must be adjusted to the target audience so that the intentions and objectives are easily conveyed. Especially for the children of Indonesian migrant workers who were born and raised in Sabah Malaysia, they also need to get character education. The value of character education that is most highlighted in novel creation as a strengthening of character education is the value of curiosity, national spirit, and love for the country. Character education-based novel reading materials can support the school literacy movement for children of Indonesian migrant workers. It is hoped that early character instilled in them can prepare them to return to Indonesia.

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