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## Moral Values in Western and Indonesian Stories: A Research on the Stories for the Ninth Grade of Junior High School

Eros Meilina Sofa

IAIN Pekalongan

erosmeilinashofa@iainpekalongan.ac.id

**Corresponding email:** erosmeilinashofa@iainpekalongan.ac.id

### Abstract

Moral value is one of the parts in a story which can be learned and adapted by students. Stories are classified into several kinds depend on their contents. There are two classifications of stories taught in the ninth grade of Junior High School: Indonesian and western stories, and both of them create different characteristics and teaching practice of the stories, as well as their moral values. This research investigated the Indonesian and western stories used in the ninth grade of Junior High School, as well as the moral values conveyed in the stories and how the teachers teach the students those different moral values. This study analyzed the stories contained in the ninth graders' textbook by comparing them with the related theories and concepts, and interviewed three teachers from different junior high schools related to their teaching practice. After analyzing the data, it was revealed that there are only two Indonesian stories and four western stories as the material in the ninth grade of junior high school's textbook; those Indonesian and western stories have different characteristics of moral values in several aspects as the result of the classification of the stories; and the different classification of the stories bear the different treatments in teaching moral values contained in the stories.

**Keywords:** Stories, Moral values, Western, Indonesian

### Introduction

Moral value is a significant part of a narrative text, which is one of the genres taught for English class in Junior High School. Teaching moral values is the inseparable part in teaching any kind of narrative text. It goes along with education in creating noble characters of the students. Each narrative has its own moral values, which implicitly show the writer's purpose in writing the text. It is highly valued from its ideological meaning of character values is narrative which may contribute to students' knowledge about moral values and characters which work with their lives (Bouchard, 2002).

Before focusing on teaching moral values, there are general information of narrative texts used to teach the ninth grade of Junior High School in Indonesia based on the current curriculum. There are descriptive and narrative texts taught for this grade. The narrative text contained six stories which originated from Indonesia and other countries.

Stories are provided in the form of fairy tales, folk tales, short stories, legend, etc. Mikesova (2006) wrote in her thesis that the use of fairy tales in language learning is able to develop the learners' language proficiency and personalities, meaning that this kind of text can motivate the learners in learning the language itself. She also assumed that a foreign language cannot be taught as an isolated subject because it has to be thought of in terms of a whole child and his individual educational needs and interests. Even, Chasanah in Dianti (2008) added that fairy tales contain values related to students' cognitive, emotional, moral, language, social, and holistic development.

Using stories is one of the favorite methods in learning English besides songs and role plays as it can blow the readers' minds to be engaged in the plot (Febriani, Satinem, Nurnaningsih, Haryani, Syafryadin, Noermanzah, 2020). The narrative plot enables learners to connect their imagination and their daily life. Automatically, they involve their emotion, feeling, and thought in understanding the story. This media provides students with a reading experience in language learning, which is highly possible to motivate the learners to read more text using the target language. Linse in Nhung (2016) believed that story-based teaching also helps students in enjoying the literature, in both oral and social skill. Even, short story, as well as fairy tale, is very useful to improve students' vocabulary and reading. The short stories have a variety of choices for different interests and tastes. Furthermore, they also can be powerful and motivating sources for writing in EFL, both as a model and as a subject of the subject matter. In addition, the short story can be a powerful and motivating source for teaching both speaking and listening (Marlina, 2012).

The Indonesian and foreign stories that are used in Junior high school are classified into folktales and fairy tales. Guroian in Dianti (2008) stated that fairy tales can provide the students with a chance to explore the other world and build their imagination. While folktales are beneficial not only for teaching culture values, beliefs, history, practices and customs of a community (Mantra and Kumara: 2018). Not all students do not recognize the difference between the classifications, that they know more western fairy tales than Indonesian folktales. But one for sure, both kinds of stories still impress students' minds in learning English, based on various purposes.

However, the difference between the origin and classification bears the difference in characteristics and moral values as well as the teaching process. Folktales are easy to be adopted by the students related to the moral value, characters, and expressions as well as decision making (Mantra and Kumara: 2018). Students also can understand the lesson and values in factual settings (Nhung: 2016). Not totally different, fairy tales also provide the students with the factual event which makes them easier in understanding the values. It exposes the simple way of thinking which can be comprehended by the students (Hohr,2000; Singhal,2013) because it contains fanciful and incredible features such as elves, goblins, wizards, even fairies (Sayer, Kristiawan, Agustina: 2018).

Moral values, as the compulsory element of a story which create character education are something that can be learned integrated with other subjects or learning. Rahim and Rahiem (2012) conducted a research on moral value in Indonesia. They concluded that moral education is integrated with religious and citizenship educations which are inseparable in the teaching process. So, people tend to relate the religious with moral or citizenship education. They added that the people will conduct investigations on whether stories are useful for children's education, especially their moral and responsibility for their actions.

Moreover, Brand (2001) conducted research on Grimm's fairy tale to understand moral content, and he concluded that the children in this study

were able to identify the moral content found in fairy tales such as vices and virtues, the intentions behind the deeds, and in certain cases reason about them using orientations of care, justice and empathy. It empowers the teacher and parents to teach the children and students using a more interesting and accepted way.

Regarding teaching moral values in stories, particularly western stories, Al-Rosyidah (2013) conducted a research which revealed there are similarities and differences between character education aspects in English fairy tales in English and Indonesian can be grouped into three types: no differences, with differences in character variants but similar in substance, and with both differences and similarities in the substance of character education. Saphiro cited by Sari (2013) believed that student's emotional intelligence which closely related to their behavior, viewing problems, social life, personal emotion and academic achievement are influenced by moral values they adapted.

Regarding the moral value and its teaching, Folk tales as the local stories from Indonesia provide more benefits for the students which cannot be found in fairy tales, epic stories, and other reading fiction. Folk tales provide students with balanced character formation and Indonesian culture (Umayra, et. al: 2017). Moreover, Deviyanti (2018) conducted a research entitled Teaching English to Children in Indonesia Using Popular Western Folktales and Indonesian Local Folktales which revealed that Indonesian folktales are more enjoyable for the students than western folktales because they can gain the values which related to their country.

Based on the elaboration, this study investigated the stories in the compulsory book for the ninth graders along with their difference and moral values. There was also investigation on the teaching moral values on those stories. Therefore, this library research was supported by interview with English teachers. However, before explaining the difference, this study mentioned the stories used and their origin. The different characteristic of the stories

bears different moral values which enables the teachers use different techniques or treatments in teaching.

### **Research Methodology**

This study was a library research with analysis on the written texts in the ninth graders' book, completed with interview to the teachers from different schools. The data were taken from English in Focus IX as the compulsory book for the ninth grade of junior high school students and the teachers of two private schools in Pekalongan. Those two schools use English in Focus as the only book which the students must have, meaning that the students tend to read and focus more on the stories contained in the book only. The researcher gathered the data from those schools to ensure the validity and can be generalized. The book was chosen by the English Teachers Community in Pekalongan as the main book for the students in Junior High School in Pekalongan. Books and journals related to the stories and moral values were used as the instruments of this research, completed with questions for interviewing the English teachers. In determining the differences between Indonesian and western stories, this study tended to use Danandjaja's concept of Folklore Indonesia and Sayer and Kristiawan's concept of fairy tales in building children's character.

The procedure for collecting and analyzing the data were divided into two activities. The first activity was collecting the data based on the library research that was conducted on the stories in the compulsory book. To analyze the data in this step, the researcher used English in Focus IX and some references related concepts and theories. The researcher investigated all of the stories in the book to be analyzed. The stories were divided into two classification, based on their origins, Indonesian and Western stories. After the classification, there were analysis on the moral values, regarding the related theories and previous studies. Then the researcher sought the differences of moral values implied in Indonesian and

western stories. In short, this activity was conducted to find the kinds of stories and the moral values implied.

As the second activity, there was interview with three English teachers from two different junior high schools who taught the stories to find the information related to the moral values teaching and the difference between teaching western and Indonesian stories. The interview were taken after the researcher had analyzed the stories, to make sure that the researcher understand the teachers' explanation. However, the interview was intended to gain the difference of moral values contained in those both stories, and the teaching practice of those moral values. After collecting the data from the interview, the researcher compiled the teachers' answers, then analyzed them by using related theories and previous studies. The analysis covered the difference between Indonesian and western stories, moral values in those stories, and the teaching practice. Last, the researcher compiled the analysis and draw conclusion.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### **Findings**

#### **The Difference of Western and Indonesian Stories for the Ninth Graders**

According to the interview with English teachers of the ninth graders, they only use English in Focus as the source book to teach English in Junior High School. This book is published by National Education Department (2008) and chosen as the compulsory book for the students. There are six stories provided in the book, covering four western stories and two Indonesian stories. This study does not involve the stories stated in the exercise or evaluation sheet. Here are the stories used in this study are:

- a. Why the Sun and the Moon Live in the Sky
- b. Collin Thinks Big
- c. The Legend of Mount Wayang
- d. The Legend of Lake Batur
- e. Cinderella

## f. What Hideous Creatures

There is a principal difference found in the Indonesian and western stories, particularly for the ninth graders of Junior High School. Indonesian stories are categorized as folk tales, while western stories are categorized as fairy tales. According to the interview, one of the teachers said that there are significant differences between moral values implied in the western and Indonesian stories. She said:

*"Kalau cerita Indonesia itu biasanya lebih mengajarkan pada kesabaran, patuh pada orang tua, saling menghormati, dan tolong menolong. Tapi kalau cerita-cerita barat biasanya lebih mengajarkan sifat percaya diri, berani, kuat."*

**Moral Values in Indonesian and Western Stories**

The differences between moral values implied in Indonesian and Western stories are influenced by the different cultures on both sides. Those differences appear in several fairy tales, but some of Indonesian fairy tales mix the Indonesian and western cultures. The Legend of Mount Wayang and The Legend of Lake Batur as the Indonesian stories, particularly folktales, expose cultural values of the Indonesian Kingdom. Besides using The King, the folktale also uses Sang Prabu to introduce the readers that Prabu means a leader of a kingdom.

What a Hideous Creatures and Collin Thinks Big only serve the pure imaginative creatures without emphasizing cultural values and certain phenomena. Both of them engage the readers to feel dissatisfied of something. Likewise, Why the Sun and the Moon Live in the Sky as a fairy tale wants to tell the readers, especially students, about the sky, the moon and the sun, without emphasizing certain values. It does not use real human, but imaginative creatures as the subjects. On the other hand, Cinderella only provides a cultural value of western society in the form of a dance party and teaches the reader to be kind to everyone.

### **Teaching Moral Values in Indonesian and Western Stories**

Regarding the teaching process, actually the differences in teaching moral values implied in Indonesian and Western stories are not significant. In gaining this data, there were interviews with three English teachers. They explained that the students had been familiar with western stories since their elementary school. One of them said, "*cerita barat itu mereka lebih mengenal, daripada cerita dari Indonesia, mungkin karena dari SD sudah biasa dengar Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, dll*". They claimed that the students were more enthusiastic in reading and responding the western stories. The main reason was the easy and simple terms used in the stories. The students did not have to remember long and complicated names of certain characters and places and western stories are more famous than Indonesian stories. Besides, the different moral values implied in those folk tales and fairy tales enable the teacher teach and illustrate the different values.

### **Discussion**

#### **The Difference of Western and Indonesian Stories for the Ninth Graders**

Only two of those six stories are categorized as Indonesian stories and both of them are folk tales, while the other four stories, which are taken from abroad, are fairy tales. Those two tales are different in the content and substance. A fairy tale tells about an imaginative world and story and it amuses the reader. In people's minds, the fairy tale is often considered as stories about fairies (Danandjaja: 2002). Folk tales comes from the real phenomenon in a real place, then it is developed into a story. Garces-Bacsal, Tupas & Hernandez (2016) in their article stated that folktale is a story unconsidered truly happened, because it only as a story to amuse the reader and have opening and closing sentences.

Based on interview with the teachers, most of their students enjoy reading stories, especially those which are completed with pictures and happy plots. Halimah (2017) in her research stated that stories can



encourage the students to learn about culture, and they can be motivation as well as a foundation for the students in learning a new language. Therefore, the use of stories cannot be separated from English learning. This is in line with the result of the interview with the English teachers, mentioning students are more active and enthusiastic when they are listening or reading stories rather than other kinds of text.

Besides those benefits, teaching stories at any level is closely related to teaching moral education for the students. Those six stories have their own moral values which empower the students to act and behave like what is stated. The moral values are in line with the learning goal, because all of them teach the students to build their characters. Even the use of stories and tales has been implemented as one of the teaching methods in modern education in the US and Europe, and recently in Turkey (Onder and Kanak, 2017).

The Legend of Mount Wayang and The Legend of Lake Batur are folk tales from Indonesia, meaning if the tales are spread across the world, the Indonesian label is still attached in the story. The first folk tale came from Bandung regency, West Java, and the second came from Bali. The origin becomes the interest for any reader in reading the text, especially those who come from the same place with the origin. Stavrou (2015) stated folk tales or folk culture is "the agent of historical continuity and gives meaning to the necessity of the preservation of an identity". She added that the identity shapes the tradition, which is the part of the cultural heritage of a country. On the contrary, western stories tend to use general names of places, enabling the stories are still the same in other countries.

Cinderella, Collin Thinks Big, What Hideous Creatures, and Why the Sun and the Moon Live in the Sky are categorized as fairy tales. They came from different countries. The purposes of those stories are not only to amuse the students, but also improve their vocabulary (Rachmawati: 2017). Those tales do not expose the cultural views on each origin (Silva: 2012).

Because of the main difference in those stories, both Indonesian and western stories create different use of term, especially in naming the characters. According to the compulsory book published by National Education Department, there are only folk tales are included in Indonesian stories for the ninth graders. The folk tales represent the Indonesian culture that appeared in the names of the location and characters. As stated by Rifqi (2010) in his research, that folk tale is the form of heritage which represents various uniqueness, visions, and perspectives about Indonesia among the ethnic groups reflected through the imaginative world. Consequently, Indonesian stories often use traditional techniques or ways of life as well as the tools inside the stories as Indonesian culture is related to the use of natural equipment rather than magic.

This is different with the western stories which are adapted in the book. Most of the western stories are in the form of fairy tale. They use general and public terms in naming the characters and places. They tend to use "the castle, the village, a mountain" rather than specific names of places. Tatar in Steeves (2015) stated "fairytales derive their meaning through a process of engaged negotiation on the part of the reader" and of the producer.

### **Moral Values in Indonesian and Western Stories**

The Legend of Mount Wayang and The Legend of Lake Batur as the Indonesian stories, particularly folktales, expose authentic materials for the students. In "The King, named Sang Prabu, was a wise man." implies the cultural values of the Indonesian Kingdom. Besides using The King, the folktale also uses Sang Prabu to introduce the readers that Prabu means a leader of a kingdom. It is in line with Fabuyusi statement, which was cited by Sukmawan and Setyowati (2017) stating that folktales provide not only language competences, but also cultural values and factual social life. Besides, "...the wicked fairy, Princess Segara fell in love with Raden Begawan.." also uses the same technique in introducing Indonesian culture. Besides those sentences, the use of "*kahyangan*" is one of the undeniable

cultural values. Although the values do not clearly appear in The Legend of Lake Batur, the use of Indonesian distinctive name like Kbo Iwo and Batur also serve the cultural values. Those words serve the cultural values which are the characteristics of Indonesian Folk tales. Those term fulfill the role of folk tales as the cultural identity shared throughout the world (Cubitt:2006).

Besides those cultural values, those folk tales imply the moral values to teach the students. In The Legend of Mount Wayang, there is a value which teaches the readers to have a good relationship with their parents. It is shown in "It indicates that Sang Prabu and his daughter have not met each other till dawn when it is time for them to part and to meet again on another moonlight night." The Legend of Lake Batur teaches the reader not to be greedy in life, represented by the greediness of Kbo Iwo.

If the folk tales serve various cultural values introduced in the stories, those fairy tales do not emphasize too much on it. Fairy tales are only imaginative, unreasonable and beyond common sense stories which have several benefits for the readers (Sayer and Kristiawan: 2018). By reading What a Hideous Creatures, we cannot find specific and emphasized moral values. It only tells about the insects who want to frighten a bird. This tale does not provide any cultural message because no specific terms or events conveyed. Likewise, Collin Thinks Big also serves the pure imaginative creatures without any cultural values and certain phenomena. However, in this story, students can adopt a moral value. It tells the readers that someone will not feel satisfied until he finds someone more unlucky than him. When Sylvia said "But I know a way to change all that!", it means that someone can change his own mind in viewing life.

Different from those two fairy tales, Cinderella provides a cultural value of western society. It is a dance party. Although there is no emphasized moral value that is told in this story, because of its popularity, people around the world know that there is a dance party held in western, which demands the dancer perform perfectly at the ball. In Indonesia, there is no dance party as told and described in Cinderella fairy tale. It takes a role

as the fairy tale which can contain kinds of social, historical, and natural phenomena as well as hope for change (Mahdiani, 2012; Rosada, 2016; Sulistianingsih, 2017). Implicitly, this fairy tale wants to convey a value that we have to be kind to everyone, although they treat us badly.

In addition, *Why the Sun and the Moon Live in the Sky* exposes the total imaginative creatures and actions. Like "the Sun and the Moon have to climb up to the roof because they do not want to be drowned" shows that it is difficult for us to relate this story with values in human life. The plot of this story only wants to tell the readers, especially students, about the sky, the moon and the sun. It uses understandable language for children to show the simple way and clear definition in understanding this complex life (Sayer and Kristiawan: 2018).

Based on those explanations, we found that Indonesian folktales have more values than western fairy tales. Folktales enable people to gain the culture, way of thinking, interest, behavior, attitudes and tradition (Ragan, 2009; Mantra, 2017). On the other hand, fairy tale is a story that contains frightening stories but they are favored by children because they give children the opportunity to imagine by depicting those events into fantasy (Carr: 2001).

### **Teaching Moral Values in Indonesian and Western Stories**

According to the finding, the students were more familiar with Western than Indonesian stories. The main reason was the easy and simple terms used in the stories. The students did not have to remember long and complicated names of certain characters and places and western stories have been more widely known than Indonesian stories.

However, it does not mean that the students did not enjoy reading Indonesian stories, especially folktales. They were enthusiastic in learning those new folktales, but the teachers needed to explain more about the origin and additional information related to the tales. As explained by one of the teachers, before discussing *The Legend of Lake Batur*, he asked the

students several questions related to Bali, as the origin of the story, which led them to learn about the archipelago of Indonesia as well as the cultural values. The same thing occurred in teaching The Legend of Mount Wayang. The teacher told briefly about Bandung as the origin of this story. Folk tales serve as a source of cultural information in an attractive way for students as well as ease them in cross-cultural understandings (Nhung: 2016).

Besides those interests and cultural views, as we described in the previous section, western stories and Indonesian stories have some differences in moral values' characteristics. One of the teachers explained, that most of the Indonesian stories teach students how to obey their parents, be cooperative, helpful, and other social kindness. In western stories, the values are about togetherness, friendship, how to be more independent, be successful and brave in viewing life. Western stories do not emphasize the harmony of children-parents relationship. In Cinderella, the main value that the teacher can deliver to the students is being kind to everyone, but there is no value that she can explain about the relationship between Cinderella and her step mother and sisters. In the contrary, The Legend of Mount Wayang let the students know the close relationship between Sang Prabu (the father) and Princess Teja Nirmala (the daughter).

From those two sides of stories, the English teachers said that sometimes they have to adapt some moral values from western culture to motivate the students in improving their personal characters, such as independence, confidence, intelligence, and courage. However, it does not mean that the students have to imitate all of the things in the stories. For example, in Cinderella, Cinderella and The Prince got married without agreement from Cinderella's parents. This value allowed them to explain more about relationship between parents and children and remind the students that such norms do not exist in Indonesia. Related to this case, Cated in Sukmawan and Setyowati (2017) also stated that language teachers must also teach the students how to overcome the global and social problem, not only understand and communicate using the language.

## Conclusion

This study contributes to the analysis of the stories for the ninth grade of Junior High School student. It reveals that western and Indonesian stories are different in classification, which Indonesian stories are folktales, while western stories are fairy tales. Indonesian stories provide more values, including cultural and obedience of children to parents. Moreover, those two kinds of stories contain different characteristics of moral values and how to teach them.

As the result, the research hopefully is able to provoke the writer to write more Indonesian stories regarding local culture and norms. The teacher also need to encourage the students to read more Indonesian stories as the cultural heritage of this nation.

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