

Culture and Citizenship Literacy in Sundanese Children's Literature

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Abstract—Culture and citizenship literacy is one of the basic literacy recommended by the World Economic Forum (2015) to be comprehended by all citizens of the world. It is intended for each individual to possess both life skills and sense of responsibility to contribute in developing the world community. Moreover, for heterogeneous Indonesia, understanding cultural diversity and awareness of citizenship is undeniably necessary in maintaining the unity and integrity of the Republic of Indonesia. Descriptively, this paper explores culture and citizenship literacy in Sundanese children's literature which has been handed down for generations both in families and in schools, so that through these efforts, the inheritance of literary traditions has been carried since the early childhood. This paper reveals literacy activities as an effort to provide cultural sensitivity and citizenship awareness especially for Sundanese children through literary works.

Keywords—*cultural literacy; citizenship; Sundanese children's literature*

I. INTRODUCTION

The World Economic Forum (2015) recommended six types of literacy that should be mastered by the citizens of the world i.e. reading and writing literacy, numeracy literacy, scientific literacy, financial literacy, digital literacy, and culture and citizenship literacy. Citizenship is closely related to rights and obligations of a person as a citizen, in which the soul of nationalism, identity retention, national solidarity, and at the same time the brotherhood of the nations are contained.

Except the digital literacy, five other types of literacy have been introduced and spread inherently in Indonesian society, as well as in Sundanese land through the inheritance from one generation to others. The media used to convey has undergone a considerable change, begin from lontar leaf, traditional paper (daluang), Europe imported paper, and then changed to national paper product.

Substantial evidence of literacy activities in Sundanese society, among others, the discovery of the ancient Sundanese manuscript *Sanghyang Siksa Kanda Ng Karesian* written in 1518 AD [1], and the ancient manuscripts found later. The documents about other literacy activities, both in detail and briefly examined are contained in the above manuscript.

Other documents that are closely related to literacy activities are literary works. The basic activity of literacy starts from the creative process of creation or its writing up to enjoying or reading it. Even appreciation and interpretation activity are also classified into the scope of literacy. Obviously, understanding literary works is not only a matter of spelling letter by letter, reading word by word, or writing sentence by sentence, but also needs a comprehensive interpretation from various points of view. Therefore, Endraswara states that literary readings required a lens of interpretation, whereas the interpretation lens in the context of literature is very open [2].

Indeed, the open scope of literary interpretation requires an understanding of the three codes that stated by Teeuw i.e. the language code, literary code, and cultural code. These three codes are the basic formulation of literature that requires readers' ability to comprehend it [3]. Understanding the main media of literary forming requires knowledge of the language code, understanding the genre and imaginative truth in the story requires literary codes recognition, and understanding of the socio-cultural setting of the story requires insight into cultural codes. Comprehending the above three codes will greatly assist and facilitate literary literacy wholly. Moreover, literary works are created not from cultural emptiness, or in Damono's terms it does not fall from the sky, but it is full of social orders and settings [4]. Such conditions are almost evenly found in various genres and literature segmentation, including in Sundanese children's literature. Therefore, literature is not only a reflection of human life, but also at the same time it is a trace of the civilization, including a record of community activities. Therefore, society collective memory on the tradition of literacy in Sundanese society can be elucidated from their literary work.

II. METHOD

To reveal the above phenomenon, the researcher tries to study and analyze Sundanese people literacy activities, especially cultural and citizenship literacy recorded in the literary works of Sundanese children. Children's literature is chosen and used as the focus of the study to show that the tradition of cultural literacy and citizenship in the Sundanese community has been carried out from an early age, both in the school and in the community.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Cultural and citizenship literacy can be interpreted as the ability to understand (literacy) culture as the identity of a nation which is accompanied by social awareness (citizens) of all rights and obligations. The capability in this case is supplemented by appreciating and implementing the knowledge for a better life. In deed it must be complemented by a high level of understanding and adequate interpretation, which stated by Evelyn as a complex, critical, and creative thinking technique in solving problems [5].

The publication of the information on culture and citizenship in Sundanese society has been pursued in various ways to all ages, including through literature, among others, fairy tales, *sisindiran*, *pupujian*, *pupuh* and *kakawihan*. Even the literary works is the element of culture [6], when children appreciate it they directly have gained knowledge and understand cultural products. Therefore, by enjoying the literally works children have helped preserve and maintaining their culture.

The introduction of cultural literacy and citizenship through children's literature can be categorized as inheritance of literacy traditions carried out from an early age, which in KBBI states that children age range is classified between 6-13 years [7]. Even more, children literature coverage is intended and consumed by children [8]. The same thing was expressed by Puji Santosa that children literature can be interpreted as imaginative works of art dominated by aesthetic elements that are mediated by both oral and written language, which can be specifically understood by children and it content is familiar with world of children [9].

Another opinion expressed by Nurgiyantoro emphasizes that a book or reading material can be classified as children's literature if the images and metaphors of life are told both in content (emotions, feelings, thoughts, sensational nerves and moral experiences) and form (peculiarities and ways of how to express) that can be achieved and understood by children and fit with their mental development level [10].

In addition, children's literature is always full of messages and moral mandates. This moral message will be held firmly by the child and even used as a guideline in their daily behavior. Connected with this fact, Sarumpaet argues that children's literature has three characteristics [8]: (1) contains prohibited elements which must avoid ugliness, hatred, cruelty, cheating, eroticism, and death; (2) direct style presentation, i.e. short description and direct to the target, not complicated. The dialogue is reasonable and simple. The characters can be known immediately: the evil characters confront with good characters; and (3) contains applied function which is informative and contains values that are useful both for general knowledge, specific skills for children growth and development

The characteristics of the children's literature are very much in accordance with the basic principles of culture and citizenship literacy, as stated in the below *pupuh Pucung*

*Utamana jama kudu rea batur,
keur silih tulungan,
silih tiitpeun nya diri,
budi akal lantaran ti pada jalma.*

Humans must have many friends,
to help each other,
entrust each other,
cleverness comes from others.

The message that in our lives, as human should have many friends to help each other and take care of each other, is a moral teaching to live together in the shade of brotherhood. This message was embodied in the *pupuh* poetry genre, which in the 2013 curriculum was taught in almost all classes in elementary school, except in third grade. In other words, nurturing citizenship values in terms of living in harmony has been carried out through the learning processes since the children admitted in the elementary school [11].

The emphasis on the importance of having many friends in the first line shows that the position of friends is higher than other things, for example with wealth and the like, or even more than anything else. This is a fundamental understanding of the nature of humans as social beings, who cannot live solitarily. Therefore we have to keep looking for, adding, maintaining friends, because the benefits of which are seen in the second line, i.e. to help each other in the broad sense. Because there could be a situation that cannot be coped with alone, or a condition that forces you to ask for help from others. This is what friends are for. Friends who are always ready to reach out, help us in times of distress, a place to share, a place to complain, and a place for talk. Even as mentioned in the third row, a place to maintain each other's own life based on the philosophy of *silih asah silih asih* and *silih asuh*. (to live together in love, peace and harmony).

Besides its presence is needed, friends are also a drive and a source of inspiration in our life. It is a godsend of good fortune and prosperity, health and goodness, because as mentioned in the fourth line, all goodness comes with intermediaries of friends.

In the story of *Sakadang Kuya jeung Monyet Melak Cau*, it is implied the citizenship message that life goals cannot be achieved at once yet must go patiently through a long process. The Monkey character that planted bananas from banana blossom, obviously made a reasoning mistake, compared to the Turtle character that planted bananas from its bud. As a result, the banana planted by the monkey became rotten while the ones planted by the turtle grow and bear banana fruit. When the banana began to ripen, the turtle realized that he had difficulty picking it, because he could not climb, so the monkey was asked for help to harvest it. Having the turtle trust, the monkey was thinking fraudulently intending to take away the entire harvest. So when the banana had been harvested, the monkey took it away into the forest, even though the sack used to carry the harvest had been perforated by The Turtle. Of course when the monkey arrived in the forest, he did not find a single banana in the sack.

The Turtle which sat calmly under the banana tree when the Monkey climbed it, can instantly eat the bananas. But, he also realized that he could taste the sweetness of the banana because of the monkey that helped him to harvest it, so the turtle decided not eat all the bananas and gave some to him when the

monkey came again to him. Monkeys also enjoyed the Turtle's bananas with embarrassment.

Cheating behavior contains universal citizenship values. In any part of the world cheating is considered to be a disgraceful conduct. On the contrary, respecting others' help, willingness to share, forgive and love others, are commendable conduct. Therefore, Sundanese ancestors considered it important to tell and share those good values to the young generation, including through stories or children's stories.

The Citizenship literacy that taught us to be actively pursuing knowledge, studious, mutual cooperation, hard work, and creativity, is also described in the literary works, one of which is like the verse below

*Sing getol nginum jajamu,
nu guna nguatkeun urat,
sing getol neangan elmu,
nu guna dunya aherat.*

drink herbs frequently,
to strengthen muscles,
be studious,
for you life now and the hereafter.

Citizenship literacy in understanding and deepening religious teachings, praise, prayer, and advice, summarized in *pupujian* work, which is usually sung in madrasah or in the mosques before prayers, while the values of democracy, togetherness, and law obedient are introduced through *kakawihan*. This works presented in one pack with traditional Sundanese children's games. Therefore, *kakawihan* is often referred to Sundanese children's games theme song.

Sundanese children's games are usually done in various places starting from the house yard, field, rice field, river, to the forest edge. *Kakawihan* chanting is even have begun when the children invite each other or call among their friends to play. The names that are called are usually chanted. Similarly, when the game will be begun, *Kakawihan's* chants continue to accompany it, for example by chanting *Cing Ciripit*, *Hompimpah*, *Perepet Jengkol*, *Dal-del-dol* and others.

When the game is in progress, or when changing other games types, other *kakawihan* will accompany alternately. For example, for games performed while climbing trees, *Eundeuk-Eundeukan* will be chanted. While walking on rice field dyke *Oray-Orayan* will be sung. When they play in the rice field hut, *Empet-Empetan* will be sung, even if their game should stop because of the rain, they will soon sing *Trang-Trang Kolentrang*. If you take shelter in the hut and smell fart, and no one confesses it, then to find the culprit is done by singing *Tat-Tit-Tut Daun Kaliki* or *Tat-Tit-Tut Daun Kanyere*. Immediately, once the *kakawihan* ends and at the end of the song the count falls to one of the children, he/she should confess that he/she is the culprit, even though it could be the other child did it.

This is one way to instill an understanding of law obedience, meaning that if a decision has been determined, it must be accepted, even though if it is temporary.

The various cultural literacy and citizenship activities mentioned above are in line with all effort in promoting the national values, derived not only from the four pillars of nationality i.e. Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, NKRI and Unity in Diversity slogan, but also from local wisdom that spreads in the community, both from oral traditions and written documents contained in ancient manuscripts [12]. Thus, Sundanese children's literature has directly perpetuated the inheritance of national values to the future generation in an exciting and pleasurable way.

IV. CONCLUSION

Sundanese children's literature among others *pupuh*, *dongeng*, *sisindiran*, *pupujian*, and *kakawihan*, explicitly show the message and at the same time it is a document informing about the activities of the Sundanese community literacy, especially children, through literary works. These activities provide a basics understanding to children on cultural literacy and citizenship awareness, which is included in culture and citizenship literacy. Evidently, it has a very good impact on children, because since childhood, they have possessed the understanding on the local cultural treasures accompanied by a sense of responsibility to be able to carry out the obligations and rights as citizens. The implications of this literacy tradition will shape individual who have the ownership, the pride and preserve culture as their identity, accompanied by the ability to behave and act and implementing knowledge for the benefits of others. In other words, Sundanese children's literature can contribute in preparing and shaping the individual to become better individuals and to improve their humanity.

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