Character in the Collection of Sixth Grader Stories

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ABSTRACT

Background: Character figure in short story refers to the traits, personalities, and attributes possessed by the characters in story short the. Character figure This form base for method reader understand and relate with story. Alif Integrated Islamic Elementary School implements a program to develop writing literacy for grade 6 students. This program takes the form of training in making Short Story anthology books. Literary works are description life humans created by the author. One of type literary works are story short.

Purpose: The aim of this research is to identify characters in the collection short story student 6th grade SDIT ALIF Ciawi.

Design and methods: Research methods used study This is analysis content, This method use ATLAS.ti For obtain data.

Results: In research found that characters created by SDIT Alif Ciawi students two types were found character that is character anthropomorphic and non- anthropomorphic. Results of research conducted on 34 short stories SDIT Alif Ciawi students there is Non-Anthropomorphic characters namely "Human ", whereas character anthropomorphic emerges in short story student that is : Grasshopper, Eagle, Squirrel, Chameleon, Fish, Deer, Mother Birds, Cats, Rats, Ants, Snakes, Male Birds, Trees Petai, Broccoli, Vegetables, Apple Trees, Hap-hap, Jin Tomang, Durian Trees, Carrots, Spinach, Worms, Kriko and Mushrooms.

Keywords: characters, short stories, children's literature

Introduction

In short stories, characters are crucial elements that move the plot and capture the reader's attention (Helmanto & Hidayat, 2023). They can take the form of individuals, animals, or even objects imbued with human characteristics, playing diverse roles throughout the story (Provizer & Provizer, 2015). Every character possesses a unique personality that contributes to the dramatization of the narrative. Characters support the depth and complexity of the story, helping to create an emotional connection between the reader and the events taking place. Through dialogue, actions, and thoughts, characters present the story's theme and message while simultaneously crafting a vivid and enchanting fictional world.

In literary works, characters breathe life into the story. They can be protagonists (heroes), antagonists (villains), or supporting characters. Great characters often have depth and complexity, allowing readers to empathize with or understand their motives. Character development involves the creation, formation, and exploration of a character's role in the plot, including their relationships with other characters (Wening, 2020). Each character encountered in a short story has a distinct role in bringing the story to life, making the

writer's message more understandable to readers (Nuraeni & Fadhly, 2017). Thus, it is essential to create characters that are clear, consistent, and interesting, making the story more engaging and meaningful for the audience.

A short story is a prose narrative that typically requires one to two hours to read. It is a structured text with a single conflict (Helmanto & Hidayat, 2020) and possesses a quality that stirs the spirit through its storytelling. A very important element in its construction is the character. Characters are the driving force behind the fictional events that intertwine to form the story. A short story, as its name implies, has concise events, a limited number of characters, and is expressed with a limited word count.

Literary works, including short stories, are reflections of human life as crafted by the author. They often carry valuable lessons for readers (Nurgiyantoro, 2013). According to the theory of mimesis, which comes from the Greek word for imitation, art and literature imitate nature and human life. Plato argued that all art is mimetic because it attempts to copy objects, events, or actions from real life (Darma, 2019). In this way, mimesis is a complex and diverse concept relating to how literature reflects the real world based on human experience.

Children's literature, as a genre, extends beyond the scope of adult literature. It includes oral traditions, written works, and interactive activities. Oral literature consists of stories told by parents, teachers, and songs or lullabies passed down through generations. Written literature for children emphasizes the beauty of language and comes in various forms such as poetry, fictional stories, biographies, and informational books. It is often accompanied by colorful illustrations. Literary activities for children include drama performances, poetry recitations, and finger rhymes, all of which engage children's senses and contribute to their understanding of the world (Heath, 1982).

The simplicity of children's stories can be observed in three main aspects. First, the problems and conflicts are simple and revolve around issues relevant to children. Second, the cause-and-effect relationships between events must be clear and logical for children to understand. Third, the sequence of events must be linear and coherent, with events told in the order they occur (Nurgiyantoro, 2013). Characters that resemble real life are easier for children to understand and identify with, as they often respond to fictional characters as they would to real people. Stories with realistic characters help children understand the world around them, while fantasy stories can stimulate their imagination and introduce them to different perspectives (Nurgiyantoro, 2013).

When selecting books for children aged 0-2 years, it's important to consider practical aspects such as how well they can see illustrations and how long they can sit still. Books for this age group should feature simple, bright images against plain backgrounds and have minimal text (Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson, 1999). For children aged 2-4 years, books that depict everyday routines and familiar objects, along with simple plots and engaging illustrations, are effective for supporting their development. At the age of 4-7 years, picture books remain a key part of children's literary experiences, with fairy tales and rhyming poems being popular choices.

As children grow older, around 7-9 years, they begin to enjoy more complex stories that allow them to explore other perspectives and experiences. They are ready to engage with transitional books and eventually novels. By the age of 9-12 years, children can appreciate more intricate storylines involving flashbacks and symbolism, and they can understand historical fiction or science fiction set in distant times or places.

In stories like "Eyes That Are Nice to Look At" by Ahmad Tohari and "Inem" by Pramoedya Ananta Toer, characters play a pivotal role in shaping the narrative and engaging the reader. Readers' reception of characters is influenced by their physical, psychological,

and sociological traits (Grindstaff, 2008). Identifying with characters is crucial for reader engagement, emphasizing the importance of building strong connections between the characters and the audience (Kohm, 2016).

Learning about literature, especially short stories, in school settings aims to nurture students' sensitivity to societal issues and foster respect for individual and social values. This learning approach aligns well with the current character education curriculum. For instance, Alif Integrated Islamic Elementary School implements a writing literacy program for its 6th-grade students, providing them with training in writing short story anthologies. This program, which started on November 11, 2023, helps students develop creativity, refine their writing skills, and hone their literary talents.

Through storytelling, authors become bridges between the real and imaginative worlds of children. By carefully crafting messages that entertain while imparting life lessons, they create works that can positively shape young readers from an early age.

Methods

The research method employed in this study is content analysis, commonly used in qualitative research. The ATLAS.ti software was utilized for data collection and analysis. ATLAS.ti aids in creating projects, importing documents, coding data, managing codes and memos, analyzing data, and generating reports.

Data collection involved critically reading and analyzing the content of short stories written by 34 sixth-grade students from SDIT ALIF. The analysis focused on both intrinsic and extrinsic elements of the stories. Sixth graders were selected due to their participation in a short story anthology training program. The study used an objective and mimetic approach.

Findings & Discussion

The following image shows the results of character analysis in the short stories written by sixth-grade students of SDIT Alif Ciawi.
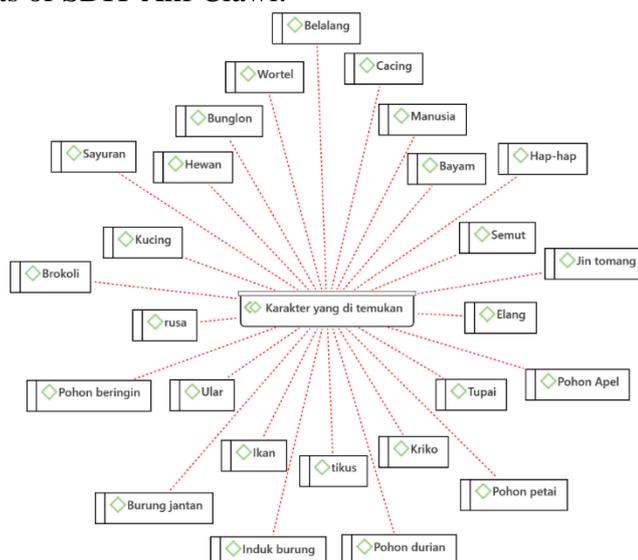

Figure 1. Characters Found in Short Stories

The research, conducted on 34 short stories by SDIT Alif Ciawi students, identified a variety of characters, including Grasshopper, Worm, Human, Spinach, Hap-Hap, Ant, Jin Tomang, Eagle, Apple Tree, Squirrel, Kriko, Petai Tree, Rat, Durian Tree, Fish, Mother Bird, Male Bird, Snake, Banyan Tree, Deer, Broccoli, Cat, Animal, Vegetable, Chameleon, and Carrot.

These characters were classified into two categories: anthropomorphic and non-anthropomorphic.
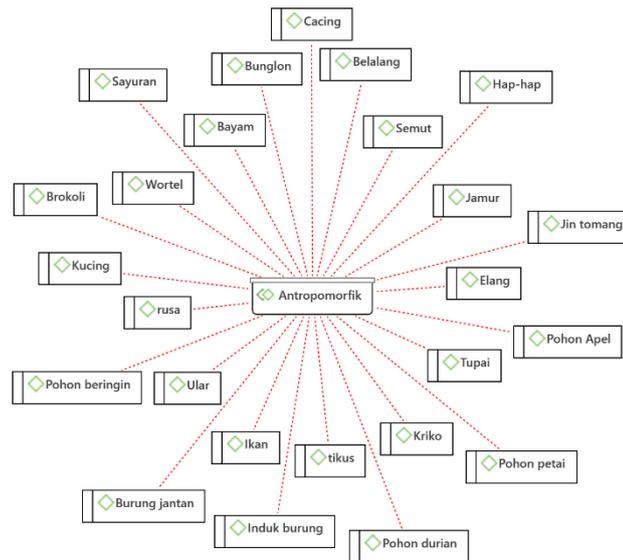

Figure 2. Anthropomorphic Characters Found in Short Stories

Analysis using the ATLAS.ti application revealed that 25 out of 34 students' stories featured anthropomorphic characters. Anthropomorphism refers to attributing human traits, emotions, or characteristics to non-human entities, objects, or phenomena. The list includes characters that embody such traits.

Figure 3. Non-Anthropomorphic Characters Found in Short Stories

In addition to anthropomorphic characters, the analysis found non-anthropomorphic characters in the students' short stories, such as the "Human."

Figure 4. Non-Anthropomorphic 'Human' Characters Found in Short Stories

Discussion

Literature represents a form of human creativity that reflects life, society, beauty, imagination, and ideas expressed through language, both orally and in writing. As the medium for conveying literary works, language is intricately tied to the author's background and context (Helmanto & Hidayat, 2020). Thus, literature can be seen as a reflection of human experiences, enabling us to explore various aspects of life, culture, and imagination.

Short stories, as part of the literary genre, often depict the surrounding environment. Literature and the environment are inseparable, as literary works frequently integrate the environment to enrich and dramatize the narrative (Vygotsky, 2004).

In a study of short stories by SDIT Alif Ciawi students, two types of characters were identified: anthropomorphic and non-anthropomorphic. **Non-anthropomorphic characters** are those that lack human traits or forms. In literature, film, and other media, non-anthropomorphic characters typically exhibit the following features:

1. **Physical Form**: They do not resemble humans physically and may take the form of objects, animals, plants, or abstract entities.
2. **Characteristics and Behavior**: These characters do not possess human traits, such as thinking or speaking like humans. They act based on instincts or natural functions.
3. **Examples in Literature**: Animals acting naturally without human speech or objects playing roles without human-like traits.
4. **Narrative Role**: Non-anthropomorphic characters are often used to create atmosphere, advance the plot, or provide symbolism without drawing attention to their human-like qualities. They add depth to the story, enriching its world.

On the other hand, **anthropomorphic characters** are those that exhibit human traits, such as facial expressions, emotions, and behaviors, even though they are not human. Anthropomorphism involves attributing human-like features to animals, objects, or other non-human entities, making these characters easier for audiences to understand and empathize with. This concept is widely used in comics, animations, and literature to humanize non-human entities, giving them recognizable emotions, personalities, and behaviors (Oreglia, 2018).

The term "anthropomorphism" comes from the Greek words "ánthrōpos" (ἄνθρωπος, meaning "human") and "morphē" (μορφή, meaning "form"). In the Big Indonesian Dictionary, anthropomorphism is defined as the assignment of human characteristics to animals, plants, or inanimate objects. It is a common metaphor used in design, art, and popular culture to make non-human objects or creatures relatable by endowing them with human-like features (Ma'as, 2023). This allows for greater recognition and connection, as humans are drawn to characters that mirror their own traits.

Conclusion

The research on short stories by SDIT Alif Ciawi students revealed two distinct types of characters: anthropomorphic and non-anthropomorphic. Non-anthropomorphic characters lack human traits or forms, appearing as objects, animals, plants, or abstract entities, with "Human" being a notable exception. In contrast, anthropomorphic characters are non-human entities endowed with human characteristics such as emotions, facial expressions, and behaviors. These characters, often found in comics and animations for their relatability, include animals like grasshoppers, eagles, and squirrels, as well as plants and other objects like trees, vegetables, and even inanimate objects like jacks and mushrooms. The inclusion of anthropomorphic elements in these short stories reflects a creative method for engaging readers by blending imagination with familiar human traits.

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