

Sub theme: folklor dan pembangunan karakter bangsa

FOLKLORE AS THE CHARACTER BUILDER IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION¹

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Abstract

There are many aspects can develop or build in early childhood education, such as cognitive aspect, psychomotor aspect, language aspect, art aspect, social emotional aspect, spiritual aspect, moral aspect, etc. The other aspect which is developed or built in early childhood education is character. And, one way of character building in early childhood education, use the folklore in instructional process.

Early childhood who are the candidate of real Indonesian people, must have Indonesian society character which is smart, moralist, and spiritualist. The folklore as the Indonesian culture heritage, bring the Indonesian society character in that story. In addition, the folklore can be used to character building in instructional process for early childhood education. When teacher use the folklore in instructional process, teacher can make and use the instructional media too (such as folklore book with nice picture, hand dolls or finger dolls). With the folklore, teacher can describe the kind of people characters, especially Indonesian society characters. And, children (student) will understand that characters. They will imitate the good character from the folklore which is described by teacher.

In summary, character building in early childhood education can use folklore as the Indonesian culture heritage in instructional process. With the folklore, student (children) will know about Indonesian society character. Furthermore, in the end of the instructional process student can imitate the good character from the folklore.

Key words: folklore, character builder, early childhood education

INTRODUCTION

The world is very old. This term which is always used by people in every discussion, has the reason. Why? Because of the earth is very old in this time. And the civilization is very old too. After 21 century, society live look so modern (including children). It's not like a several decades ago, children was just busy with traditional games. For the example in Indonesia, at the night, children in the past very liked to play in outside of their home when

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the moon was being full. It's because of there had no television or the other electronic games in the house which made them swing round from traditional games with togetherness.

Everything which has characteristics of traditional, culture, and about the past time, has begun to be lost. Children (including early childhood) don't know increasingly about their native culture. As we know, all of the cultures have full philosophies of life which can be foothold in life when they have come of age. In the philosophies of life, they have to find and or know the original characters of Indonesian people (smart, moralist, and spiritualist). One of cultures which has full of original philosophies (which have the original characters of Indonesian people) is **folklore** (*dongeng*) as part of oral *folklor*.

Traditional folklore (*dongeng*) can be used in instructional process for children character building (including early childhood). The characters are off course the original character of Indonesian people which is smart, moralist, and spiritualist. Children will imitate their favorite figure character in folklore story (*dongeng*). In order to interest for children, off course teacher need instructional media which support the story content (such as folklore book with nice picture, hand dolls or finger dolls).

CHARACTERISTIC OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

Myrtle B McGraw from Briarcliff College said that, "it is not possible to pinpoint any particular ideologies or theories that have given rise to the present interest in early childhood development. The forces were many: they were complex" (Smart & Smart, 1973). This opinion is more or less states that it is impossible to show some facts ideologies and theories that have been given to reveal the interest of early childhood development. They are so complex. That's why forces make it difficult to be revealed. This shows that children's world is something that exciting and full of mystery but need special attention.

Biechler & Snowman (1993) said that, preschool children are those aged 3-6 years old (cited by Soemantri Patmonodewo, 2000). One form of preschool education is kindergarten (*Taman Kanak-kanak*). In Indonesia, most children attend preschool kindergarten program at the age 4-6 years old. Furthermore, early childhood in Indonesia is 0-6 years. Even though early childhood in Indonesia is 0-6 years, NAEYC said that early childhood is 0-8 years. That's why the first and the second level student in primary education are called as early childhood too, because it's in 7 and 8 years old. They are in playing period. In addition, Piaget said that they are in period of pre operational concrete. Sri Rumini, et.al (1993) told that children are in playing period and have some unique characteristics, such as egocentric,

centralized, irreversible, and the static directional thinking. So that the child is developing normal and positive, then treat them in accordance with the stage of development and its characteristics, such as not turning them away from their playing period.

By Mayke S Tedjasaputra (2005), playing is place for children to experience a variety of experiences such as emotions, happy, sad, excited, disappointed, proud, angry, etc. Children will feel happy when playing, and the kids learned a lot of things other than experiences. Playing with the word “play” is fun. It is also why children are so unique and fun.

The role and purpose of playing was different. Follows are some classical and modern theories about the purpose and role of play cited by Mayke S Tedjasaputra (2005):

Classic Theories

Theories	Founder	Purpose of Playing
Surplus-energy	Schiller-Spencer	Expend the excess energy
Recreation	Lazarus	Restore power
Recapitulation	Hall	Raises ancestors instinct
Practical	Gross	Refine instinct

Modern Theories

Theories	Role of Playing
Psychoanalytic	Overcome the traumatic experiences, coping the frustration
Cognitive-Piaget	Practice and consolidate concepts and skills previously learned
Cognitive-Vygotsky	Promote abstract thinking; learning and connecting with ZPD; self-regulation
Cognitive-Bruner/Sutton-Smith	Bring the flexibility of behavior and thought; imagination and narrative
Singer	Adjust the speed of stimulation from within and outside
Others Theories	
Arousal Modulation	Keep the children awake at optimal levels by increasing the stimulations
Bateson	Advance the ability to understand the different levels of meaning

With the playing activities, children will be found meaningful lessons. As said by DePorter and Hernacki (2003), there are three learning style, are auditory (learning by hearing), visual (learning by seeing), and kinesthetic (learning by move, work, and touching). Playing activities can summarize the three of learning style. Whatever of children learning style, children can be take the knowledge by playing.

Nasution (2003) has different opinion from DePorter and Hernacki (2003). Nasution said that learning style is a consistent way of students in capturing stimulation and information, how to remember, think, and solve problems. And this learning style is divided into three, are field dependence-field independence (there were influenced by environment and there were not influenced by environment), impulsive-reflective (one that taking decisions quickly without thinking about in deeply and one that considering all alternatives before making a decision in a situation that has no easy solution), perceptive/receptive-systematic/intuitive (there's who filtering incoming information and the relationships among attention and there's who more attention to detail or detail information and does not attempt to round or information relate to one another; there's who tries to look at the structure of a problem and working systematically with data or information to solve a problem and there's who directly bring up a specific answer without using the information in a systematic).

Although the two opinions above are different, however, they are learning style, and all learning styles are covered in play activities. With different learning style, children can still learn together in play activities. So basically, a period of play, which is one of the characteristic of children, can be used as a means of stimulating growth and development of children with different learning style.

FOLKLORE SEBAGAI PEMBENTUK KARAKTER AUD

Folklor is Indonesianization (peng-Indonesia-an) from the English word which is from two words. They are: *Folk* and *Lore* (Tim Serbasejarah: 2013). Furthermore, the meaning of *Folk* is *kolektif* (collectivity), and the meaning of *Lore* is tradition of folk. The meaning of *folklor* is the culture which is given from people in the past with an oral manner or with an example which is completed by gestures or reminder tools. After being a word in Indonesian language, *folklor* (without "e" in the end of word) is defined as part of collectivity culture which is spread and heir from people in the past, and as different traditional version, with the oral and gesture or reminder tool. The same as that opinion, Kamus Besar Bahasa

Indonesia (W.J.S. Poerwadarminta: 2007) define *Folklor* as traditional custom and citizenry story which is heir from people in the past (ancestor), but it's not entered in a book.

Furthermore, Tim Serbasejarah (2013) said that the characteristics of *folklor* are:

1. created, spread, and heir by orally way (mouth by mouth) from one generation to the next generation,
2. traditionally, spread in the same type at certain area, spread in certain group (people) on the long term (min for 2 generations),
3. become a together fate of certain people, because the first create has not known. So, every of collective member feels fate it (not knowing who is the create), and
4. have the utilization in togetherness life (such as a teacher, healing, social protest, and the inside willing projection).

Jan Harold Brunvard, a *folklor* expert from USA (in Tim Serbasejarah: 2013) said that *folklor* can be classified to three big groups which is based by the type, such as: oral *folklor*, semi oral *folklor*, and non oral *folklor*. And the folklore (*dongeng*) is part of oral *folklor*. The Indonesian original folklore story has the characteristic, the nature, and the character of Indonesian people in every figure.

Character is the quality or mental power or moral power, individual moral values, or conduct of life which is as motor special personal and different to another person (Furqon Hidayatullah, 2010). In addition, Agbenyega (2011) said that character is the way of life which is developed from value and conviction, and isn't the universal thing. The value and conviction are developed from the history. *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* by W.J.S. Poerwadarminta (2007) said that value is the important thing for humanity. Because of that, the character is based on the living space contamination and sliced with culture. For the example, Indonesia society character which is moralist, smart, and spiritualist, is bequeathed from ancestors and appropriate with Indonesian cultural which is very plurality. The character will be built from the early age.

To build the children character is not like to turn the palm of hand. There is a hard work from everyone, such as institution of education. Agbenyega (2011) told that an institution which has a certain quality must have the high instructional program and must have the high teacher quality too. He said that the instructional program has to refer: naturally learning, holistic learning, and understanding (not knowing).

In instructional program, there is an instructional process. And folklore (*dongeng*) can be inserted in instructional process for children character building (especially early

childhood). Folklore (*dongeng*) has philosophies and characters which can be imitated by early childhood. When teacher tell a folklore story (*dongeng*), children will listen and assimilate the good story and character of figure inside of the folklore (*dongeng*). When tell the folklore story (*dongeng*), teacher can use the instructional media too, as the folklore book with nice picture, hand dolls or finger dolls. Folklore story (*dongeng*) which is part of *folklor*, can be a character builder in early childhood, because it has good story plot and describe figures with Indonesian people characters (moralist, smart, and spiritualist). For the example, folklore story (*dongeng*) of “*bawang merah* and *bawang putih*”. This folklore story (*dongeng*) has unique character of Indonesian people. In this folklore story (*dongeng*), there is *bawang putih* with good character, and *bawang merah* with bad character as the opposite. So, children can assimilate in their mine, where character can be imitated (off course with the describe as the helper from teacher).

CONCLUSION

Folklore story (*dongeng*) which is part of oral *folklore*, can be a character builder in early childhood in instructional process. With the instructional media, the message of moral content (as the original character of Indonesian people which can be imitated by children) inside of folklore story (*dongeng*) can take perfectly by children. So that, children can understand and apply the original characters of Indonesian people which is moralist, smart, and spiritualist in their life.

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