CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains explanations relating to the research background, problem identification, scope of the study, research question, purpose of the study, definition of key terms, and significance of the study.

1.1 Research Background

In the current era of globalization, information, and communication technology developments affect all aspects of human life, including character (Arwen & Puspita, 2020). Today, the development of technology is so fast that people quickly get and exchange new information, primarily through media. Facilitating the exchange of information through the media also impacts human life, both positively and negatively (Arwen & Puspita, 2020). As explain by Arwen and Puspita (2020), the positive impact of the rapid dissemination of information with technological developments on students, one of which is helping them get the information and knowledge they need quickly and easily. However, it also makes access to damaging information much more accessible. Negative information that students find on the internet or social media indirectly affects their character, in line with Utami et al. (2020), who state that broad access to information allows students to access positive and negative information that can affect the character of future generations. At an early age, students are more likely to be curious and like to imitate societal trends. Aghni et al. (2020) argued that children imitate adults or those around them to fulfill their curiosity. Therefore,

even though good information is easy to find in every mass media, lousy information can also be easily accessed by students and can affect their character development, causing problems of character degradation in children.

Character degradation is the main problem that occurs among students in Indonesia (Istiningsih, 2016). Some examples of character degradation that occur are bullying, the habit of cheating, violence, internet gambling, pornography, sexual harassment, brawls between students, and even drug abuse (Alam et al., 2014; Cahya et al., 2020; Cahyani, 2019; Kaimuddin, 2014; Saputro & Murdiono, 2020). This shows Indonesia's condition, which is currently experiencing a lack of character education (Saputro & Murdiono, 2020). Moreover, Lickona (2016) states that harmful content provided by mass media such as television, the internet, and print media can negatively impact human life, such as deviant sexual behavior, broken homes, psychological problems, etc. Therefore, character quality also decreases with increasing access to information and knowledge.

The government is trying to lead students to develop good behavior through school education to reduce the number of deviant behavior due to excessive use of technology or mass media. According to Lickona (1991), schools must be able to become a place to teach character education to students so that they can build good character in students. Moreover, Lickona (2004) states that character education refers to a deliberate effort by individuals to instill good values. Lickona (1991) also states that character education is an attempt to shape someone to understand ethical values intentionally. Besides that, character education is a way to build the character of students' moral awareness through the

framework of their psychological, social, and cognitive development learning (Putri, 2018; Rosala & Budiman, 2020; Saputro & Murdiono, 2020).

Furthermore, Saputro and Murdiono (2020) state that character education has played an essential role in building students' character through teaching and learning activities. The implementation of character education is expected to influence the behavior of students (Saputro & Murdiono, 2020). Character education leads students to become individuals with good morals, following the laws and customs in society (Ardianti et al., 2019; Wijaya et al., 2019). Therefore, students need to know the values of character education to prevent deviant behavior or other harmful behavior (Lewis & Ponzio, 2016).

The Indonesian government has implemented character education teaching to develop students' attitudes, ethics, morals, and responsibility. Indonesia has an educational curriculum that cares about teaching character education to students (Lase, 2019; Wulandari, 2020). The Indonesian government aligns the values of character education with learning knowledge and skills (Saputro & Murdiono, 2020). According to the Ministry of National Education, in Indonesian education, the values developed in character education come from four sources, namely Pancasila, Religion, Culture, and National Education Goals (Kurniawan, 2017). Based on these sources, the value of character education is broken down into 18 values, namely religious, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, nationalism, love of homeland, appreciation of achievements, friendly/communicative, love peace, love to read, care for the environment, care for the society, and responsibility (Kemendiknas, 2010). However, along with global changes, there have also been changes in every sector

of life, including education (Kemendikbud, 2017). Therefore, the Ministry of Education and Culture (2017) believes a new movement is needed to strengthen character education. As a result, the Ministry of Education and Culture (2017) updated the values of character education into five core values: religious, nationalist, independent, mutual cooperative, and integrity. This concept of character education is used as the primary strategy of the Ministry of Education and Culture to improve Indonesia's educational standards (Kemendikbud, 2017). Therefore, character education is essential for students, especially to build strong character in children.

Teachers in schools are expected to have cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competencies in teaching students regarding character education (Kazu & İş, 2018; Putri & Imaniyati, 2017). However, teachers can do character education in schools and outside of school. As argued by Suwastini et al. (2017) that teaching character education values to children should not only be carried out by teachers at school, but the role of parents and the people around the children is also essential. Therefore, schools, teachers, parents, and other community members around children can influence children's character development (Aghni et al., 2020; Lickona, 2012). In formal education, teachers and schools help students develop their cognitive abilities, help students become responsible children, and build strong reasons why they need to act in a certain way (Permana et al., 2018, as cited in Suwastini, Aryawan, et al., 2022). In a more informal context, children will learn to imitate their surroundings (Aghni et al., 2020). This aligns with Utami, Suwastini, et al. (2020), who explains that good character development must be taught to students formally and informally. There are

several ways that teachers and parents can do to help students develop good values in their character, one of which is through reading literary works.

Literary works are one way to teach character education to students (Marhayani, 2016; Sekeh et al., 2019; Shastina et al., 2020). Literary work is not only intended for adults; it can also be used to teach good things to children from an early age. Literary works written for children and read by children are called children's literature (Leonardi, 2020). One of the literary works that can be used to teach character education to children is children's novels. The novel is an example of literature teachers or parents can use to teach character education. According to Wahyuni et al. (2019), the novel is delivered in narrative form, where the story and events are sequenced. A novel is a lengthy, complicated, imaginatively written prose story exploring human experience (Bennett & Royle, 2009, as cited in Yudin et al., 2021). The novel can depict in detail the characters' growth, complicated social conditions, relationships involving other characters, and various complicated events that happened over time (Stanton, 2012, as cited in Yudin et al., 2021). Even though the novel is a fiction story, it provides entertainment and knowledge since it consists of moral messages inside the story (Yudin et al., 2021). With novels as reading material, students can increase their interest in reading activities and learn good values from the characters in the story (Rahmi, 2018; Zahro et al., 2017). Thus, the novel can be a choice of reading material for students because it contains many values that students can learn and apply in social life.

One of the popular children's novels, Billy and the Minpins, was written by Roald Dahl and published by Jonathan Cape in 1991. Roald Dahl wrote this

novel as a fantasy for children's literature. The novel *Billy and the Minpins* is an example of a novel whose story contains character education values where it can have a positive impact on the children who read it. The main character of this novel is a young boy named Little Billy, who lives in a small cottage on the edge of a forest. Little Billy's mother forbids him from approaching the Forest of Sin behind their house; she believes that in the forest, there are many of the most terrifying beasts in the world. However, Little Billy did not believe his mother's words, so he explored the forest alone. On the way to the forest, there are many dangers to face and encounters with the Minpins, who will help him safely return home. Through the fantasy story of Little Billy facing danger when leaving his house, there are some excellent character values that children can emulate in this story.

There are several types of research show that character education is essential for children's development and success in life, as it helps promote positive character traits, social and emotional skills, positive self-awareness, and essential life skills (Aghni et al., 2020; Agustin et al., 2020; Suwastini, Aryawan, et al., 2022; Widyahening & Wardhani, 2016). Despite that, much research on character education values examined literary works, especially novels. Some relevant studies have demonstrated that the characters in stories, such as novels, children's stories, and even short stories, effectively convey moral values through character development in the story (Aliyanti et al., 2022; Febriana et al., 2018; Hidayati et al., 2018; Hissan, 2012; Hizraini et al., 2022; Jayanti & Putri, 2018; Saraswati et al., 2021; Sekeh et al., 2019; Simanjuntak et al., 2017; Sundari & Fitriani, 2021; Suwastini, Dewi, et al., 2022; Yudin et al., 2021). Even though

there has been much previous research discussing the values of character education in novels, the researchers in this study conducted research using different literary works.

The explanation above attracted researchers' attention to using the main character in the novel *Billy and the Minpins*, Little Billy as a model for teaching character education to students. The story of Little Billy in *Billy and the Minpins* is inspiring and contains good moral values. Therefore, this study aims to identify the values of character education reflected in Little Billy, which align with the values of character education proposed by the Ministry of Education and Culture (2017). In addition, this can also be an alternative for teachers and parents to use literary works such as novels as a medium for teaching character education values to children.

1.2 Problem Identification

The background of this study presents several problems that can be expressed through a brief explanation. Rapid technological developments have brought progress in disseminating and accessing information among all groups, including students. Advances in technology allow students to access various types of information, both positive and negative information for them (Arwen & Puspita, 2020). With easy access to various information, exposure to harmful content is unavoidable. This is one of the causes of character degradation.

Degradation is often interpreted as a decrease in quality. In this era of globalization, it was found that Indonesian people experienced problems with

decreasing character values, such as behaving impolitely and not caring about the environment (Muassomah et al., 2020). Various social problems related to character degradation in adolescents, such as cheating on exams, bullying, violence, theft, alcohol and drug abuse, brawls, sexual harassment, and other illegal acts (Muassomah et al., 2020; Kaimuddin, 2014; Saputro & Murdiono, 2020; Wulandari & Hodriani, 2019; Zulela et al., 2022), often occur in the world of education in Indonesia.

Education in Indonesia seems to face various challenges, especially the degradation of character in the younger generation. Research conducted by Sugiarto (2010, as quoted in Putry, 2018) revealed a survey of moral decline in young people; it was found that 63% of teenagers in big cities in Indonesia had premarital sex. In addition, the Good News from Indonesia (GNFI) survey results with the Indonesian Public Opinion Study and Discussion Group in July 2022 revealed that most of the younger generation experienced character degradation. As a result, three of the four main issues related to the issue of morality in the younger generation, namely sexual harassment 13.7%, the spread of hoax news 9.5%, and moral and ideological degradation 8.4%. These problems illustrate a degradation of character due to a lack of character education for children.

Istiningsih (2016) revealed that character education has become a significant issue in Indonesia since 2012. There are many crises of national character, especially among the younger generation, such as elementary school students (Abdi, 2018). Phenomena among elementary school students, such as bullying, cheating, skipping class, littering, being late for school, mocking friends, and inter-student violence, are still frequently reported in various mass media

(Abdi, 2018). In addition, the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) reported around 153 cases of violence against children in schools. Around 60 of these were cases of bullying by elementary school students (Koagouw, 2019). Alamsyah (2020) also found cases of brawls between students who used sharp weapons in the Sukabumi District. The illustration above shows that most character degradation problems occur among young people or the younger generation. From these cases, it was concluded that moral degradation is one of the many problems that will be faced along with the times. Therefore, it is essential to teach character education to children from an early age so that they can form good character.

The behavior carried out by students in the cases above shows deviant behavior in children. This deviation received special attention from the government. Therefore, the government includes character education in the curriculum, which must be taught in schools. Besides formal education at school, character education can also be taught at home. Character education values can be delivered through reading novels in their free time. One novel suitable for students is *Billy and the Minpins* by Roald Dahl. This novel contains many values of character education reflected by the characters in the story. This novel is an exciting reading material for children that also presents values of character education in characterizing the main character, Little Billy. Therefore, this study will discuss the values of character education in characterizing Little Billy as the novel's main character.

1.3 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study was on the values of character education reflected in the characterization of Little Billy as the main character in Roald Dahl's *Billy and the Minpins*. The intrinsic element of the novel was used to identify the characterization of Little Billy in Roald Dahl's *Billy and the Minpins* and to represent the value of character education in his characterization.

1.4 Research Question

Based on the research background above, two problems can be formulated as follows:

1. What are the characters of Little Billy in Roald Dahl's *Billy and the Minpins*?

2. What are the five core values of character education reflected in the characters of Little Billy in Roald Dahl's *Billy and the Minpins*?

1.5 Purpose of the Study

Related to the problems mentioned previously, the purposes of this study are:

1. To describe the characters of Little Billy in Roald Dahl's *Billy and the Minpin*s.

2. To describe the five core values of character education reflected in the characters of Little Billy in Roald Dahl's *Billy and the Minpins*.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

The researcher aims to clarify the definitions of the essential terms used in this study to prevent misunderstandings and ambiguity regarding the terms utilized. It is essential to define the terms of this research to clarify the issues discussed. The key terms are as follows:

1.6.1 Character as fictional personae in a novel

Gill (1995) defined a character is a person with their own identity, such as name, appearance, way of talking, action, behavior, and thoughts. In this study, characters are people who are told in the story and have their characteristics.

1.6.2 Characterization

Characterization reveals the character's personality, behavior, and feelings (Gill, 1995). The characterization can be identified through physical description, reactions, actions, thoughts, and dialogues (Gill, 1995).

1.6.3 Character as Traits

Lickona (1992) states that character as traits is part of an individual that determines a person's character, such as thoughts, feelings, and personality, to their choices.

1.6.4 Character Revelation

Meredith (1993) states that character revelation is the disclosure of the characters in the story, which reveal the characteristics of the characters in general, personally, physically, and emotionally.

1.6.5 Character Education Values

Lickona (2004) defined character education as a conscious effort to support individuals to understand, observe, and act on "the right stuff, " including values such as justice, honesty, courage, and compassion.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to be useful practically and theoretically in every aspect, both general and specific.

1.7.1 Theoretical Significance

The results of this study are expected to contribute to the field of learning literature and language learning.

1.7.1.1 Literature Learning

The significance of this research in learning literature is to provide additional information and knowledge about literary works, especially in children's literature. In addition, literary works can also help students to obtain information related to character values, other cultures, or societies in children's literature due to differences in cultural understanding, linguistic forms,

communication, and meanings (Hismanoglu, 2005; Krasniqi & Muhaxheri, 2019; Varita, 2017).

1.7.1.2 Language Learning

The significance of this research in language learning is that literature can teach students the four language skills and areas of language (Hismanoglu, 2005). Literature is used to teach writing, reading, listening, and speaking skills, and it can also be used to improve or increase students' vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation (Hismanoglu, 2005).

1.7.2 Practical Significance

By reading this study, the writers hope that it can provide benefits and more information for:

1.7.2.1   EFL Teachers

The results of this study are expected to contribute to teachers to assist them in utilizing literature as a medium for teaching English and instilling character values in schools. Sahr (2015) revealed that teachers could use literature to improve students' critical thinking. In addition, teachers can use children's literature, such as novels, to demonstrate moral and social values to help students learn about the values of character education (Hismanoglu, 2005; Sembiring, 2021; Turan & Ulutas, 2016). Besides that, Leonardi (2020) also states that children's literature can educate and entertain children. Thus, the teacher can use novels to motivate students to learn character education values.

1.7.2.2   EFL Students

This research is expected to benefit English students by helping them develop and improve their English language skills by reading novels. In addition, literary works such as novels can inspire students with the positive values of the story and can be applied to everyday life (Sembiring, 2021; Suarniti, 2019). According to Muassomah et al. (2020), the literature contains good values or moral messages that are useful for students in real life, and there are also various cultures and knowledge that are useful for EFL students (Muassomah et al., 2020). Thus, by reading novels, students are expected to increase their awareness of the importance of moral values.

1.7.2.3   Society

The results of this study are expected to help increase the public's views about the role of children's literature in instilling character education values in children. In this study, the focus is on characterizations in children's novels. In a novel, characterization is essential because it can help readers understand the behavior and character traits in the story (Coles, 2016). In addition, through literature, people can learn indirectly about the character values reflected by the characters in the novel. Thus, this research is expected to be helpful for the community, especially in building awareness of the importance of building children's character by utilizing literature.

1.7.2.4   Future Research

The results of this study are expected to contribute to future researchers as a reference for conducting research related to character characterizations, especially the values of character education in children's literature. Future researchers can get more information regarding similar analyses and understand the steps for conducting similar research through this research. This research can be used to find information not covered in previous studies.