CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains the explanation about the research background, problem identification, research scope, research questions, research objectives, research significance, and definition of key terms.

1.1   Research Background

In today's era, character needs to be one crucial thing that should be highlighted. According to Bialik, Bogan, Fadel, & Horvathova (2015), character comprises attitudes, behaviors, dispositions, mindsets, personalities, temperament, and social & emotional skills on an indivdual. Good character will lead individual to become a better citizens which certainly will result in a democratic society. Individuals who have noble character will be able to sort and choose to do the right things, and will be easier to get along in the society (Nucci, Narvaez, & Krettenauer, 2014). However, recent phenomena that occur significantly indicate a degradation of character, especially among the youth. This is in line with Lickona (1991), who states that there is moral decline in the youth generation which is indicated by the emergence of problems such as violence and vandalism, stealing, cheating, bullying, breaking the rules, disrespect for authority, bad language, etc. In accordance to Kemendiknas (2011), there are number of national issues that have happened lately, such as disorientation of Pancasila values, the decline in the value of ethics in teenagers, decreased awareness of the nation's culture, and threat of national disintegration.

The problem of character degradation certainly does not simply happen. There are various factors that influence this case, one of which is the rapid development of technology and globalization. According to Broto (2014), based on extensive survey conducted by UNICEF in partnership with the Ministry of Communicatin and Information, the Berkman Center for the Internet and Society, and Harvard University, it was found that approximately 30% of Indonesian internet users are children and teenagers. The survey results found that 98% of children and teenagers are only familiar to the internet, and 79.5% of them are active internet users. Artini (2019) mentions that without supervision, children and teenagers will be easily affected by the negative impacts of the internet, such as pornographic, violent, and other non-educating contents. According to Pagani, Fitzpatrick, Barnett, & Dubow (2010), Alghamdi (2017), and Mustafaoglu, Zirek, Yasaci, & Ozdincler (2018), the excessive use of technology in early childhood has been linked to a decline in the child's character.

Regarding this problem, it is necessary to cultivate character education in children as an effort to shape them becomes a virtuous individual who has noble character. Consequently, character education becomes focus of attention in Indonesian education nowadays. According to Prestwich (2004), character education is an attempt to cultivate goodness that should be owned by every individual. Another idea revealed by Althof & Berkowitz (2006) who state that character education is an approach to embed desirable habits in individuals, specifically students. In addition, Almerico (2014) mentions that character education is a process of teaching and training students to have appropriate

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manner and attitude which will lead them to be able to choose and do the right things.

Kemendiknas (2010) mentions that character education is a process of instilling and developing good manner and attitudes in students based on Pancasila. Character education encompasses moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action that should be possessed by students. According to Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia No. 20 Tahun 2003 concerning the national education system, the primary function and aim of national education is, to develop and shape the character and disposition of the nation's generation in order to become knowledgeable, responsible, and characterized human beings. Hence, in order to reach the goal of national education, Kemendikbud (2017) has formulated five core values of character education rooted in Pancasila that has been inserted in the curriculum and should be instilled in students, namely (1) Religiosity, (2) Nationalism, (3) Independence, (4) Cooperation, and (5) Integrity. These values are the result of revitalization of 18 values proposed by Kemendiknas (2010) which values covered are more complex. The previous eighteen values mostly cover universal values. However, the five core values proposed by Kemendikbud (2017) not only cover universal values, but also particular values that are in accordance with the existing situation and condition in Indonesia. Furthermoe, five core values of character education is a reduction of 18 values that aims to focus on strengthening the core character that must be instilled in students.

In an effort to instill the values of character education as proposed by Kemendikbud (2017), there are various ways that can be done by both teachers and parents; one of which is by utilizing literary works. Literary works are known

to bring number of benefits for its connoisseurs. It does not only present beauty in writing, but also knowledge and moral character that could lead the readers to be a better human being. This is supported by O'Sullivan (2004) who states that well-written literary work does not only present arts, but also morals or character education values. Moreover, Wellek & Warren (1948) state that literature can influence, persuade, and change the attitude of the readers. It always comprises worthwhile values to persuade the readers to do right things, and shaped good character in readers.

One type of literary work that is appropriate to be used as a medium to incalculate moral character in students is children's stories. O'Sullivan (2004) states that literary works, in this case children's stories, is one of the best and easiest ways to instill character education in children. Teachers and parents can use children's stories to form children's character and attitudes since it explores both good and bad values of life realities (Otten, 2002). By reading stories, there are a lot of moral messages that are presented through characters' behavior, characterization, etc. that could be obtained and taught to children. Children's stories can be said as one of the great media to succeed the government's mission in instilling character education in students.

One of the greatest children's story in which the story full of morals and character education values is E.B White's *Charlotte's Web* (1952). The reason for choosing this novel is because the novel is rich in educational values especially about friendship and sincerity that are highly suitable to be taught to students. The novel has been categorized as one of America's Top 100 greatest children's books selected by PBS's *The Great American Read*. Moreover, *Charlotte's Web* (1952)

has won several awards, such as Newbery Honor Award in 1953, The Children's Literature Legacy Award in 1970, and The George C. Stone Center for Children's Books Recognition of Merit Award in 1970. In addition, the novel has been adapted into a film in 2006 with the same title. The film won the 2006 Critics' Choice Awards for Best Live-Action Family Film, and ranked third in the Box Office. Both its book and film get positive reviews which mean that it is very suitable to be used as media for teaching character education.

Researches on moral or character education values contained in children's stories have been done several times. Giovani (2014) was done a research to find out moral values in cildren's book entitled *Charlie and The Chocolate Factory*. She found that the story comprises religious moral values, individual moral values, and social moral values. In addition, on the same topic, Potocarova (2017) has conducted a research to discover educational and moral messages in children's book entitled *The Little Prince*. The result showed that the story have universal messages which are suitable to be instilled for students in all ages; as well as the character exemplifies ethical values and problem solving skill. Likewise, a research was done by Sutari, Fadloely, & Setyarini (2014) to analyze character education values embodied in children's book entitled *Eight O'clock Tale*. The result showed that the values of honesty, discipline, responsibility, and team work were found in the story.

The previous researches above discuss the same issues, that is character education values in children's stories. However, the previous researches have not focused on the five core values of character education proposed by Kemendikbud (2017), but rather focused on the extent to which educational or moral values are

contained in children's stories. Besides, those researches do not analyze the characters in the story specifically. Therefore, this present research intends to identify five core values of character education as proposed by Kemendikbud (2017) in the characterizations of the main character in one of the best children's stories, E.B White's *Charlotte's Web* (1952).

The researcher chooses E.B White's *Charlotte's Web* (1952) because the story is full of friendship values, as well as other individual and social moral values, which are certainly crucial to be taught to children; considering the recent frequent cases of bullying done by students to their peers. Moreover, the book is included in Top 100 greatest children's book and lined up as the best children's story over the years. Besides, the language used is very light for children to read and is certainly loaded with positive values and norms. It is expected through reading E.B White's *Charlotte's Web* (1952), the readers will be inspired and emulated the positive values found in the story.

1.2 Problem Identification

Nowadays, there are heaps of problems occur due to the decline in moral and character of adolescents. It could be seen from the news broadcast in various media. There are number of crimes committed by underage adolescents. It shows the degenerate of adolescents' character which is caused by various factors. Many parties are responsible for this matter; not only parents, families, and schools, but also the government. The government has tried to instill character values by promoting the development of character education and inserting it in teaching and learning process in schools. In fostering students' character through teaching and learning process, there are enormous of media that can be utilized; one of which is

literary works, specifically children's stories. Children's stories are known not only offer arts, beauty, and imagination, but also have messages or moral education that implied in it; which is usually exemplified by the characters of the story. Like a story in E.B White's *Charlotte's Web* (1952) that are full of positive messages and moral education that can be taught to children since the early age in order to cultivate positive moral values and character education. It has meaning that by utilizing children's stories as media in instilling character education to students is an apposite effort.

1.3   Research Scope

This research focused on identifying moral character contained in E.B White's *Charlotte's Web* (1952), which is one of the best children's books. Specifically, the research identifies the characterizations of the main character in the story, who is Charlotte. This research is limited in identifying the characterizations of Charlotte as the main character and identifying the moral character especially five core values of character education proposed by Kemendikbud (2017) that are represented in the characterizations of Charlotte as the main character in E.B White's *Charlotte's Web* (1952).

1.4   Research Questions

Based on the elaboration above, there are two problems that can be formulated:

1. What are the characterizations of Charlotte as the main character in E.B White's *Charlotte's Web*?

2. What are the five core values of character education represented in the characterizations of Charlotte as the main character in E.B White's *Charlotte's Web*?

1.5   Research Objectives

Based on the statement above, this research has two purposes which could be stated as follows:

1. To identify the characterizations of Charlotte as the main character in E.B White's *Charlotte's Web*.

2. To identify the five core values of character education proposed by Kemendikbud (2017) that are represented in the characterizations of Charlotte as the main character in E.B White's *Charlotte's Web*.

1.6   Research Significance

Generally, significance of this research intends to describe how this research could give benefits for readers, both theoretically and practically.

1.6.1   Theoretical Significance

1.6.1.1 For Literary Learning

This research is hoped to be beneficial to give information and additional knowledge in literary learning, particularly about children's literature. Literature leads us to understand cultural diversity and human experience (Sorensen & Lehman, 1995). Children's novels is one part of children literature that mostly analyzed by researchers, especially the characterization which is one of the most important elements. Through

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analyzing the characterization of the characters, the readers will be helped in understanding and getting the meaning of the story better. Moreover, the readers will be assisted in catching moral values of the story. Furthermore, according to Hunt (2004), children's literature can bring its own pleasure for readers. Therefore, this current research is expected to increase people's interest in reading literature, especially children's literature.

1.6.1.2 For Language Teaching

Literature can be utilized as a basis of teaching. Literature, particularly children's literature can be used to teach language to children in their early age (Sorensen & Lehman, 1995). Literature is worthwhile in improving and mastering language skills and also enlarge students' vocabularies (Sorensen & Lehman, 1995).

1.6.1.3 For Society

The result of this research is hoped to be useful for society, especially parents in understanding the importance and the benefits of utilizing children's literature to teach the values of good manners to their children. According to Boratav (2013) as cited in Turan & Ulutas (2016), literary work is one of the elements that gives considerable influence in educating the society. Therefore, this present research is expected to be able to build and increse public awareness, especially parents about the

importance role of children's literature as one of the medium to shape children's character.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

1.6.2.1 For Students

This research is expected to be useful for students specifically English Foreign Language students in helping them to master four language skills, that are reading, writing, listening, and speaking. By utilizing literature in learning, in this case children's literature, indirectly there will be embedded reading habits in students (Sorensen & Lehman, 1995). Through reading children's stories, students will be helped in expanding their knowledge of vocabulary; thus their language skills gradually can be improved. In addition, positive values found in the story can be used as a reference to be emulated and applied in students' daily lives.

1.6.2.2 For Teachers

Literature in form of children's story certainly will be worthwile to be used as media in teaching and learning. Lestari (2013) states that literature can be used as learning media because it allows in making learning more interesting. Literature in form of children's story certainly will be worthwile to be used as media in teaching and learning. The teacher can utilized it to teach reading skill. Besides, teachers can teach and instill character education values loaded in the story to the students; so

that the mission of developing character education promoted by the Ministry of Education and Culture can be successful.

1.6.2.3 For Future Researchers

This research is hoped to be helpful as a reference for other researchers to conduct a new research related to the characterization of a character in a story especially about character education issues.

1.7   Definition of Key Terms

There are five key terms explained here in order to provide clear information and avoid misunderstanding about what this research is concerned about. The key terms are explained as follows.

1.7.1   Conceptual Definition

1.7.1.1 Character in Story

According to Gill (1995), character refers to a person in literary work that owns several characteristics given by the author. Character is the actors that involved in every single events in the story (Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson, 1999).

1.7.1.2 Character as a Trait

Lickona (2004) mentions that character is human moral quality such as honesty, kindness, responsibility, etc.

1.7.1.3 Characterization

According to Gill (1995), characterization is the personalities or depiction of the characters in a story created by the authors.

1.7.1.4 Character Values

As stated by Lickona (2004) that character values is a standard behavior that reflect goodness, such as justice, courage, honesty, wisom, self-control, love, etc.

1.7.1.5 Character Education

In accordance to Lickona (2004), character education is an effort in instilling values of virtue which is done through education.

1.7.2 Operational Definition

1.7.2.1 Character in Story

In this research, character refers to the animals involved in the Charlotte's Web story. The character observed in this research is Charlotte who is the main character in the story.

1.7.2.2 Character as a Trait

Character is a set of attitudes and behavior that denotes someone's personality.

1.7.2.3 Characterization

In this research, characterization is personality, attitudes, behavior, and traits owned by Charlotte as the main character in the story.

1.7.2.4 Character Values

In this research, character values refer to five core values proposed by the Ministry of Education and Culture that consist of religious, nationalist, independent, cooperation, and integrity.

1.7.2.5 Character Education

In this research, character education refers to the Ministry of Education and Culture's mission to produce youth generation who have noble character based on Pancasila.