

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The elements discussed in this unit are the background, the problem identification, the limitation, the statement of the problem, the purposes and the significances of this study.

1.1. Background of the Study

The implementation of 2013 curriculum in Indonesia was a start of the education that does not only emphasize on the pedagogical aspect, but also skill and behaviour aspect (Indonesia's Ministry of Education and Culture, 2014). Therefore, school is expected not to only be a place for students to learn knowledge but also as a place to develop useful skills and build good affective values. Salahudin et al (2018) also states that students go to school not only to get grades but to make them ready managing their life and facing the future. Furthermore, as the future members of society, students are expected to have values consist to foundational philosophical theory of Indonesia, the Pancasila.

However, if we dive through all the issues revolving the students in Indonesia, most are the result of lacking moral values such as being involved in mass conflict, doing violence, and harassment (Salahudin et al, 2018). Besides, since Indonesia varies in tribes, religions, races and factions, there are social problems that easily exist which are surely the result of unstable self-control (Widyahening & Wardhani, 2015). Hence, the pressing concern of the education

system in Indonesia is the receding moral values. Emphasizing character education is one of the answers to such problem.

According to Indonesia's Ministry of Education and Culture (2016), character education has been the main concern of the government of Indonesia since it is believed to be the key of the future. In 2010, the government of Indonesia has declared and implemented a policy of *Gerakan Nasional Pendidikan Karakter* (the national movement of character education) which was later continued, optimized, deepened, and expanded with *Gerakan Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter* or PPK (the movement for strengthening of character education) (Indonesia's Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017). This movement puts character values as the deepest educational dimension which makes character as the axis of the implementation of primary and secondary education. Five core values are declared as the priority of this movement which are religiosity, nationalism, independence, mutual-cooperation, and integrity. Thus, character education should not be second priority; in fact, it should be parents and teachers' focus on the children' educational process.

Considering the importance character education, teachers or parents should devise effective ways to instil the values within the students as early as possible. Nonetheless, creating learning environment where these values can flourish is not an easy feat, which entails innovative approaches and methods to be used in the classrooms (Turan & Ulutas, 2016). Chowdhury (2016) says that in enhancing character and moral values, teachers could implement some techniques such as role playing, drama, simulation, educational games, debate, discussion, project, group work, study tour, interview and brainstorming. However, there is one

simple and traditional method which has been effectively used to transfer values to children even before the school exist, which is literature (Edgington, 2002).

Why should literature be considered? Besides being a vehicle to transfer values, Edgington (2002) also says that the relevancy to the lives of children provided by literature is the primary reason for him to use it in character education. In line with that, Bohlin (2005) states that literature can give children an opportunity to immerse themselves in many kinds of story. They can experience different situations which lived by the characters in the story. Besides, teachers or parents are also able to expose children to linguistic features like metaphors, dictions, and figurative languages used in human's daily communication (Widyahening & Wardhani, 2015). Moreover, Piscayanti (2010) says that in learning a language, the use of books of literature is effective as the source or core material since it provides students with real, useful, and meaningful language learning. Furthermore, what is more suitable for children rather than children's literature?

Children literature is literature that gains children's interest since the literature itself relates to children's range of life experience and somehow is told in the language they understand (Stoodt, 1996). With it, teachers or parents could give children an opportunity to go inside a moral journey of a life experience with various desires, conflicts, trials, and triumphs of characters (Bohlin, 2005). From the journey in the stories, children could have the exposures about characters way more intense since they can relate to the stories. Characters in literature revealed as the characters overcome their conflicting desires which later will inspire the students as they read the story and will affect them (Bohlin, 2005).

Considering the effectiveness of literature in fostering good values within the students and the role of characters in the relevance of a story, this study attempts to identify a character of a children's literary work which is interesting and relevant for children especially in term of teaching them character education. The character which is considered is Jesse Oliver Aarons, Jr. (Jesse Aarons) from the legendary Newbery Medal Winner, *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson.

The task for selecting good literature for character education is surely a tough duty for parents or teachers. Almerico (2014) says that, one consideration of choosing a good story is the wide availability or accessibility of the book. As a popular children's book, *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson is available in print and online. This book also had been awarded with *The Newbery Medal*, which is an award for most distinguished author whose book is recognized with excellence across some criteria (Schneider, 2016). Moreover, a study done by Rajab and Purbani (2015) shows that this book is suitable for the English proficiency level of students in grade nine (junior high school) to grade twelve (high school). In addition, the researcher also found that this book has varied character education values and can also be utilized by English teacher as a teaching media since it contains monologue and dialogue examples with transactional and interpersonal expressions.

A story containing about the death of a friend might not be pleasing for children. However, O'Sullivan (2004) claims that the strong character with varied traits will ease the involvement of character education in the study. In line with that, Almerico (2014) states that the chosen books must have engaging characters

who work, live, play, survive and thrive as the values they possess. Moreover, it is more effective if children can relate to the traits of the character (O'Sullivan, 2004). Jesse Aarons would not be more perfect as he had struggles in which many children could relate such as conflict about family, friendship, school, love, dream and more.

Previously, some researchers had done several analyses on both the book, *Bridge of Terabithia*, and the main character, Jesse Aarons. However, none had focused on further revealing the values of character education on Jesse Aarons' characterization, especially concentrated on the values proposed by Indonesia's Ministry of Education and Culture in 2016. Hence, the novelty of this study relies on revealing the values of character education within Jesse Aarons' characterizations in *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson focusing on the five core values proposed by Indonesia's Ministry of Education and Culture (2016).

1.2. Problem Identification

Today's education system has been emphasizing in not only pedagogical aspects but also skills and good affective values for students to gain at schools. It is a convenient implementation since there are a lot of issues done by students which are the result of misbehaviour and lack of self-control. As members of society which varies in tribes, religions, race and factions, students should have good values within themselves. One way to deliver character education to students which can be used by teachers or parents is by utilizing literature. Students will receive exposures of the characterizations of characters which will

affect them in their life. As the one of most famous literary work in twentieth century, this study chooses a children's literary work entitled *Bridge to Terabithia* to be analysed. The character that is focused on is Jesse Aarons who is the main character of the story. This study aims to reveal the values of character education that are reflected by the character of Jesse Aarons based on the five core values proposed by Indonesia's Ministry of Education and Culture (2016).

1.3. Limitation of the Study

The limitation of this study is on the character education values found on the characterizations of Jesse Aarons as the main character in *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson. Hence, this study focuses on revealing the characterization of Jesse Aarons and finding the reflected five core values proposed by Indonesia's Ministry of Education and Culture (2016).

1.4. Statements of the Problem

There are two statements those can be drawn from the background of the study, the problem identification, and the limitation of the study, namely:

- 1) What are the characterizations of Jesse Aarons in *Bridge to Terabithia*?
- 2) What are the values of character education reflected in the characterizations of Jesse Aarons in *Bridge to Terabithia* that belong to five core values proposed by Indonesia's Ministry of Education and Culture (2016)?

1.5. Purposes of the Study

Based on the statement of the problems mentioned before, the purposes of this study are as follows:

- 1) To identify the characterization of Jesse Aarons in *Bridge to Terabithia*.
- 2) To identify the values of character education reflected in the characterizations of Jesse Aarons in *Bridge to Terabithia* that belong to five core values proposed by Indonesia's Ministry of Education and Culture (2016).

1.6. Significances of the Study

The significances of this study could be drawn to theoretical and practical contribution of this study. Therefore, there are theoretical significances and practical significances.

1.6.1. Theoretical Significances

The significances of this study that are related to the theoretical contributions are:

- a) Character education

The result of this study is expected to contribute in the efforts of the implementation on character education for Indonesian children or students as the young generations who take roles in Indonesia's society which values in diversity. It also supports the Gerakan Nasional (National Movement) about character education in school

proposed by Indonesia's Ministry of Education and Culture since 2010.

b) Children Literature

This study is expected to contribute in the future studies which are relating to the analysis of children literature especially children's book. The previous studies are beneficial for future researcher who is interested in this topic of study. One of previous study on children literature is one done by Persulesy, Emzir, and Rahmat (2018) using qualitative analysis towards *Oliver Twist by Charles Dickens* to analyse the social values within, which is one of the researcher of this study's source of thoughts. Hence, this study is also forecasted to contribute for upcoming study.

1.6.2. Practical Significances

This study is expected practically have significances for:

a) Teacher

This study is expected to increase the interest of teachers to utilize children story especially literature as a teaching media. Because by using literary work as, teacher can deliver values of character education and while at the same time teaching about pedagogical aspect. As the result of study done by Turan and Ulutas (2016), it showed that the teachers found the use of children literature is useful and effective.

b) Parents

As children or students spend most of their time at home with their parents and family, parents should aware that they have big roles in children's cognitive and affective development. Parents could not only rely on schools to fulfil this obligation. Just as McElmeel (2002) says, there should be parents' support for successful character education initiatives because the key for its success is not only duties for schools or civic organization. Hence, through literature, parents could provide a convenient media for students to improve their selves' quality. This study is expected to show that children literature could be used as a media to aim that.

c) Students

This study is expected to be an alternative for children in understanding the values of character education which are reflected through children's story. According to Almerico (2014), students could recognize traits such as respect, honesty, courage, kindness, and interesting aspects of the around them are real when teachers use literature as media for teaching character education concepts. Through the comprehension of values from the character education in the children's story, children or students will be ready to have role in society and as a member of society with good values so that they will be a valuable human resource.

d) Other Researchers

This study is expected to be useful for future researchers who are interested in conducting similar study such analysis on children literature and analysis of character education on characters in the books.

