

Digital Comics of Minangkabau Folklore as Learning Media of Character-Building in Middle School

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ABSTRACT

This paper is part of the research which is motivated by the importance of character education in schools, especially junior high level. The initial assumption is that junior high school students are at a tumultuous age in the process of finding self-identity, thus, they are easily influenced by visual factors such as media viewing, the surrounding environment, and image technology which are currently very easily accessible. This mechanism makes children at that age tend to be vulnerable to insertion by things that are inappropriate which can interfere with their maturity process. To prevent this, one method that is often used is to conduct character learning. Character learning requires interesting media therefore the learning process becomes enjoyable and not too dogmatic. The offer of this research is a digital comic of the Minangkabau folklore. Digital comics of Minangkabau folklore are predicted to be easily accepted by students if they have adapted to technological developments. In addition, digital comics from the Minangkabau folklore are also expected to inspire the students to absorb local values and wisdom in them.

Keywords: digital comic, Minangkabau folklore, characterized learning.

1. INTRODUCTION

Character learning activity is a must in all forms of learning. However, this activity requires specific strategy at the juvenile level, especially in junior high schools. This strategy and development aims to achieve the intended learning to the formation of good character can be achieved. The intended characters include stout, competitive, noble, moral, tolerant, mutual cooperation, patriotic, dynamic developing, science and technology oriented based on faith and piety to God Almighty as well as Pancasila. Character learning in schools requires special strategies. Therefore, the strategy must be prepared by referring to several components such as strategies in the implementation (process) of learning, characterizing good character in every activity in school, extra activities and curricular activities.

Zainun [1] defines character learning as an activity of planting and applying values (characters) to school members which includes knowledge, awareness or will, and commitment to perform noble values to God Almighty, themselves, fellow environment, and nation in order to become a perfect human beings. The formation of character in students is something that must be implemented to face the challenges of future education. Character learning implemented in all levels of education is expected to give birth to a good society, who is able to appreciate the relationships between community members and respecting the norms of behavior that prevail in society, therefore, creating a harmonious life in the midst of differences that are owned by these community groups.

One of learning media that can be developed for character learning is literary works [2]. In every literary work certainly contains multifarious values, such as moral values, educational values and any other values [3] Additional values in question include (1) hedonic values which means that literature gives direct pleasure to the reader, (2) artistic value, that is, manifesting one's skills, (3) cultural value, a literary work containing a relationship between civilization or society and culture, (4) the value of religious and education in literary works, containing teachings relevant to educational ethics and religion, as well as having the values of character education as a footprint for someone in showing his/her in society.

Besides containing scholastic values, literary works also contain moral messages that are beneficial in shaping the character of teenagers [4]. The values of character education can be explored in the content of literary works, including Minangkabau folklore which belongs to the category of oral literature. This is in line with the results of research conducted by Waryanti [5]; Hapsari [6]; Hermansyah, [7]; and Wulandari [8] which states that Minangkabau children's literature have great potential to be a good character-planting medium for children and young people. Through literary works, the targeted audiences not only get some pleasure but also learn exemplary values from numerous characters in the story.

Much like literary work, comics is a common medium or a tool in communicating some ideas in the modern era. According to Darmawan [9] comics is a medium for storytelling or expression with compiled picture-language. Furthermore, Darmawan explained that, in comics, it is more important to have a story and drawing language than just mastering drawing skills. The rationale above

emphasize that drawing skills are different from the language of drawing (graphic prose) or what is often referred to as visual language. McCloud [10] explains that comics is drawing images that are aligned in sequences intentionally intended to contain information and/or produce aesthetic responses in the reader. Based on those notions, comics generally contain [9] several core elements such as images and panels.

Cohn [11] mentions that visual language is the structure of image sequences. Furthermore, Cohn explained that visual language is a systematic pattern in representing images and structures which unifies the sequence of images. Visual language is influenced by many cultures as seen from the differences in the visual language of American comics with Japanese comics both from the drawing style and the sequential pattern. Darmawan [9] simply mentions that the language of images is a system of visual symbols to convey certain information or messages. The language of images in comics uses special drawing languages. Cohn [11] further explains that visual language does not fully mimic reality or actual circumstances. Visual language creates from human minds that is spoken visually. Therefore, to get a thorough understanding, it must go through a cognitive approach especially in understanding the composition of comic images.

This research argues that the utilization of digital comics adapted from Minangkabau folklore (literary work) is considered potential as an interesting medium in character learning for young generation. Since the stories contained in the comics are stories that are close to the daily life of children, especially junior high school students. This paper explains how the use of the Minangkabau folklore combined with digital comic in the character learning towards junior high school students in Padang city.

2. METHOD

Oral tradition (or oral literature) also belongs to one genre of children's literature [12]. This piece originates from the habit of a mother telling her children various interesting stories during bedtime. However, the story told to children according to Nurgiyantoro [12] should be relevant to the world of children and relevant to their age and mental development. In this connection, traditional literature is also considered important in its presence in the world of children's literature in Indonesia, which in recent times has been forgotten and abandoned [13]. In addition, traditional literature is a medium of expression and existence to express various patterns of community life. The messages that can be captured in traditional literature are values that also exist in the supporting community of that literature [3].

In the activities of comics-making of Minangkabau folklore, several theories about comics are applied, especially by Cohn [11] and Darmawan [9] which states that comics visual language has a sequential nature, i.e. the pictures that are arranged deliberately will form a simple narrative. Eisner (in Darmawan [9]) states that comics is framing time activity. Eisner explained that the panels in comics were actually like "boxing the action". The

particular action is portrayed and put into a box (panel), arranged with another panel containing other actions.

Eisner (in Darmawan [9]) also stated that the visual language in comics feels more "filmic" in narrating the scene. The characteristics that are identified are as follows (1) The filmic effect is awakened when comics emphasize the element of motion rather than the element of narrative or textual speech. (2) The element of motion is clearly captured when the panel functions as a "static camera" with figures or objects in the moving panel. (3) The movements or gestures of the characters depicted in comic panels can show the emotions or stories

This research was conducted with a qualitative approach using an inductive design model. The qualitative approach is considered relevant for this study because the objectives, processes and data are verbal, including reference to the theory of fiction, semiotic, and stylistical analysis that underlies the analysis with qualitative content. Operationally, this research also applies the principles of the content analysis method, more specifically the qualitative content analysis method. This method generally used to understand the symbolic messages of the Minangkabau folklore. The symbolic message can be obtained from analyzing the intrinsic elements, especially the speech and actions of the characters and the underlying events contained in the Minangkabau folklore.

The data source of this research were the digital comics of the Minangkabau folklores. Next, this type of comic is utilized as a character learning media in junior high school (SMP) in Padang city. The product of research that will be generated is a characterized-learning model with digital comic media sourced from Minangkabau folklore. Later, the product will be published in the form of scientific journals, modules and reference books.

After the data is fully collected, the first step of data analysis is to develop a model using digital comics.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Related Exploration of Intrinsic Elements in Comic-making of Minangkabau Folklore

While transforming Minangkabau folklore into comics, the first thing to complete is analyzing the intrinsic elements contained in the selected folklore. Then, choose the elements which can and will be highlighted visual aspects in the comics. The intrinsic elements in Minangkabau folklore is analogous to the intrinsic elements in general prose. Both of them contain characters and characterizations, plot and events, setting, theme and message, point of view and language style.

In Minangkabau folklore, characters and characterizations are important elements that determine the timeline of the story. Selected characters are responsible for delivering certain values that will be conveyed by the narrator. This value sourced from the wisdom of the people who underlie

the birth of the folklore. Some of the characters contained in folklore illustrate the values of character education which has the potential to be used for moral learning.

Apart from the figures and characterizations, another intrinsic element that can be explored is the plot. Plot generally serves to contain events that describe the attitudes and behavior of characters. The main values contained in the folklore will be reflected in the events that are conveyed. After that, the plot and the intended values are wrapped in an interesting language structure. With this technique, young readers or listeners will be interested in reading or hearing the story.

Besides these two elements, the setting and atmosphere in the folklore also play an equally important role. The background visualization will support the characterization of a number of important figures and will make the values carried by the story easily captured.

Point of view in folklore is greatly depends on who is telling the story. In this case, the perspective in folklore

has little difference from folklore in modern prose. Since in Minangkabau folklore, it is generally conveyed oral way. Thus, the point of view will be adjusted to who is telling the story. In modern prose, point of view is generally stagnant and does not vary. Since from the literary work was created, published, and read by any reader, the point of view has remained the same.

Themes and messages are intrinsic elements in literary works that are no less important than other elements. However, these two things cannot be visualized like characterizations, events and settings.

Based on preliminary analysis, the intrinsic elements that can be explored into visual form are characterizations, plot, and setting. The reason is these three elements are more likely to be visualized than the other intrinsic elements in the story. Here are some fragments from comics of Minangkabau folklore.



Fig. 1 Footage of the opening scene of a Minangkabau folklore comics

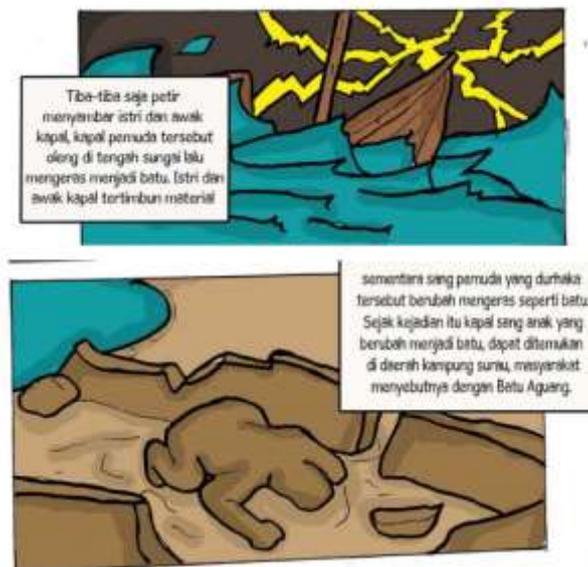


Fig. 2 Footage of the climax scene of a Minangkabau folklore comics

3.2. Formation of Characterized Learning Module through Minangkabau folklore Comics

The comic-based character learning module is a module that contains a set of planned learning experiences and designed to help or facilitate students in mastering learning goals that have been set. The steps taken in the preparation of characterized learning module through the comics of Minangkabau folklore are (1) reviewing the curriculum, (2) determining learning objectives, (3) determining comics in accordance with learning objectives, (4)

preparing teaching materials assisted by comic media, and (5) compiling learning modules.

Based on the results of curriculum analysis, the material selected in implementation of characterized learning module through the comics of Minangkabau folklore is learning to write fantasy texts. After the curriculum is analyzed, the authors design characterized learning through comic that will be completed. This is illustrated in a learning module. In the learning module there are two learning activities. Both of these activities are understanding texts and producing texts. The stage of understanding the text, can be seen in Figure 3.



Fig. 3 Footage of Learning Module (stage of understanding content of the text)

First, the students read characterized learning modules through comic media. Students observe one of the comics in the module in groups and give their response after reading the comic (example: comment about the character's character, plot, setting, etc.). The stage of producing text can be seen in the module snippet in figure 4.

Students will learn to write some texts while reading Minangkabau folklore comics that contain character education. Next, students are guided to understand fantasy text material. At the end of the presentation, a series of writing performance tests were given by attaching the assessment rubric. Through this mechanism, students are expected to be able to measure their skill level in writing and producing story texts.

4. CONCLUSION

The 2013 curriculum provides a new atmosphere in the realm of education in Indonesia. Some adjustments require teacher to be more creative and innovate in learning. One of the innovations that can be applied in learning is through the use of media in accordance with the age of students and the development of the times, but still incorporate the values of virtuous local culture and wisdom. This research offers an update on comic-based character education learning media as an expedient option. Digital comic from Minangkabau children's stories is believed as an innovative learning media to support the learning process of character in school. In addition, this media can also be serve in terms of learning to write text in junior high schools, both in understanding texts and reproducing texts.

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