THE FUNCTIONS OF FILMS FOR CHILDREN AS LEARNING MEDIA IN CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Children's interest in learning should be continuously enhanced. Selecting suitable learning media is very important to support the increased interest in learning. A film can be one of the learning media that offers advantages for achieving a quality children's education process. This study aims to discuss the functions of films for children in children's education. The method used is descriptive qualitative with literary studies techniques. The study results show that there are three functions of films for children as learning media, namely film as a media for language learning, film as a media for character building, and film as a media for introducing multiculturalism. Film can stimulate children's imagination so that children can think actively and creatively. However, the functions of films are inseparable from the role of parents and teachers in selecting films and methods or techniques for presenting films so that children remain active learners.

INTRODUCTION

Children's interest in learning is difficult to increase. Their willingness to continue to develop themselves must be driven by external factors that force parents and teachers to continue to think creatively. Books seem old-fashioned to children today. Technological developments make them close to the digital world. So many electronic books (e-books) began to appear. Digitization of books continues to be carried out for educational purposes and to provide easy access for anyone, especially children as students.

The transfer of media from books to digital is not only in the form of text but also in the form of films. Transfer of media is common in literary works because they have the necessary characteristics as an aspect of a film. Literary works with characters, dialogues, and plots are the main aspects of the film. Meanwhile, literary works are one of the subject matters that can support children in learning, especially learning language and culture. It makes parents and educators like teachers start to look at the film as an alternative media for delivering learning material. They see opportunities through films to increase student interest because watching films can increase student interest and motivation (Stempleski, 1992).

Champoux describes several advantages of using film as a media for learning, including increasing student interest because film is a comfortable and familiar media. Films are also an economical substitute for field trips because students get the same experience by watching films. It supports those films can go beyond books as windows to the world. In addition, films can hone students' analytical skills, help them think critically, and provide cognitive and affective experiences. This advantage further supports film as one of the learning media (Champoux, 1999).

Learning media is one of the essential aspects of teaching-learning activities (Cunningsworth, 1995). Learning media is anything that can send messages or information to stimulate students' thoughts, feelings, concerns, and interests in learning (Munir, 2016). Learning media can help students understand more deeply the subject matter delivered. It shows that teachers should use media or teaching tools when giving material to students (Harmer, 2001). Three types of learning media can be used in teaching: audio, visual, and audio-visual. Film is included in the form of audio-visual media, which means that film is a media that can be heard and seen. It gives added value to film as a learning media.

The use of film as a learning media has functions in teaching and learning activities. This study aims to describe these functions to add references for teachers in improving the educational process. In addition, this research can also be a solution to increase students' or children's interest in learning. It is crucial to do because children are the nation's successors, so interest in learning must be continuously increased to achieve one of the nation's ideals, which is to educate children of the nation.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method by observing children's films that have categories for children or with parental guidance. This category already has safe and familiar standards in the world of children. The data collection technique begins by selecting films that have value in the world of education and can show valuable functions in education for children. The second step is to review the literature on the function of film as a learning media. Then, it is followed by the third step, which is the classification of films based on the functions of films as learning media. The last step is the presentation of data.

DISCUSSION

Film as a learning media has been proven to attract children's interest in learning. The advantages of using films in teaching and learning activities can offer useful functions in children's education. Here are these functions.

As Media for Language Learning

Film as a language-learning media has been proven by many previous researchers. For example, children's films that use English are beneficial for improving basic language skills, such as writing skills which have been proven in a study entitled *Film as Media Used by Teachers to Teach Writing for Tertiary Level Students* (Ardayati, 2018), Listening skills in research entitled *The Use of "Inside Out" Film to Improve Students' Listening Comprehension* (Muna, 2019), and Speaking skills in a study entitled *The Effects of Using Movies on Students' Narrative Speaking Ability at SMAN 9 Pekanbaru* (Pratiwi, 2015). These studies discuss how films can improve basic language skills, even though it is English language skills in this context. However, this does not rule out the possibility that film media can be applied to learning other languages.

As an audio-visual media, film helps children understand language more easily. Language skills significantly affect the ability to communicate. Films provide things that support good communication, such as cultural information, which is not only verbal language, accents, and ways of speaking but also body language (Borra, 2006). It makes film an ideal resource covering real and varied situations for students learning a second or foreign language (Khan, 2015). Learning language through films can also develop the vocabulary of children. Vocabulary selection in certain situations helps children to express themselves appropriately when encountering similar situations.

In their growth period, children also tend to imitate how people talk around them, including how the characters speak in the movies they watch. Many children have a different dialect from the people around them because of the influence of the film. This phenomenon further supports those films have an impact on language learning. Imitation of pronunciation can make children able to speak correctly. It is common for students who are learning a second or foreign language. However, this can also help young children in their mother tongue learning phase. Film also can be an alternative media in helping children who experience speech delay.

As a popular product, film is often a topic of conversation. In terms of speaking ability, children can also make films as a topic to develop these abilities by retelling films after they have watched them. Retelling can also train children's memory and focus on attention to detail, which is essential in everyday life. Children's speech skills can also develop by paying attention to the dialogues or expressions used by the characters in the film. Many different expressions can be used in the same situation, and these expressions can be found in films.

Just as film can develop the ability to produce language, such as speaking, writing skills can also be improved. Retelling can be done in text form. In addition, children can also practice writing reviews and giving their opinions on the films they watch. Children can also be introduced to storylines and story-building elements through films, such as themes, characters, and dialogues. They can also be guided in writing stories that can be drawn from experience as well as from their imagination. Children's imagination abilities can be honed by stimulating through films. Then, they can put it into writing in the form of a story, and this can help improve children's writing skills.

Films for children usually use simple language that children can easily understand. New terms may also be contained in the film, but this is good because it can add new vocabulary for children. The role of parents and teachers is vital in explaining the intent and meaning of these words.

As Media for Character Building

Character building is one of the focuses of education. Children are individuals who are still developing themselves and must continue to be directed to build their character. The role of parents and teachers is essential so that children can have good personality following the values and norms in society. It is necessary to make life better so that individuals must be able to respect, be responsible, think wisely, practice discipline, have courage, practice kindness, and have pure thoughts (Lickona, 1997). To realize these things, character building is needed, which is a way of educating children to learn good morals through family, school, community, and the country (Sudrajat, 2011).

Films can be a media to support children character-building. People usually do not realize that films can indirectly influence the audience (Adi, 2011). Much evidence shows that films can impact a person's attitude (Cortes, 2000). It makes films have a power that can influence the audience, including children. Children's films usually consist of story development, in which children gain achievements through endeavors that inspire the audience (Indriati et al., 2021). Films like this can help children to develop good personality traits, such as courage, responsible, and thinking wisely.

Children's films also usually have a moral message that can help improve children's character building. Like children's literature, which is usually in the form of narrative texts, films can be seen as another dimension capable of showing story-building elements that are very useful for building children's character. One of the studies that discusses the moral messages in films is research entitled *Values of Character Education in Disney's Animated Featured "The Good Dinosaur"* by Peter Shon (Indriati et al., 2021). This research shows a moral message conveyed by children's films that follow the curriculum in Indonesia. The moral messages obtained include honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creative, independent, curiosity, love of the motherland, respect for achievement,

communicative, love of peace, sociality, and responsibility. Personality or attitude like this is perfect for children as the basis of their character.

In addition, another study entitled *American Films as An Educational Tool for Character Development of Teenagers* (Rudy, 2022) confirmed that film can be a learning media for developing character. The research also adds several personalities that can be taught to children, including attention, politeness, solidarity, and kindness. These personalities are very good for children. It proves that film can be a media that strongly supports character building. Even in the context of education in schools, films strongly support character formation in schools according to the personality selection set by the government in character education programs in schools (Nugrahani, 2017).

Parents and teachers can also choose children's films adapted from folklore closely related to moral messages. Films like this also have advantages because the characters raised in the moral messages follow the values of the local community. Character building in children can encourage children to understand how to act in society. They can position themselves and behave well in any situation, and to make this happen, the role of parents and teachers is needed, as well as the selection of appropriate and interesting media, such as film, as a learning media for character building.

As Media for Introducing Multiculturism

There is no doubt that films introduce culture. The topic of culture often appears as the main topic in films. It provides an opportunity for film as a learning media in introducing culture to children. Children's films adapted from folklore can certainly be a media for introducing local culture. In addition, national children's films also present a variety of cultures. Not just one culture, but many cultures, as is the Indonesian motto, namely *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*, which means unity in diversity. It is very important to introduce culture to children so that children know, understand, and respect each other across cultures. Children's films such as *Si Unyil*, which was famous in its time, or animated films such as *Budi* or *Adit dan Sopo Jorwo*, provide much information regarding Indonesian culture.

Furthermore, film for children from Malaysia, *Upin dan Ipin*, is also very popular among children. Diverse cultures are also highlighted in this film, such as the presence of Chinese character, Indian, Malaysian, and even Indonesian. There is diversity in film for children. It makes the film can be a reference and media in teaching about multi-culture.

The topic of race and culture has also caught the attention of famous children's film producers, such as Disney. Previously, Disney always featured a white character as the main character. At the end of the 20th century, Disney began to display main characters with skin color (Khairunnisa, 2018). The film *Aladdin* features characters from the Middle East; the film *Pocahontas* features Indian characters; the film *Mulan* features Chinese characters; and the film *Princess and the Frog* features African-American characters. These films are just a series of Disney films that raise cultural topics and feature characters from various ethnicities.

The concept of multi-culture, which discusses ethnicity and culture, is fundamental to be introduced to children. Through films, children can understand diversity better. Understanding diversity is very important because Indonesia, even the whole world, has a different culture. Children must understand that every culture is unique and must respect these differences. It can also be used as a step to avoid cases of racism by eliminating the potential for children to commit acts of discrimination.

Both formal and informal education are needed to avoid cases of racism. The use of media in introducing multi-culture can be a fun way to teach children about the topic. Movies can influence children in understanding of the concept of gender, class, and ethnicity (Malfroid, 2009). Parents and

teachers must teach these concepts well. The role of parents and teachers to guide children in understanding these conceptions through films is very important to avoid misinterpretations and misconceptions.

The introduction of multi-culture to children must be followed by an introduction to their own culture. Children must understand their own culture and respect their culture. So, if anyone asks about it, they can explain it well. A good explanation indeed leads to respect and appreciation. In addition, the introduction of multiculturalism is also prone to influencing children to think other cultures are better than their own. So, the introduction of their own culture must have a solid foundation. Parents and teachers must guide children to understand that all cultures are egalitarian. It is crucial to avoid a sense of superiority that might arise from the process of introducing culture through film.

Film as a learning media has a supporting function in children's education. However, this function does not mean that films can replace the role of educators. The use of film as a learning media must still be supported by the role of parents and teachers. The selection of films must be adjusted to the age standards of the children, the standards of community values and norms, as well as cultural standards. Parents and teachers must choose films that children can easily understand so that children can absorb knowledge optimally.

The selection of films must also be adjusted to the children's level. The film's duration is very important to note so that children stay focused and do not lose concentration while watching it. Long-duration films usually make children easily bored. The choice of duration is also important, mainly when films are used in school. The duration of the film must be adjusted to the duration of learning in class. Short films can be an alternative in this case. While films with a rather long duration can be used when studying at home with parents.

Parents' and teachers' creativity is also required to develop children's critical thinking skills. Parents and teachers must provide children feedback so they can continue learning actively. Methods and techniques in presenting films as learning media must be considered. Parents and teachers can ask questions related to the topic or learning material contained in the film. It is to avoid passive learning, which makes children only recipients of lessons. For this reason, it is essential to keep children active by watching films.

CONCLUSION

The use of film as a learning media has functions in teaching and learning activities. These functions include film as a media for learning a language, film as a media for building character, and film as a media for introducing multiculturalism. As a media for learning a language, films can provide examples of correct pronunciation, display expressions that can be used in certain situations, and show how to speak with a certain accent or dialect, to display body language, which is very important in the context of learning a language. As a media for character development, film can provide moral messages that are useful for building a personality that follows societal values and norms. Meanwhile, as a media for introducing multiculturalism, films present characters of various ethnicities and cultures so that children can understand that there is diversity in the world and respect that diversity.

These functions support the educational process for children. The use of film media can make children interested in learning. However, the role of parents and teachers remains crucial in selecting films and determining methods or techniques in the learning process. Even though the film itself can make children active in thinking because of the stimulation for imagination, parents and teachers still must have the creativity to make children actively participate in producing actions, such as concluding

stories from films or giving opinions on topics that are discussed. They learn so that children can practice the lessons they get from the film.

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