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Psychosastral Study On The Emotional Response Of Elementary School Children After Reading Short Stories

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Abstract. The background of this research is that the relationship between readers and a work cannot be underestimated. Emotional response and storyline in a work often become something interesting to discuss. This study aims to understand the emotional responses of elementary school students after reading short stories.The approach used is psycho-literary. The research was conducted at SDN Rahayu, Tasikmalaya Regency, with 30 students from grades IV and V as subjects. Data collection included observation, interviews, and questionnaires to identify children's emotional responses. Data were analyzed using a thematic approach. After the short story reading, some learners gave emotional responses in the form of joy, sadness, empathy, and fear. 10 learners in Class IV responded sad, empathy and fear, while the remaining 5 responded happy. In Class V, 8 responded happy, and empathy, while 7 responded sad and fear. The findings of this study indicate the importance of using short stories in literature learning in elementary schools as a tool to support children's emotional development.

Keywords: Psycho-literary studies, short story, emotional

INTRODUCTION

Children's literature, especially short stories, plays an important role in children's emotional and psychological development (Oktaviana et al., 2019). In the context of education, especially at the elementary school level, short stories are used as a tool to support children's learning and character development (Blodgett & Lanigan, 2018; Domingo & Garganté, 2016; Lu & Liu, 2015; Papadakis et al., 2016; Pulimeno et al., 2020). Psycho-literature, as a branch of literary psychology, focuses on how literary works affect the psychological state of their readers. This study aims to explore how short stories influence the emotional responses of elementary school children (Ristianti et al., 2023).

Primary school children are at a critical stage of development, where they begin to understand and manage their own emotions (Domingo & Garganté, 2016; Jones & Doolittle, 2017; Low et al., 2015). According to the theory of emotional development, as proposed by Erik Erikson, children at primary school age are at the stage of industry versus inferiority (Saepurokhman & Sumayana, n.d.). At this stage, children begin to develop a sense of competence and confidence through interaction with their environment, including through reading such as short stories. Through the characters and stories in short stories, children can see a reflection of themselves, learn how to face challenges, and develop empathy for others.

Short stories as a form of short literature have an interesting structure and are easily understood by children (Ningrum, 2020). Simple plots, easily identifiable characters, and clear moral messages make short stories an effective medium for teaching values and developing

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emotional skills (Unimed & Sinabariba, 2017). For example, short stories about friendship, courage, or honesty can provide children with concrete examples of how to deal with similar situations in their own lives.

Research on the influence of literature on children's emotional development has shown positive results. A study by Koss and Teale (2009) found that children's literature, including short stories, can help children develop the ability to empathize and understand the feelings of others. Through identification with the characters in the story, children can learn to manage their own emotions and become more sensitive to the emotions of others (Siregar et al., 2023).

In the context of psycho-literature, this study will use a qualitative approach to understand children's emotional responses after reading short stories (Winarni et al., 2021). This approach allows researchers to explore children's subjective experiences in depth. By observing, interviewing and collecting data through questionnaires, this study will identify patterns of emotional responses that emerge after children read certain short stories.

In addition, this study will also explore differences in emotional responses based on gender and grade. Previous research has shown that there are differences in the way boys and girls manage their emotions. According to Chaplin and Aldao (2013), girls tend to be more expressive in expressing their emotions, while boys tend to be more restrained. Thus, this study will see if these differences also appear in emotional responses to short stories.

Similarly, this study will consider differences based on class. Children from different grades may have different experiences and backgrounds, which may affect the way they respond to stories (Kotilainen, 2021). For example, children from higher grades may be more familiar with reading and have a richer vocabulary, which may affect their comprehension and emotional response to short stories.

In education, especially in primary schools, short stories are often used as teaching materials to develop reading and comprehension skills (Annisya & Baadilla, 2022). However, their use can also be expanded to develop children's emotional and social skills (Jadmiko et al., n.d.). Teachers can choose short stories that fit a particular theme, such as friendship, courage, or tolerance, and use the stories as a starting point for class discussions on these values.

Furthermore, utilizing short stories in teaching can also help children develop critical and creative thinking skills (Bukit et al., 2022). By encouraging children to think about the motivations and actions of the characters in the story, teachers can help them develop analytical and reflective skills. For example, after reading a short story, teachers can ask children to write a different ending or describe the main character's feelings in a particular situation. However, to maximize the benefits of short stories in children's emotional

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development, it is important for teachers and parents to understand how children respond to stories. This study aims to provide insight into this, with the hope of providing practical recommendations for teachers and parents on how to select and use short stories in children's learning and emotional development.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative descriptive design with a psycho-literary approach. This design was chosen because the purpose of this study was to describe and understand the emotional responses of elementary school children when/after reading short stories. Qualitative research allows researchers to explore children's subjective experiences in depth and identify themes that emerge from the data. The subjects of this study were grade IV and V students in one of the elementary schools, namely SDN Rahayu, Karangnunggal District. This technique was used on the basis that children at this grade level already have a fairly good reading ability and are able to understand stories in short stories and most importantly are able to recognize, manage, and provide emotional responses to various events. Meanwhile, data collection techniques used observation, interviews, and questionnaires. Observations were made when students were reading and after reading short stories, while interviews and questionnaires were distributed after students finished reading short stories. The data analysis techniques used include data transcription, thematic analysis, data triangulation, and data interpretation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Students' Emotional Response During and After Reading Short Stories

The emotional response evoked by literature, especially in children, is the result of a unique and subjective personal experience. In this study, the emotions observed include happiness, sadness, empathy, and fear. Each of these emotions emerged against the background of students' understanding of the stories they read and the extent to which they could relate their personal experiences to the stories. Short stories that students read:

Friends from the Past

In a small village, there lived a girl named Mira. Mira loved reading books and imagining the past. One day, while Mira was reading a history book, she found an old medal in the pages of the book.

The medal looked very old and glittery. Mira felt curious and decided to wear it. As soon as Mira put the medal around her neck, she suddenly felt dizzy and everything went dark.

When Mira opened her eyes, she found herself in the past, in an ancient village. Everyone there was wearing traditional clothes, and the village looked very different from where Mira was from. Mira felt confused but also excited. She meets a boy named Andi who becomes her best friend. Andi took Mira around the village and told her about life in the past.

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Mira learned many things from Andi, such as how to weave cloth and cook traditional food. They also played traditional games that Mira had never played before. Mira felt very happy, but she also missed her home in the present. She knew that she had to go back. With a heavy heart, Mira told Andi about her origins.

Andi felt sad, but she understood. "Don't worry, Mira. True friends will never be separated, even by time," Andi said.

Mira said goodbye to Andi and put the medallion back around her neck. Instantly, everything went dark, and when Mira opened her eyes, she was back in the present.

Although she felt a little sad to leave Andi, Mira was happy to have a friend from the past and learned many valuable things.

Happy:

"Mira felt confused but also excited.

She met a boy named Andi who became her best friend. Andi took Mira around the village and told her about life in the past".

"Mira felt very happy"

The Happy emotion response arises when an event can make us laugh or proud (Freud, 1923). Based on the quote, the author tries to foster the emotions of happiness and enthusiasm that flow through the characterization. The figure or character of Mira turns out to be able to make readers, especially grade IV students, feel happiness and enthusiasm too. The author tries to stimulate readers from the words

"excited ' and *'very happy"*.

Excited in the short story text excerpt contains a psychological magnet that creates a positive aura for the body and especially emotions.

Happiness in students often arises when the short story presents a conflict that is then resolved or when the main character achieves success. In the students observed, smiles, laughter, and positive interactions with peers were the main indicators that they felt happy. Some learners showed such positive responses. The most influential factor in these feelings of happiness was the success of the main character in the story or funny moments that provoked laughter. The study found that stories that had elements of humor or positive endings tended to increase happy responses in students. For example, a character who successfully overcomes obstacles or manages to get what he wants will more easily invite happy feelings in students and that has been proven by the character Mira who has made new friends in the past and successfully returned to the future.

Sad:

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"Mira was very happy, but she also missed her home in the present. She knew she had to go back. With a heavy heart, Mira told Andi about her origins".

"Although she felt a little sad to leave Andi"

Sad reactions can be caused by a variety of events or situations that occur. Sadness is a process of depicting emotions based on desires that do not match reality. This is in line with Endraswara's opinion that sadness is an emotional response to disappointment, failure to get something, or being left behind by something you love. The feeling of sadness in the short story excerpt above shows the figure of a Mira who misses her home. Why does this happen? Because there is an emotional response that causes disappointment and sadness because the incident occurred in the past, not the present.

Sad emotional responses in students usually appear when they face conflicts in the story that have not been resolved or when the character experiences severe difficulties. In more empathic students, sadness is stronger because they are able to imagine what it would be like to be in the shoes of a character who is suffering. In observations, glum facial expressions, changes in tone of voice to be quieter, and statements such as

"pity" or "so sad"

often appeared when students expressed their sadness.

The observations focused on behavior and mimic that could be observed during and after reading the short story. The eyes lit up indicating that the learners were included in the story which dragged them to position themselves as Mira. Learners feel as if they are in the past and miss their home. Coupled with the scene of having to leave her best friend in the past, Andi. Learners imagine that if they had to leave their classmates or true friends they would not be able to. This is evident from the results of several interviews with students who said

"sad" and "don't want to" if they did not have friends.

This phenomenon shows that short stories with emotional conflict can increase learners' ability to feel empathy, even when the conflict is not directly related to their personal experience.

Empathy:

"Andi felt sad, but she understood. "Don't worry, Mira. True friends will never be separated, even by time," Andi said."

Empathy arises when students can put themselves in the shoes of the main character and feel what the character is going through. Elementary school-aged children, especially grades IV and V, are in a developmental stage where they begin to understand other people's feelings

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better. In this study, it was found that students with empathy skills tended to show serious or concerned facial expressions, as well as make comments that showed understanding of the character's feelings, such as "if I were her, I would feel sad too." Such sentences were based on the short story passage "don't worry Mira, true friends will never be separated, even by time". Emotionally, the passage has put learners in a state of heart full of empathy.

Starting from the results of observations and interviews that have been carried out many fourth and V grade students who feel the same way as the character Andi. Many learners who display a sparkling eye expression saaat reading short stories. After being interviewed and many issued the words"kasian". The word "kasian" meant here is for the character of Andi because he had to be left by mira who returned to the future. Just like sadness, because empathy can appear starting with the saddest feeling first. This is in line with the opinion of Endraswara who said that empathy arises because it is stimulated by sadness. This student's ability to express empathy suggests that short stories can be an effective medium for developing empathy. Children learn to respond and understand the emotional experiences of others.

Fear:

 "As soon as Mira put the medal around her neck, she suddenly felt dizzy and everything went dark"

In Freud's theory of personality, fear or anxiety can be understood through the interaction between three main components: the id, the ego, and the superego. Each plays a different role in responding to fear and anxiety:

Id

The Id is the basic part of the personality structure that contains instinctive impulses and basic desires. The Id operates on the Pleasure Principle, which seeks instant gratification without considering consequences. When the id encounters a situation perceived as threatening or dangerous, fear can arise as a natural response to a threat to basic needs or personal safety. For example, the fear of death or pain is a form of primal defense of the id aimed at protecting oneself from physical harm.

Ego

The Ego acts as a counterweight between the impulses of the id and the demands of reality. The Ego operates on the principle of reality, which means that it tries to satisfy the needs of the id in a realistic and socially acceptable way. When a person feels fear, the ego will work to assess the threat and decide on the appropriate response. If the threat is real, the ego will encourage the individual to look for ways to avoid or deal with the situation. However, if the

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threat is not real or excessive, the ego can help relieve fear through rationalization or defense mechanisms.

Superego

The Superego is the moral component of the personality, which houses the learned values and social standards. In the context of fear, the superego can generate anxiety or moral fear. For example, the fear of breaking rules, making moral mistakes, or not meeting the expectations of others can stem from the pressure of the superego that seeks to keep individuals in compliance with social and ethical norms. The Superego sometimes makes individuals feel guilty or anxious if they do not act according to their internal standards, which can trigger fears of social rejection or feelings of shame. Overall, fear and anxiety can be seen as the result of tension between an id that wants to avoid danger, an ego that tries to confront or rationalize threats, and a superego that demands adherence to moral and social standards. The interaction of these three elements creates the complexity of the emotion of fear in various situations. Through these short stories, the feeling of fear is often triggered by elements of the story that portray tension, danger or uncertainty. In children, fear can be triggered by a description of a stressful situation or an evil portrayal of a character. Proven in short fragments

"Reluctantly, Mira told Andi about her origins. Andi felt sad, but he understood. "Don't worry, Mira. True friends will never be separated, even by time, " said Andi.

In observation, physical reactions such as holding your breath, looking tense, or even covering your eyes are signs that the student is experiencing fear. The fear experienced by these students showed that they were able to respond realistically to frightening situations in the story, reflecting their ability to understand dangerous situations and react emotionally to them. Learners were drawn in the storyline that describes someone who is afraid of losing something that is the figure of a friend.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that reading short stories can trigger a variety of emotional responses in elementary school students, including happiness, sadness, fear, and empathy. The existence of characters in short stories that have various characters is able to foster children's emotional responses. Coupled with the characterization that the author describes, the relationship between the work and the reader becomes a unity in the story. This psychosastral approach indicates that the short story can be an effective medium in supporting the emotional development of children, as well as being an important tool in learning in elementary school.

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