

Identification of Values in Malay Short Stories

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Abstract: This study focuses on the identification of values in Malay short stories among second language learner. The objectives of the study are to identify and discuss the values in Malay short stories. The samples of the study consist of fifty four subjects from four classes of Malay-Indonesian course aged between 20-27 years old. The subjects were given Malay short stories for the fourteen whole weeks of study. They were given the chance to discuss about the values in the short stories. The results of the study revealed that the subjects were able to identify the values of love and care as well respect. They also categorized the values into family, siblings, friends, nature and animals. It is anticipated that future study will concentrate on values in Malay quatrains.

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1. Introduction

Malay short story is one of the Malay literature genres. It is also favored among readers of first and second languages. The readers of Malay short stories are from children to adults, not only in Malaysia but also in countries that speak or learn the Malay language. Besides that, Malay short stories are famous among researchers for the contents of the stories. The contents of the stories were crucial in order to deliver the message to the readers and affect the understanding of the surrounding. The stories also help readers to understand (Normaliza Abd Rahim, 2013) the lives of people in the villages and cities, such values (Gaut, 2007; Eaton, 2002) and also each characters were important in the stories. In fact, second language learners would be best taught and exposed to short stories in order to enhance the learning environment (Seliger, & Shohamy, 1995). Although, short stories consisted of approximately 8 to 12 printed pages but the stories have endings that make readers think and understand. Not all short stories have good endings or values since the authors of the short stories neglect the positive values that may reflect the readers' lives. Hence, this study helps students in identifying and discussing the values in the short stories.

Normaliza Abd Rahim & Siti Nur Aliaa Roslan (2012) postulated that short stories were important to enhance the process of learning, no matter in the first or second languages. They stated that the readers of the short stories would try to retell the story in order to show their understanding and appreciation towards the stories. The study involved a group of primary school students in a school in Malaysia. The subjects were given stories to read, and by end of three weeks, they were given the opportunity to retell the stories. The

results of the study revealed that the subjects have the confidence to retell and managed to have the right storyline. Also, the subjects were able to discuss the stories with the teacher by including values in the stories. The values were love, care, hardworking, respect and others. Normaliza Abd Rahim & Siti Nur Aliaa Roslan (2012) added that the process of storytelling has given the subjects a big challenge since most of the subjects were not prepared with this kind of activities before, and therefore, they felt that the activity has given them the time and space for understanding the storyline; and at the end of the activity, they have to give their comments and ideas on the stories. The comments and ideas included the values in the stories. Short story is one of the methods in delivering messages to the readers (Arbaie Sujud, Normaliza Abd Rahim, Noraien Mansor, Hazlina Ab Halim, Roslina Mamat & Siti Nur Aliaa Roslan, 2013; Normaliza Abd Rahim, Roslina Mamat, Hazlina Ab Halim, Arbaie Sujud & Siti Nur Aliaa Roslan, 2013; Normaliza Abd Rahim, 2013). Therefore, an interesting short story is the best method to ensure that the message is understood and delivered (Gaut, 2007).

Imran Ho & Ruzy Suliza Hashim (2007) examined the readability statistics of Malaysian short stories. The study involved twelve short stories which were selected for the purpose of the study. The short stories were published in the New Straits Times, and the reference corpus consisted of seven short stories that have been recommended as texts for the school syllabus. The study used the three readability statistics that were generated for the stories according to Flesch Reading Ease, Flesch Grade Level dan Gunning Fox Index. The readability scores of these stories were compared to the readability of the recommended texts on similar themes in order to assess the suitability for

Malaysian learners. The results of the study revealed that both Malaysian corpuses recommended text falls within the range of US grade 6.0-8.5 with the Malaysia corpus having the advantage in terms of cultural and local references. The study by Imran Ho & Ruzy Suliza Hashim (2007) showed that Malay short stories have given great impact among school students, and the students seemed to enjoy the lessons even more.

According to Siti Musliha Isnain & Normaliza Abd Rahim (2012), short stories could also help in building up self-confidence and also learning the language. The study involved a group of 40 students learning the Malay language by using short e-stories. The short stories were in the form of multimedia, and the subjects involved were able to answer the questions related to the stories. The results of the study revealed that the subjects would prefer to have stories in learning because they were able to relate the stories with their lives. Furthermore, short stories are short and the messages are clear (Normaliza Abd Rahim et al., 2013; Arbaie Sujud et al., 2013; Normaliza Abd Rahim, 2013; Quayum & Wicks, 2001). Siti Aisah Yusof & Normaliza Abd Rahim (2011) study has the same results whereby short stories using the technology were able to enhance the students in learning. Also, the short stories would become more interesting with the help of the technology. Although the study by Siti Aisah Yusof & Normaliza Abd Rahim (2011) focused on another genre in Malay literature but there were also short stories included to the discussion. The subjects involved were able to retell the stories confidently and they also understood the stories.

Other than studies on short stories that involved students, there were also studies based on the analyses of the short stories. One of the studies was from Hajar Che Man (2011) which focused on the reviewing short stories anthologies by a famous Malaysian writer Zurinah Hassan. The study also discussed the convention versus innovation of the short stories. Two anthologies titled *Meneruskan Perjalanan* (The Continuation of the Journey, 1987) and *Menjelang Pemilihan* (As the Selection Dawns, 2004) were discussed. The evidences of the short stories were divided into two parts. The first relates to convention in terms of the parallelism and acquiescence or obedience as Zurinah Hassan inserts issues or conflicts from the extracts of the short stories. The second relates to the context of innovation and invention, and refers to the discoveries from conventional characteristics. The results of the study revealed the development of Zurinah Hassan's credibility in writing, and the transformation in terms of creativity, imagination, illusion and fantasy. The improvisation and growth existed through knowledge,

discipline and knowledge of assistance and Zurinah Hassan's experiences are in including current issues. Besides that, women's issues were highlighted in the short story genre to be disseminated to other women and readers. Moreover, short story is the best way of providing awareness to the community (Brown, 1994). Short stories will also include the social life of a person and community, and this will enhance the readers' reading (Coulmas, 2005; Seliger & Shohamy, 1995).

Based on the literature review on short stories and the needs of short stories for second language learners, the objectives of the study were to identify and discuss the values of Malay short stories among second language learners at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, South Korea.

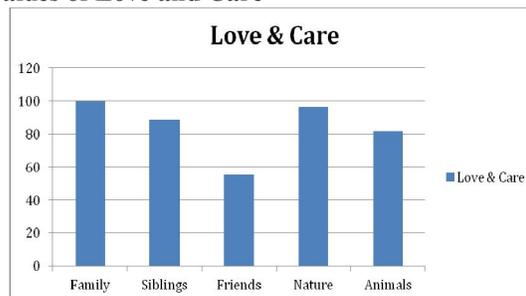
2. Methodology

The samples of the study involved 54 subjects from four classes of Malay-Indonesian course. The subjects aged between 20 to 27 years old. They were exposed to the language from the beginning of the semester. The subjects who understood the subjects were also taught the Malay short stories. They were given more than 24 short stories to study for 14 weeks. They were given a set of questionnaires on the values in the Malay short stories. They discussed the values among their peers in the classroom. The data were collected and analyzed by using percentages and the discussions were analyzed by using Brown & Yule's (1983) discourse analysis. Brown & Yule (1983) stated that written and spoken languages are best analyzed by using the discourse analysis method. Thus, the written spoken language will be clearly understood among readers and listeners.

3. Results and Discussion

The results were analyzed by the following categories; family, siblings, friends, nature and animals. The results for quantitative analyses were based on the graphs and were analyzed by using percentage, whereas the discussions were analyzed by discourse analysis.

Values of Love and Care



Graph 1: Love and Care towards family, siblings, friends, nature and animals

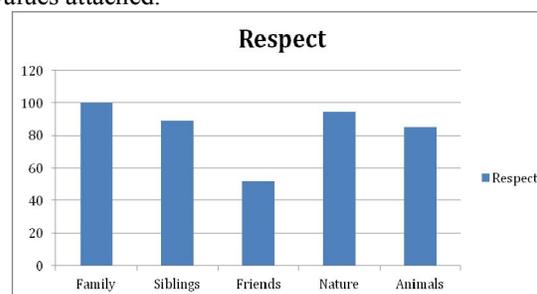
Graph 1 above showed the values of love and care towards family, siblings, friends, nature and animals. All the subjects (100%) stated that they identified the values of love and care in the Malay short stories. The subjects mentioned that the values were clearly stated in the stories. The subjects said that the values in the stories showed positive impacts toward readers. Meanwhile, 48 subjects (88.9%) of the subjects identified love and care among siblings. The subjects revealed that the short stories were also about siblings in the family. Although most of the subjects did not have any siblings, they understood the meaning of love and care among the siblings. The values have shown the satisfaction in their reading and that they understood the meaning of sharing within a big family. They said that having siblings in a family will give them the time to share, and also to appreciate everything and everyone in the family. Hence, 30 subjects (55.6%) stated that they found love and nature towards friends in the short stories. The subjects mentioned that friends were obviously stated in the stories and the stories also consisted of three to four friends. Although the percentage was low but the subjects who managed to identify the values showed evidences in mentioning the short stories that they have read. Minority of the subjects did not mention this value because they felt that love and care towards friends were not important in their lives since most of them were individuals who preferred to be alone.

On the other hand, majority of the subjects (96.3%) stated that they discovered the values of love and care towards nature. This showed that the subjects were able to relate the stories with nature. The nature involved were love and care towards the forest, environment and weather. The Malay stories mentioned the values within and the subjects who were aware of the importance of nature were able to identify the values easily. According to the subjects, everyone should appreciate nature, and, most important, show love and care towards it. Thus, 44 subjects (81.5%) identified the love and care towards animals. Majority of the subjects agreed that love and care towards animals were nearly the same as love and care towards human. They stated that all living things should be respected. The animals mentioned by the subjects were dogs, cats, rabbits etc. The animals were domestic animals that accompanied them in their daily lives. Minority of the subjects did not agree with the love and care towards animals because they had no animals at home, and some of them were scared of animals especially furry ones. Nevertheless, some of the subjects found that the values were unclear in the short stories.

Value of Respect

Graph 2 showed the values of respect in the Malay short stories as identified by the subjects. All

the subjects (100%) stated that they identified the value of respects towards family. This was clearly stated in the short stories. All the subjects stated that majority of the short stories (15 short stories) were based on the values of respect. They stated that family was always mentioned in the story, and the storyline reflected their daily lives. They were happy to read the stories since it was really interesting and they appreciated the values showed by most of the characters in the stories. Hence, 48 subjects (88.9%) mentioned that they identified the value of respect towards siblings. This showed that in most of the stories, there were also siblings in the family and they understood the concept of having more than three persons in the family. As mentioned in Graph 1 above, most of the subjects involved were the only child in the family, but they were able to understand the concept of siblings in the family. They were happy to relate their lives with the stories that they read. In addition, 28 subjects (51.9%) stated that the values of respect towards friends were also mentioned in the stories. Although the percentage for this value was low, but according to the discussion, the subjects understood the stories and they could not identify the values of respect towards friends. They claimed that the friends were only characters in the stories with no values attached.



Graph 2: Respect towards family, sibling, friends, nature and animals

On the other hand, 51 subjects (94.4%) stated that they found the value of respect towards nature. The subjects agreed that most of the stories mentioned the environment, weather and every living creature around the characters. Also, the subjects stated that in the beginning of each stories that they read, the nature in the village, city or surrounding environment somehow resembled the surrounding around them. They mentioned that they were shocked to read about nature in the stories that they were able to imagine and picture. Thus, 46 subjects (85.2%) stated that they found the value of respect towards animals in the short stories. The subjects mentioned that most of the short stories have included domestic animals like dogs, cats, rabbits etc. They also stated that a person should respect the animals that they love, and also the stray

animals were fed or reported to the authority. Thus, the animals will be saved instead of dying from starvation, and also show considerations for the weather and environment. The subjects suggested that respect towards animals were as important as respect towards human beings. Most of the subjects were obviously animal lovers and a few of them have the experience of volunteering for animal rights. Therefore, the values of respect towards animals have shown positive in all the subjects.

Based on the data above, the results revealed that majority of the subjects managed to identify the values of love and care with the value of respect. This showed that the subjects understood the storylines in the short stories and were able to discuss the evidences based on the values by suggesting examples. The subjects were confident in giving the answers even though the short stories were in the Malay language. However, the results also revealed that the short stories have given them the opportunity to understand each of the values stated. The subjects not only learnt about the language and the stories but also the values within. The results for this study is parallel to the studies by Normaliza Abd Rahim & Siti Nur Aliaa Roslan (2012) and Normaliza Abd Rahim et al., (2013) where short stories should include values so that the readers would understand the messages. Also, the results of this study was similar to the the study by Siti Aisah Yusof & Normaliza Abd Rahim (2011) where short stories were one of the Malay literature genres that are best understood and learnt by the first and second language learners. The Malay short stories would be shared with others easily as it consisted of minimum pages, and thus, messages would be delivered easily.

4. Conclusion

This study is not only implicated for second language learners at the universities but also to students at schools. On the other hand, this study will give great impacts to authors and book publishers when considering adding values to the short stories. Also, the values will somehow reflect their lives and make them want to change to a better person. Therefore, Malay short stories will enhance their learning about lives and also the language. It is anticipated that future studies will focus on the values of Malay quatrains among second language learners.

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