

DESIGN OF ILLUSTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S STORY BOOKS “THE AMAZING BITTER MELON” TO INCREASING MUTUAL RESPECT

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Abstract

Early childhood education is the most valuable time to shape personality. Picture storybooks are an effective visual medium and play an important role in stimulating children's interest in reading and understanding because of their attractive visualization. Children absorb information more easily through images than text. However, in the digital era of Society 5.0, Indonesia still faces the challenge of low interest in reading and the lack of instilling character values from an early age. This condition demands the presence of innovative and relevant educational media to form a capable and characterful future generation. As a solution, an illustrated children's storybook “The Amazing Bitter Melon” with the theme of diversity and mutual respect was designed. This research uses qualitative methods through in-depth research, visual exploration and direct validation from children. The result of this design is a 24-page illustration of a children's storybook entitled “The Amazing Bitter Melon”, designed using a combination of manual and digitalization techniques. The goal is to convey a moral message about the importance of appreciating differences from an early age. This illustration design is not just an artistic process, but a visual strategy to form empathetic and tolerant children's characters.

Keywords: Children's Storybook, Illustration, Character Education, Moral Message

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is the most fundamental stage of education and determines the development of children in the future. According to Law No. 20/2003 Article 1 Paragraph 14, Early Childhood Education (ECE) is a development effort from birth to six years of age through providing educational stimuli that support physical and spiritual growth and development so that children are ready to enter further education (Sinamo & P., 2023). During this period, children's potential needs to be stimulated optimally, including in developing reading skills and interest in literacy. Picture storybooks are one of the important media that make it easier for children to learn to read because they are equipped with attractive colors and illustrations, thus helping to build vocabulary, introduce letters, and string simple words (Sinamo & P., 2023).

As a visual medium, picture storybooks present information that is easier to understand through a combination of images and descriptive text. Illustrations in storybooks can help children understand the content of the story, show events that occur, and connect stories with

children's daily experiences (Febriyanti et al., 2021).

The ability to read pictures comes even earlier than reading text. Children begin to recognize and understand images several months before mastering spoken language and several years before fluent writing. This shows that children's visual perception develops first so it needs to be stimulated through pictorial media (Vega, 2024).

However, the rapid development of technology in the Society 5.0 era brings new challenges to efforts to improve children's literacy Indonesia, which soon faces a demographic bonus with the majority of the population of productive age, is still ranked low in terms of literacy according to The World's Most Literate Nations survey by Miller. In fact, humans as the main resources in this era are required to have the ability to solve problems, collaborate, and create value through the use of information and technology (Wulan, 2022).

Attractive illustrations in picture storybooks play an important role in arousing children's curiosity and motivation to read. Illustrated books help children understand the material, increase reading interest, and facilitate the learning process. Illustrations, whether in the form of images, photos, or graphics, function as a visual translation of the material presented, arranged according to aesthetic and design principles that are easily understood by the target audience, namely children (Mahardika, 2021).

At an early age is a very appropriate time for planting good values to develop potential in children, in its application can be done in daily activities in an interesting, varied and fun way. Parents and the home environment can be a very important factor in shaping the character of children's daily behavior, the role of parents guiding their children determines the attitude that will continue to be carried into adulthood. One of the characters that need to be taught to early childhood is the character of mutual respect which includes politeness and respect for the existence of others. There are various ways to instill mutual respect, namely establishing good relationships with others, serving others, and not discriminating.

Thus, designing the illustration of the children's storybook "The Amazing Bitter Melon" is very appropriate considering that children remember more easily through pictures than words. To support the delivery of moral messages about the importance of respecting each other, this research will focus on developing illustration concepts that are not only aesthetic, but also effective in instilling the values of empathy, tolerance, and acceptance of differences in children, in order to form quality character from an early age.

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

This research uses qualitative research, which is an approach oriented towards understanding phenomena in depth and thoroughly in a natural context, as stated by experts. According to Moleong (2017), qualitative research is research that aims to understand the phenomena experienced by research subjects. Researchers try to understand about behavior, perceptions, actions and others and then describe them in words.

Research with design techniques aims to design children's storybooks about "The Amazing Bitter Melon" as a medium to increase mutual respect considering that currently many children lack mutual respect for others, therefore this research is deliberately carried out as a medium to form a personality to children about the importance of mutual respect from an early

age.

The choice of children's storybook media as teaching material media is considered more effective because children prefer pictures than just being explained directly or with writing. In addition to designing researchers also develop children's storybooks "The Amazing Bitter Melon" as teaching materials and then become effective learning media for children's stories used in education.

The main stage is the collection of data that will be needed. This design uses secondary data taken based on literature review studies obtained from the internet in the form of theories in articles, opinions from several experts, news and official web pages, and images as visual illustration references in the design that will be used.

Through the stages of this working method, it is expected that the illustration book "The Amazing Bitter Melon" will not only be a reading book, but also has a strong visual form in conveying moral messages about mutual respect, so that it can shape the character of children who are empathetic and tolerant of others.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The making of the children's storybook study project "Design of Illustration for Children's Story Books (The Amazing Bitter Melon) To Increasing Mutual Respect" includes several stages. Here are some of the stages that the author did, are:

1) Determining the theme of illustrations in children's storybooks

The theme used in the design of children's storybook "The Amazing Bitter Melon" is diversity, self-acceptance, and the importance of mutual respect. The illustrations will focus on how unique each character is. The visuals will emphasize clear emotional expressions, positive interactions between characters, and the use of bright colors and compositions designed to create a warm and empathetic atmosphere.

2) Determine the working media (materials and tools)

The working media in the design of the children's storybook "The Amazing Bitter Melon" uses manual drawing techniques on A5 size drawing books with coloring methods using crayons and colored pencils commonly used in children. Which after the work is finished will then be scanned and done layouting per sheet by adding a story description using Adobe Illustrator (Ai).

3) Determining the Composition of Illustrations

The composition of illustrations in designing children's storybooks are:

a. Main and Supporting Character Development:

The character models used are animal and vegetable illustrations as the main and supporting character designs. The goal is to attract children's attention because animals and vegetables have unique shapes and colors and are easily recognizable to children. Designing in detail the main character of Si Pare that emphasizes its uniqueness but is still friendly and attractive to children.

Facial expressions and body language will be explored to reflect Si Pare's feelings (such as doubt, happiness, empathy). Other supporting characters (such as the monkey, carrot, chili, or pumpkin) will also be designed with their visual characteristics, showing a variety of shapes, colors, and textures to ensure each character can convey emotions and interact positively.

b. Storyline Creation

The author will develop a clear storyline by arranging the storyline from the beginning, middle, to the end, including a series of events that lead to conflict, the climax point of the story where the message about mutual respect and can provide lessons for readers, writing dialog adapted to the age of children, simple, but still expressive.

The narrative will be written in easy-to-understand language, and support the illustrations to create an enjoyable reading experience for the reader.

c. Sketching the Composition of Each Page

For each important scene in the story, the author will explore various composition options. Such as the placement of characters, backgrounds, and other visual elements so that the storyline flows well.

These sketches will then be made more detailed, taking into account the point of view, balanced visual images to ensure each illustration is easy to read and attracts children's attention. The composition of the book will be designed to create a warm atmosphere, and invite empathy, reflecting the theme of mutual respect.

d. Character Design

The collection of existing data results in the design of character characters that will become figures in the book and the formation of several characters in the story of the children's book "The Amazing Bitter Melon" as below:

Table 1. Character and Description

No	Character Name	Information
1	The Monkey King	Character: Like the monkey animal but wearing the king's robe and crown. Trait: Generous, Wise and Fair
2	Nyemot (King's Guard)	Character: In the form of a monkey animal using a typical guard clothes and a hat. Traits: Friendly, Wise and Fair
3	Papare (Bitter Melon)	Character: Shaped like bitter melon by wearing clothes with the symbol "P" which means Papare Traits: Humble, Optimistic and Confident
4	Miss Worce (Carrot)	Character: Shaped like a carrot with 2 leaves tied on his head as hair using feminine pink clothes and a flower logo Traits: Critical, Empathetic and Wise
5	Lababa (Pumpkin)	Character: Resembles a Pumpkin fruit, has a small posture, dresses in simple ash, uses glasses Traits: Wise, Critical, and Empathetic
6	Cibay (Chili)	Character: Shaped like a red chili pepper with a feminine green outfit with hair tied one on top Traits: Pessimistic, Arrogant and Perfectionist

Source: (Personal Documents)



Page 1. Book Cover "The Amazing Bitter Melon "

(Source: Personal documentation)

a) Description of Book Cover

On the front cover of the book depicts the characters contained in the children's storybook "The Amazing Bitter Melon" they look happy with the setting of a beautiful village atmosphere as well as beautiful mountains and kingdoms. There is a title as well as the author's name underneath. At the back of the book there is a synopsis that tells the conclusion of the story and there is also a moral message in the book.

b) Title and Contents of the Book

The title of this children's storybook is "The Amazing Bitter Melon". It tells the story of a village that is sad because their king is sick, then with the initiative of Papare wants to provide medicine for the king to be healthy again, but so far Papare is considered a very bitter, unattractive and useless vegetable among other vegetables. This made his friends doubt, but it turned out that Papare had many benefits that turned out to be successful in curing the king, since then Papare was no longer underestimated.

This book contains character education values that reflect the value of respecting each other despite differences.

c) Final Results

The final results on the design of the children's illustration book "The Amazing Bitter Melon" use the following book size and pages:

Book type	: Children Story Book
Book dimension	: A5 (14.8 x 21.0 cm)
Number of pages	: 24 pages
Finishing	: Ivory soft cover binding



Picture 1. Page 1&2
" The Amazing Bitter Melon"
 (Source: Personal documentation)



Picture 2. Page 3&4
" The Amazing Bitter Melon"
 (Source: Personal documentation)



Picture 3. Page 5&6
" The Amazing Bitter Melon"
 (Source: Personal documentation)



Picture 4. Page 7&8
" The Amazing Bitter Melon"
 (Source: Personal documentation)



Picture 5. Page 9&10



Picture 6. Page 11&12

" The Amazing Bitter Melon"
(Source: Personal documentation)



Picture 7. Page 13&14
" The Amazing Bitter Melon"
(Source: Personal documentation)

" The Amazing Bitter Melon"
(Source: Personal documentation)



Picture 8. Page 15&16
" The Amazing Bitter Melon"
(Source: Personal documentation)



Picture 9. Page 17&18
" The Amazing Bitter Melon"
(Source: Personal documentation)



Picture 10. Page 19&20
" The Amazing Bitter Melon"
(Source: Personal documentation)



Picture 11. Page 21&22
" The Amazing Bitter Melon"
 (Source: Personal documentation)



Picture 12. Page 23&24
" The Amazing Bitter Melon"
 (Source: Personal documentation)

CONCLUSION

The illustration design of the children's storybook "The Amazing Bitter Gourd" is not just an artistic process, but a visual strategy in building mutual respect for children. With a planned approach in character visualization, use of color, composition, and background details, illustration can be a very appropriate tool to convey moral messages about the importance of mutual respect. This book is expected to not only be a source of fun reading, through expressive character designs and strong visual stories, children are easier to understand and absorb moral messages and also become a strong foundation in shaping children's characters who are empathetic, tolerant, and able to appreciate every difference around them.

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