



The Character Value of “*Culturingsi Bulus Si Rumbuk*” by Willem Iskander in Local History Learning

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Abstract: This article aims to discover the inculcation of the character value of "Si Bulus-bulus si rumbuk-rumbuk" by Willem Iskander in learning local history in literary works during the Dutch colonial period, which became a phenomenon for the people of North Sumatra. Willem Iskander's work can instill character values for students in learning local history. A literature review reveals that "Si bulus-bulus si rumbuk-rumbuk" by Willem Iskander in the 1860s contains character values including educational, religious, moral, humanitarian, and so on that can increase the character values of students. Strengthening students' character through history learning based on literary works is needed to teach students about love for peace, friendship, responsibility, tolerance, national spirit, patriotism, care for the environment, social care, religion, and respect for achievement, independence, and discipline. Literary-based character values in local history learning are needed to dispel the notion that history is boring and less helpful for students.

Keywords: Character value, Willem Iskander, local history



Introduction

Education plays a vital role in making competent and superior human beings. Education functions to shape one's character and intellect to have life skills, so they become independent, familial, and responsible citizens. This function aligns with the National Education System Law no. 20/2003 that education means to form intelligent human beings in knowledge and form character, personality, and character by religious values and noble culture inherited by the nation. Therefore, the primary purpose of education is to form a person who is intelligent and has character.

Value is a scale or measuring instrument to determine the quality of good and evil or positive and negative towards something. Character refers to a person's attitude or behavior. In other words, the character is a characteristic of individual behavior that distinguishes it from other individuals. Thus the value of character can be interpreted as a scale of a good, bad, or positive-negative of a person's behavior. The implementation of learning character values that are moral, attitude, and behavior should be based on universal values rooted in the culture that underlies the nation with *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity).

The formation of character (moral) has been mandated in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution. It has been implemented in education since the country became independent with one compass, namely the principle of Pancasila. The five precepts contain the values of divinity, humanity, the spirit of unity, respect for differences and responsibilities, and a sense of justice concerning all aspects of social, national, and state life. This nation's generation slips into facticity, which always invites the concerns of various parties. One source of character is the value of local wisdom contained in stories related to the life of certain local people in teaching history. Local wisdom is the knowledge that results from the adaptation process of local communities in their life experiences which are transformed from generation to generation, from one generation to the next. The local community uses the value of this local wisdom in the social interaction of daily life with nature and its social environment as part of the mechanism for survival.

Based on the above problems, it is crucial to instill character values of tolerance, religion, and responsibility to students at all levels of education, one of which is through history learning. Willem Iskander's literary works are



Indonesian literary works as the nation's cultural heritage. The “Si bulus-bulus si rumbuk-rumbuk” as a literary work is seen as a social document. It reflected the situation when the literature was created, and literature also reflects the writer's social situation. Literature also manifests historical events and socio-cultural conditions (Endraswara, 2012: 81). “Si Bulus-Bulus Si Rumbuk-Rumbuk” was written by Willem Iskander in 1840-1876 when the Indonesian nation was under Dutch colonization. This literary work is written in the local Mandailing language. It can be considered local literature, but the themes and messages show a strong spirit of nationalism and unity. This sense is a testament to the figure of Willem Iskander. He does not talk about local issues anymore but focuses on issues of independence and nationalism. Birch (2005) stated that poetry/literary works expressed through local languages could hinder colonial attention to the people's movement. Through Willem Iskander's literary works, he can encourage people to fight for national independence and expel the invaders from this beloved country.

Si Bulus-Bulus Si Rumbuk-Rumbuk. The book contains 12 poems, and the poems contain meanings about religion, love, education, introspective nationalism, and development. This book arrived in Batavia in 1870. The central government issued a *besluit* (*besluit*) or decree, number 27, dated February 23, 1871, regarding the publication of this book. In 1872 this collection of prose and poetry was published in Batavia by *S'Landsdrukkerij* (*Percetakan Negara*). This book was reprinted in Batavia in 1903, 1906, and 1915. When we talk about Willem Iskander, the Mandailing people must remember his work “Si Bulus- Bulus Si Rumbuk-Rumbuk”. This work also significantly influenced education and social life in Mandailing.

History is a subject that is closely related to the development of national attitudes, the spirit of nationalism, love for the homeland, democratic spirit, and patriotism. In history lessons, some values are very distinctive and distinguish them from other subjects. According to Kochhar (2008: 64), the values contained in history subjects can be classified into scientific values, informative values, ethical values, cultural values, political values, nationalism values, international values, and work values. Students can understand various local, regional, national, and international levels by studying history.

School history lessons are also required to make students as close as possible to the community in shaping students' character. The history taught and the



values contained therein are taken from a historical event in the community. Thus, history subjects can also be used to maintain the identity and character of the nation. In order to realize this goal, historical learning based on local historical values can be used as an alternative solution. In learning history, local history is needed to raise awareness of national history and prevent students from being ignorant of the historical values. Thus, it is natural in history learning to introduce local historical values to each student, one of which is a local figure from North Sumatra named Willem Iskander.

Methods

The data collection method in this study uses library research methods, namely research carried out through collecting data or scientific papers aimed at the object of research or data collection that is the library in nature, or studies carried out to solve a problem. Problems are centered on a critical and in-depth study of highly relevant library materials. Before conducting a literature review, researchers must first know the source from which the scientific information will be obtained. The sources used include textbooks, scientific journals, and newspapers, research results in the form of theses, dissertations, the internet, and other relevant sources.

This research includes descriptive qualitative research, which focuses on a systematic explanation of the facts obtained during the research. The data collection method in this study was taken from the data source, which means the data source is the subject from which the data can be obtained. The document or note is the data source if the researcher uses documentation, while the record's contents are the research subject. As library research, the researchers used two data sources, namely primary and secondary sources.

Findings

Cultivating Character Values in Local History Learning. According to the Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), character means ethics, psychological traits, morals, or patterns that distinguish a person from others. The character comes from the Greek *charassei*, which means carve to form a pattern and mark. This term is more focused on action or behavior. The character can be formed and developed through value education. This value education will lead to value knowledge, which will lead to internalizing these values and their application in



daily life. Character education aims to inculcate values in students and renewal in the order of shared life that respects individual freedom. The expected educational outcomes are the achievement of the formation of the character and noble character of the participants in a comprehensive and integrated manner. According to Hasan (2010), character values identified from character education sources include religion, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democratic, curiosity, national spirit, patriotism, respect for achievement, friendly communication, loves for peace, caring the environment, and social responsibility.

Efforts to instill character education among students can be made through history learning. The integration of these values targets are subject matter, delivery procedures, and the most important is the meaning of students' learning experiences. Through history learning, the teacher can shape the character and build the morals of students through events, characters, and facts in history. Given the position and function of history learning, the role of education will determine its implementation, especially in learning local history taught to students. In this case, the teacher in the implementation of learning should be aware that history learning can instill character values in students.

Permendiknas No. 22 of 2006 stated that history subject is a branch of science that examines the origin and development, the role of society in the past based on specific methods and methodologies. History learning should be innovative learning that will have many benefits in the nation's life. Learning history should be able to bind the construction of Indonesian nationalism. History learning, in general, has several benefits in instilling nationalism, not just memorizing facts but also disseminate the values in it into the real life.

In the context of learning history, local history is needed to raise awareness of national history and prevent students from being ignorant of the historical values that surround them. History teachers must incorporate character values in Willem Iskander's literary works into the history learning process in the classroom. History learning that implements Willem Iskandar's character values will undoubtedly be successful if the history teacher understands Willem Iskander's thoughts. The teacher, in this case, has a vital role in the learning process. Teachers should be able to introduce regional figures who also have a significant influence on education in Indonesia. One of them is Willem Iskander. As the spearhead of education, teachers must be able to utilize local



figures in internalizing values to students. For learning to run effectively, one of the efforts teachers can make is to insert history learning materials that contain values so that students can actualize these values. In the learning process, the teacher can use KD 3.4 to analyze history as science, events, stories, and art, with KI 4.4 presenting the study results of history as science, events, stories, and art in written form or other media.

Willem Iskander. Willem Iskander was born with the name Sati Nasution, the title Sultan Iskandar, the name written on the birth certificate (*acte van bakenheld*), Letters, belsit, charter, and marriage certificate, Willem Iskander (the name after he was baptized in Arhem, 1858) was born in Pidoli, Mandailing Natal, North Sumatra in March 1840. He is also known as a poet who gave birth to many works and writings. His ability to master Malay, Mandailing, and Dutch made him known and respected by the Dutch colonial government. Apart from being an artist, writer, and public figure, he was also the first scholar from the Batak lands who took formal education to the Netherlands (in 1857) to establish a *Kweekschool* in Tanobato. In Dutch, "*Kweekschool*" means "nursery school" or "nursery school" which means that in this school, the seeds of teachers are planted or sown (Buchori.M:2007).

The Tano Bato teacher school has emerged as the most prominent teacher education and training center in the entire Dutch East Indies. Observing the excellent quality of education at *Kweekschool* Tano Bato, Van der Chijs, who served as the *Bumiputera* Education Inspector, established the the School as a pilot college for teacher education in the archipelago. The school taught the basics of arithmetic, reading, writing, Dutch, Malay, Mandailing, mathematics, physics, geometry, earth science, and government science. The letters studied are not only Latin but also Mandailing and Jawi scripts.

Willem Iskander is a poet and writer who have published many books. Among them is the book "Si bulus-bulus si rumbuk-rumbuk", which contains poems containing educational values, morals, humanity, and that can improve student character. In the history of national education, Willem Iskander's name is recorded locally. Not many know his history nationally, even in North Sumatra; many do not know this one figure. The reason is that his name is not included in the national history curriculum as a National Hero. History has also recorded that Willem Iskander was a thinker. His greatness lies in the persistence of his ideas and works in the intellectual life of the Indonesian



people. His pioneering work in the field of education positioned him as the initiator and implementer of the regeneration of the nation's intellectuals in a relay manner through teacher education.

Literary Works of Si Bulus-Bulus Si Rumbuk-Rumbuk as a Media for Cultivating Character Values. Literary works can, of course, be used as a learning tool for students. Teachers can use literary works to strengthen students' character both expressively (receiving) and receptively (expressing). In addition, literary works in education can be used as a medium for strengthening character education. The teacher can use the receptive use of literary works when choosing teaching materials and the learning process. In selecting teaching materials, teachers must choose quality literary works that have aesthetic value and contain ethical values. The goal is that the selected teaching materials contain values that guide and direct students towards a better life.

Willem Iskander writes ten proses in "Si Bulus-Bulus Si Rumbuk-Rumbuk", one of which is dialogue, which can be categorized as a form of drama (mini). The whole prose he created was also estimated to have been written around the 1860s. Because according to the information obtained, the book of poetry and prose was printed for the first time in 1872 in Batavia. It can be concluded that the prose was created 75 years before Indonesian literature recognized the form of short stories as the influence of the existence of Western literature.

The story is entitled "Sada Alak Pulon Ta On Na Mabiari Di Ahaila" (A person from our island afraid of shame). The theme of this first story is accountability for each person's duties. The story tells of the attitude taken by a king's son when he accepted the task of accompanying a Dutch *contelir* or local inspector who was hunting in the forest. While the hunt was in progress, suddenly, a ferocious wild boar greeted the Dutchmen. From the story, it can be seen how responsibility must be upheld when someone is assigned to do a job. In addition, the story also illustrates that Willem Iskander wanted to show the Dutch that Indonesian sons have self-respect that can be risked with their lives, rather than having to endure shame and make mistakes by not being able to carry out the tasks that have been entrusted to him.

The story, entitled "Amamate ni Alak na Lidang" (The Death of an Honest Person) has a religious theme. This story tells the surrender of someone who has been known as very honest in accepting death which is sure to come to



every creature of Allah. Based on the strength of the character's faith as a religious man, the resignation shows how important it is for everyone to be grateful for what he has received so far in the world, including the age and children he will leave behind. Through this story, Willem Iskander also clearly and firmly reminds people to remain afraid of Allah SWT, to be afraid in the sense of carrying out His commands so that one day they can live happily. So it is clear that the message that every human being strengthens his faith must be carried out to obtain happiness in this world and the hereafter.

The story, entitled "Na Dangol Muda Na So Binoto" (Sad If You Do not Know) has the theme of education. This story tells of a king from the island of P who visited the house of a Dutch Resident Assistant. When he met, there were some white people in the house talking with the Assistant Resident. As is customary, a glass of hot tea is served to greet the newly seated king, and the king of the island of P has never had such a treat. Therefore, he began to be confused about how to drink the hot tea. From that explanation, it can be seen how misguided people do not know how to visit and entertain. Therefore, everything unknown should be questioned first without feeling ashamed to admit that we do not know it. In addition, through this story, Willem Iskander seems to want to satirize the lifestyle of the nobility in the past, which did not show the importance of education, such as knowing ethics/social etiquette.

The story entitled "Na Binaut Tingon Barita ni Tuan Colombus" (Taken from the Story of Tuan Colombus) is also two continuous stories that tell the story of the journey of Columbus, the discoverer of the Americas. The story with the theme of the benefits of science for the welfare of humankind tells the story of the superiority of Columbus in using calculations based on astronomy.

The story entitled "Si Baroar", is a Mandailing legend with the theme, who commits/intentions crime against others. Usually that person will meet his misfortune. This story tells of an assassination attempt planned by King Hutabargot Sutan Pulungan against Si Baroar by plunging him into a prepared hole. However, unfortunately, it turns out that Sutan Pulungan's child is the victim because of a misunderstanding.

Another story is as follow, *"The school there is a house, has benches and tables, where we sit, to study, All good children, His heart is happy in that house, Because he already knows, There we get knowledge. Who loves, that schoolhouse, He who is more honorable,*



Than that sutan slander. Who goes to school, he will get knowledge, he can read and count, and must be good at speaking. Who does not go to school, He is a fool, who only knows the country, Like a frog in a shell. The conclusion is to remind children to be diligent in school to become intelligent, polite, and respective people. To people who did not go to school he was an idiot, one who would only know about his area. In his poem entitled *This School*, Willem invites everyone to go to school and love science to become intelligent, polite, and broad-minded people.

Can find out about the outer live. This academic prose by Willem Iskander became another pioneer in education in Mandailing. They argue that knowledge is best left for a child than property. They are willing to sell their inheritance to send their children to school. In addition to the theme of education, the prose also contains a sense of nationalism which the freedom fighters will use as a source of fighting spirit in Mandailing, back than the bastion of republican fighters. Thus, the themes and descriptions of the contents of several of Willem Iskander's literary works have been described. The story focuses on the issue of moral education, religion, humanity, heroism, and science for the people of North Sumatra. By concluding the themes raised by Willem Iskander through the story, it can be seen that the insight and orientation of the ideas he displays have entirely abandoned the views and mindsets of traditional society in the context of literary and historical creation, as one of their acts of communication and creativity in the literary tradition.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the above study, it can be concluded that the inculcation of the character value of "si Bulus-bulus si Rumbuk-rumbuk" by Willem Iskander in learning local history is very important to strengthen students' character so that students have a national identity. The character value system has a close relationship with culture. Strengthening students' character through history learning based on literary works is needed to teach students about love for peace, friendship, responsibility, tolerance, national spirit, love for the homeland, and care for the environment, social care, religion, and respect for achievement, independence and discipline.

Literary-based character values in local history learning are needed to dispel the notion that history is boring and less helpful for students. In addition, the inculcation of the character value of "si Bulus-bulus si Rumbuk rumbuk" by



Willem Iskander in learning local history can be a stronghold in the face of global cultural transformation play a role in strengthening national identity. As a suggestion, to preserve character values through learning local history, history teachers should identify/explore local wisdom in their area to introduce one of them, Willem Iskander, socialized to students through integrating or inculcating character values in local history learning.

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