



advantages. In addition, it is also important for people to choose a correct and attractive way in introducing literature to the young learners.

## **DISCUSSION**

### ***The development of Young learners' language skill***

The discussion of literature cannot be separated from the discussion of language because literature is transmitted through language. At first people share the beauty of literature by using the verbal language, such as by retelling stories. However, when people start to invent and know how to write, they start to use another form to share literature. In fact, nowadays, people are more familiar with the existence of literary text, which is in the written form.

The massive development of technology helps people get in touch with many different cultures. At the same time, it is easier for many people to access literary texts which have various cultural backgrounds and use different languages, since as stated by Colson, the existence of language is inseparable from culture (2008). To be able to enjoy those literary texts which use foreign languages and in the same time to know deeper the cultural aspects from those texts, many people try to master foreign languages. In fact, Williams (2010) argues that the function of language in this case is more than just to transmit meaning. Furthermore, people can find biases, practices, values and traditions in all kinds of cultures that cannot be separated from the language used in communication. Given the fact, the need of learning those foreign languages increases through time. Thus, many countries try to introduce those languages to, even, their younger generation.

However, to teach language, especially foreign language to young learners is not as easy as it seems. When people want to teach language to the younger generation, they have to choose the most suitable materials and also techniques which depend on the children developmental stage. Phillips (2003: 5) gives her comments:

It would not be reasonable to ask a child to do a task that demands a sophisticated control of spatial orientation if he or she has not yet developed this skill. On the other hand, beginners of 11 or 12 years of age will not respond well to an activity that they perceive as childish, or well below their intellectual level, even if it is linguistically appropriate.

Thus, both the materials and techniques of teaching language to the younger generations have to be carefully selected.

As stated by Linse (2005:46), it is easier for the young learners to learn language through any forms of entertainment. It is because they are already familiar with the basic unit of language, which is word. They use words while

they play, either alone or with their friends. Basically, most of children love to do role-playing. They practice their speaking ability when they converse between one to another. Linse (2005: 46) also adds that children "practice and adapt scripts that they heard from adults either in person or on TV. Young children talk when they engage in make-believe activities".

Papalia, Sally and Ruth (2008: 337) argue that young learners gain their linguistic ability during their school years. During this period they start to use language for practical use, or in other words it is known as pragmatics. The area of pragmatics includes both conversational and narrative skills. Those experts also give their example:

When first-graders tell stories, they usually do not make them up; they are more likely to relate a personal experience. Most 6-year-olds can retell the plot of a short book, movie, or television show. They are beginning to describe motives and casual links. By second grade, children's stories become longer and more complex. Fictional tales often have conventional beginnings and endings ("Once upon a time..." and "They lived happily ever after," or simply "The end"). Word use is more varied than before, but characters do not show growth or change, and plots are not fully developed.

Based on the above quotation, it is clear that children acquire their pragmatics ability when they enter the school years.

According to Papalia, Sally and Ruth (2008: 337), young learners give respond to a certain language teaching based on "what it does or what they can do with it, rather than treating it as an intellectual game or abstract system." They also give some points to be remembered. Those points are:

- a. The children should be able to understand the purpose of the activities. Therefore, the activities should not be too complicated.
- b. The task should be reachable and also sufficiently motivating for them to feel pleased with their work.
- c. The listening activities for very young children should have a large proportion. On the other hand, the oral based activities should have a bigger portion of the class time.
- d. The younger children should have a minimum portion for the writing activities.

Given the above facts, therefore, it is clear that children knowledge and ability related to the area of pragmatics develop through times. Papalia, Sally and Ruth (2008: 338) explains that when young learners learn language through storytelling's session, there are several differences in their center of attention:

Older children usually "set the stage" with introductory information about the setting and characters, and they clearly indicate changes of time and place during the story. They construct more complex episodes than younger children do, but with less unnecessary detail. They focus more on the characters' motives and thoughts, and they think through how to resolve problems in the plot.

Huck, *et. al* (1987) clarifies the above statement. They stated that young learners (especially elementary school students) are one of generations who love stories very much. Wollman-Bonila and Werchaldo (1995: 562-570) also give comment that, in fact, the first grade students are able (and at the same time willing) to give response when they are exposed to literature through the storytelling's session. It is understandable because as stated by Piaget (1951), children in the age of 7-12 are in their cognitive development.

Therefore, in this level of age, children can think systematically toward concrete things, then, literary texts can be a suitable choice to transfer moral teaching to children. Furthermore, Knoeller (in Hasanah, 2012: 99) comments that by exposing literary texts to children, it can help them develop their appreciation toward stories, their writing-reading skills, and also their social development. Friend and Davis (in Hasanah, 2012: 99) also explain that literature can be used as a trigger to get emotive responses from children. In fact, as stated by Simpson (in Hasanah, 2012: 100), literature, especially fictions, can be used as a medium to develop children's reading, speaking and many other skills.

### ***Literature and Young Learners***

Many scholars believe that someone who can appreciate literature is the one who can appreciate life more. By reading literature, this person, in a way, will be able to find answer to the un-answerable questions of life. As commented by Hake (2001):

...only literature gives us a concrete and vivid look at our lives themselves and what is most basic and ultimate in them. Are you interested in literature? I hope at least you are interested in life! I hope you haven't already given up all hope and settled for a mindless life: a life in which your senses, feelings and thoughts are all deadened or dying, and you are simply caught up in a whirl of meaningless activity. If you haven't, literature has a lot to offer you.

Thus, it is important for people, regardless their background (age, social status and culture), to study literature, or at least to get to know it. Hake further explains that literature presents the experience of human and it imitates human life. It happens because by using his/her "artistic selection" literary writers will

simplify, clarify and discuss human experience vividly in their writings. In other words, they want to help the readers of their works to be able to make sense out of their own lives (2001). Hence, it is obvious that literature offers its readers many benefits.

In line with Hake, O'Sullivan stated that nowadays many institutions see literature as an important component, especially in the English language teaching. Moody (1987) also argues that studying literature can bring people back to the realities of life and at the same time it helps them recognize human problems.

Seeing those facts, it is really important and urgent to let the young learners to get themselves familiar with literary texts. According to Kurn (2009) when readers become aware of some special features found in literary texts (such as "cultural differences, the complexity of language, and connotations"), sometimes they will face difficulties in reaching a deeper understanding of a certain literary work. However, after they come into the inner message of this work, they will find out that by reading literature not only are they able to find enjoyment, but the activity also helps them develop themselves, teach them about the universe, and provide much information related to ideology as well as education.

#### ***Storytelling as a medium to introduce Literature to Young Learners***

As stated by Moody (in Kurn, 2009) there are several traditional ways that can be seen as the most suitable ways to introduce literature to the wider readers. Those ways are "oral activity, conversation, greetings, oratory, story telling, and discussion", which are mostly done by the European and American. He then adds that when someone is exposed to literary texts and he/she is trying to enjoy it by reading it, then indirectly his/her basic ability and competences are being developed (1987: 3). Thus, it is not surprising to see that nowadays more and more people with multi-backgrounds (age, social status and culture) enjoy their time when they are exposed to literary texts since those texts offer them many advantages.

As previously mentioned, one of the suitable ways to introduce literature to the young learners is by conducting the storytelling's session. As stated by Wright (2003), "stories are particularly important in the lives of our children: stories help children to understand their world and to share it with others."

In fact, based on the article entitled "Storytelling: Benefits and Tips" (2003), storytelling is a useful medium to develop students' "understanding, respect and appreciation for other cultures" and it also can help them increase their positive attitudes to people who come from many different backgrounds. This article also adds that storytelling can create a good communication and intercultural

understanding because by enjoying this activity, those young learners can learn many things. Basically, they are able to:

- a. explore their own cultural roots,
- b. get in touch with various kind of cultures which then allow them to find out the differences and similarities of those cultures,
- c. learn more about unfamiliar people / places / situations / local wisdom,
- d. have wider perspectives on various traditions, values and other people's life experiences,
- e. to have new ideas, and
- f. unify cultures and create a connection across the cultural gap.

Wright (2003: 12) also gives several guidelines on how a story teller can choose a correct story for young learners. First, a story teller can choose a story which can attract children's attention from its' first few lines. Second, he/she can choose a story that he/she likes, so he/she can enjoy his/her story telling session with children. Third, he/she has to choose a story which he/she considers suitable for children. Fourth, he/she has to choose a story which is easier to be understood by children. Thus, they can enjoy the story. Fifth, he/she has to choose a story which can give children a chance to get in touch with language. Sixth, he/she has to choose a short and simple story which is easy for the young learners to understand. Seventh, he/she has to choose a story which is suitable, in terms of context and time. Finally, he/she has to choose a story which he/she can tell very well.

In line with Wright, Ellis, Brewster, Armstrong, and Bell (in Brezinova, 2007: 15), suggested that there are eight (8) important criteria related to the selection of a story. Those criteria are as follows.

1. The age of the young learners
2. The language level of the target group
3. The target group's interest and motivation
4. New and familiar language's balance
5. "Illustration"
6. "Natural repetition"
7. Pronunciation's practice
8. Positive attitudes' creation

Brezinova (2007: 15) also adds that it is important for the storyteller to choose a story that is based on the children's interest since they "can identify with the characters and through the use of their imagination they become a part of the story."

### ***Materials and Activities in Storytelling***

According to Brezinova (2007: 26), a story teller has to maintain eye contact and use his/her ability to "dramatise the story telling." In this case, he/she has to choose the right level of language to help children absorb the message in the story. As commented by Brezinova, "we can either simplify the language for very young learners or make it more difficult for the older ones." She also adds that the story teller can use various properties to make the story telling session even more interesting, such as "hat, soft toys or even some pictures made by children."

In line with Brezinova, Wright (2003: 14) also stated that some teachers, who use a story telling technique in their classrooms, oftenly equipped themselves with 'a story bag' full of properties like friendly puppets, hat, coat, pictures, an old umbrella or basket full of food in it.

Wright (2003: 15-17) then adds that a good story teller has to be creative in delivering his/her story to the young learners. Another way which he/she can use is by using various human voices (includes pitch, volume, rhythm, softness/harshness, pace and pause), and making use of his/her face and body to deliver his/her story.

Thus, to attract the attention of the young learners, the story teller has to choose the materials and activities carefully. He/she has to consider several aspects as mentioned by those experts. Furthermore, he/she also has to set the goal. Does he/she only want to introduce literature by re-telling it to the children?, or does he/she also want to teach those children the way to become good story tellers?

When a story teller wants to introduce the beauty of literature, he/she can equip him/herself with a story as well as a set of visual aids. To make the presentation more interesting, the story teller has to use various human voices, face expressions and body movements to deliver his/her story. To make it more challenging, he/she can lead the young learners to do a small discussion at the end of the story telling's session. The discussion has to be connected to the discussion of the intrinsic and also extrinsic elements of literature. The story teller can create questions which can arouse the children's curiosity related to those elements.

The examples of those intrinsic elements are the characters, the setting of place and time, the plot, and etc. To relate the intrinsic elements to the discussion of culture, the story teller discusses about the extrinsic elements in the short story, such as the social and cultural background of the short story. The examples of those questions are as follows.

1. Questions related to the intrinsic elements:
  - a. How many characters that are involved in the story? Please mention their names one by one!
  - b. Where do they live?
  - c. What did they do in the story?
  - d. Where and when does the story happen?
  - e. What kinds of lesson(s) that the young learners can learn from the story? (especially related to the discussion of culture)
2. Topic of discussions related to the extrinsic elements:
  - a. The young learners have to describe the outfits that are worn by the characters.
  - b. They have to describe the place(s) where the character(s) live.
  - c. They also have to compare and contrast the cultural aspects that are found in the story with the ones that are found in their own surroundings.

The discussion of the intrinsic elements will help the young learners understand the story and also check their comprehension, while the discussion of the extrinsic elements will help them to gain the deeper meaning of this story. As stated by "Storytelling: Benefits and Tips" (2003), by learning about the extrinsic elements of a certain literary text, the young learners will be able to develop their "understanding, respect and appreciation for other cultures" and it also can encourage them to have positive attitudes to people who come from various backgrounds.

Then, after finishing the discussion's session, the story teller can continue the session by giving the young learners a chance to be story tellers. He/she can divide the children into smaller groups. Then, he/she can distribute different stories to the children. Each of those groups is equipped with some visual aids (such as puppets and pictures). Firstly, they have to practice to be story tellers individually within a specific time. When they are ready they can take turn to practice to be story tellers in their own groups. After finishing this session, some of them will be invited as volunteers to perform his/her story in front of the class.

The above session is conducted as a medium for the participants to have their own experiences as story tellers. In fact, they can push their abilities and imaginations to the limit, and at the same time it motivates them to have more confidence.

## **CONCLUSION**

Literature offers so many advantages to its lovers. Many scholars believe that by studying literature, people can learn about the realities of life and at the



same time it helps them recognize human problems. Therefore, it is important to introduce literature to wider readers, especially to the younger generations. It is agreed that people have to choose a correct and attractive way in introducing literature, especially to the young learners. Using activities which are interesting and meaningful will help those children acquire the deeper meaning of literary texts.

Story telling is one of the best examples of how people can introduce the beauty of literature to the young learners. Through this technique, not only are the learners able to appreciate the beauty of a certain literary text, but the technique will also develop the children's awareness of cultural differences. In brief, literature will help them to find enjoyment and also help them open the secret of the universe.

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