

**INTRODUCING CHILDREN'S LITERATURE  
BY MAXIMAZING TABTALE'S INTERACTIVE BOOKS  
AT DIGITAL DEVICES**

Titik Wahyuningsih  
Faculty of Letters  
University of Muhammadiyah Purwokerto  
Email: titikwahyuningsih@ump.ac.id  
HP: 08132 8833 868

**Abstract**

*The rapid development of technology has changed children's attention mostly to computer and its all-things rather than to paper based things. This way, story books for children may become untouched things that lead to the unheard of strange things to children. If the condition happens, language acquisition, cultural understanding, and moral teaching and all the advantages of tales reading will then come into only a fantasy. TabTale's interactive storybooks provide an exciting and rich reading experience on iPad, iPhone and other digital devices. With over 25 million downloads TabTale's interactive books, games and educational apps provide a new interactive experience full of innovative activities which inspire children's creativity and imagination as well as help caring parents to educate their lovable children in a uniquely enjoyable and fun way. As brilliant interactive books for kids, TabTale provide many famous stories for children in which in each title not only can we enjoy the story but games as well. Thus, children can help the characters inside the stories to do certain things, tap a character and see how it transforms, opt whether to read the story by themselves and record the sound or let the media read for them so they know the best way to pronounce the words, do puzzles in between the readings, paint the pictures, count objects, match pictures, and else. Thus, the variations of activities inside motivate children to know more and understand any aspects of education they should get in their early stage of life.*

**Key words:** *Children's Literature, Tab Tale's Interactive Books, Digital Devices, educational apps, innovative activities*

**A. DISCUSSION**

The rapid development of technology has changed children's attention mostly to computer and its all-things rather than to paper-based things. This way, story books for children may become untouched things that lead to the unheard or strange things to children unless we find a way to make children keep on knowing stories.

Through the centuries, children find the experiences of reading books. However, by the changing of times, they come into dismay to find out that books' performance is not pleasurable enough. For this reason, Locke said that "to encourage reading, a child should be given an "easy pleasant book suited to his capacity." (<http://www.faqs.org/childhood/Ch-Co/Children-s-Literature.html>).

Looking back into the history, we find that there were no books written specially for children that made children read adult books. Thus, they read *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe,

*Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift, *Rip Van Winkle* by Washington Irving that are actually intended for adults. Thus, it can be said that children literature is relatively a new genre.

Later development, some writers attempted to provide texts for older children as well as adolescent literature that subsequently became a separated genre from children's literature. On the other hand, adults also read children's book, make indistinct the borders between children's and adult's texts. J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter has become an evidence of the fact.

The availability of children's books at first times were those to instruct children. "Before 1850, books taught lessons on manners and morals." (<http://www.generalfiles.me/download/source/g6004cd66h32i0>). Thus, we find that there were moral messages inside stories for children to conduct them to do certain things just like what adults wish them to do. This condition is rather different than what we can find nowadays that stories for children mostly intended to amuse them rather than teaching them rules.

Between the first books available for children was encyclopedia for children written by Anselm (1033-1109 AD), the Archbishop of Canterbury (<http://www.generalfiles.me/download/source/g6004cd66h32i0>). Later, bible was also published at Renaissance era as well as Aesop's Fables in the middle English period. Here Locke recommended to *Aesop's Fable* by noting, "If his Aesop has pictures in it, it will entertain him much the better." (<http://www.faqs.org/childhood/Ch-Co/Children-s-Literature.html>).

However, as the cost for printing children books were so expensive, the first "permanent" book was called Hornbook was a trend at the time of Renaissance.

"It was a square piece of wood with a handle at one end which measured  $2\frac{3}{4}$  inches by 5 inches. A printed page of vellum (made from skin of calf, lamb, or goat) was pasted on the board." (<http://www.generalfiles.me/download/source/g6004cd66h32i0>)"

Following hornbook, rhymed alphabets and primers were published for children. For years, this kind of book became children's text books. The Royal Primer had a letter of alphabet, followed by a familiar verse. *A In Adam's fall, we sinned all.* (<http://www.generalfiles.me/download/source/g6004cd66h32i0>)

Later on, at Puritan times, we started to find out children books illustrated ones. We can find out "the first illustrated textbook includes simple captions in Lahnand in the common language as well as woodcuts that provide a visual encyclopedia of the world. (<http://www.faqs.org/childhood/Ch-Co/Children-s-Literature.html>). Popova also believed that

"From very early on, we both intuit and learn the language of pictorial representation, and most modern adults, the picture book was our first dictionary of this visual vocabulary. Though pictorial storytelling dates back to the earliest cave wall paintings" (<http://www.brainpicking.org/index.php/2012/02/24/childrens-picturebooks/>).

"Caldecott's work heralds the beginning of the modern picture book. He devised an ingenious juxtaposition of picture and word, a counter point that never happened before. Words are left out — but the picture says it. Pictures are left out — but the words say it. In short, it is the invention of the picture book." (Popova, <http://www.brainpicking.org/index.php/2012/02/24/childrens-picturebooks/>).

The following development, in 1700s, children's books contained ballads and folktales. At this time, printing cost was not too expensive that ordinary person could afford to buy these books. In the beginning of the 1800s, literary authors who wrote only for adults did it for children as well. Creative illustrations were also found at children's literature.

Subsequently, more creative and attractive books called movable books or pop-ups came into public. The most original movable picture books of the 19th century were devised by Lothar Meggendorfer. (Montanaro, <http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/libs/scua/montanar/p-intro.htm>).

In the 1930's Blue Ribbon Publishing of New York animated Walt Disney characters and traditional fairy tales with pop-ups. Blue Ribbon was the first publisher to use the term "pop-up" to describe their movable illustrations (Montanaro, <http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/libs/scua/montanar/p-intro.htm>). Other kinds of books were considered toys as well as they were board books available for infants and toddlers. Between the examples was Rosemary Wells's *Max Ride* (1979).

Through the digital era, eBook grows. At the beginning era, publishers just copied printed picture books on to PDF format. Another important aspect of the growth of children's literature has been media: films and TV series. Through this time, we can see Walt Disney's cinema broadcasted widely. *Snow White and Seven Dwarfs* began the force in 1937 and we still can see until today much more such as *Donald Ducks*.

"The adaptation of texts into cinemas has both complicated the meaning of a children's literature text and made children are more familiar with a text through viewing a media adaptation than through reading the books. Disney's adaptation of Hans Christian Anderson's fairy tale, *The Little Mermaid* (1989), led to a revival of the company's film fortunes" (Allan 1999 via [http://www.randomhistory.com/2008/09/23\\_disney.html](http://www.randomhistory.com/2008/09/23_disney.html)).

However, the growth of children's literature on screens has bad impact on defamiliarizing children from reading text books.

Further, children are got further away from reading books through the rapid development of this digital era. From a research, we find that

"in 2006, 90 percent of parents said that their children younger than 2 consumed some form of electronic media. The 2011 report mentioned "smart cell phone" and "new screen" technologies, but did not address interactive apps. Nor did it broach the possibility that has likely occurred to those 90 percent of American parents, queasy though they might be: that some good might come from those little swiping fingers" (Rosin, 2013: <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2013/04/the-touch-screen-generation/309250>).

The condition, likely, happens widely on earth as the consequence of borderless space due to the media.

## **B. DISCUSSION**

### **The Importance of Children's Literature**

Hewins says, "There have been children's stories and folk-tales ever since man first learned to speak. Children's books, however, are a late growth of literature." The statement seems factual in our country, Indonesia.

"It has been known that story telling or *dongeng* in Indonesia plays an important role as an oral literature. The activity involves direct contact between teller and listener, usually a mother and her child(ren). The tellers used to do this activity to accompany their children to go to bed. Anyhow, the activity seems to disappear, mothers no more telling stories to children before going to bed." (Wahyuningsih, 2009: 194)

Stories for children was an oral literature at first, as most of our people were illiterate. However, the habits of telling stories to children has built up many positive effects. Through the stories, children build imagination that mostly help them to stimulate their brain to be smart ones. Through stories, children can also understand others better. Stories also make them know the

wider world with wider perspective. Julius Lester via Uchima (2007) discusses the influence of literature on the imagination.

“... literature is the royal road that enables us to enter the realm of the imaginative. Literature enables us to experience what it is like to be someone else. Through literature, we experience other modes of being. Through literature, we recognize who we are and what we might become.”

Further, Uchima (2007:2) says, “Experiencing stories through listening to narration, dialogue, sound effects, and music forced us to create pictures in our minds.” Uchima (2007:2-3) adds, “Also, imagination is related to empathy, since relating to another person’s feeling requires being able to “imagine” how they feel. Thus, listening to story telling or reading it really helps children to upgrade their potential of facing life. On the other hand, when children do not get more stories, language acquisition, cultural understanding, and moral teaching and all the advantages of tales reading will then come into only a fantasy.

Although not all stories for children have happy endings, there is always a ray of hope in the end, even in the most tragic of circumstances. This way, we help them to be optimistic in facing any single problems in life.

Listening to or reading stories also helps children to build their visions of life. They are accustomed to know the pattern they face. “Many stories include rhymes and predictable patterns that invite active participation by children” (Uchima, 2007:4). They are getting more active as well to take part in the stories they are involved in.

### **The Attractiveness of Interactive Books**

The Czech theologian and educator Johan Comenius recognized that children learn both visually and verbally. This integration of visual and verbal elements has remained a significant design of children’s literature, particularly in information and picture books. Through the development of the digital era, we find TabTale’s interactive storybooks fulfill the curiosity of children.

TabTale’s interactive storybooks provide an exciting and rich reading experience on iPad, iPhone and other digital devices. With over 25 million downloads TabTale’s interactive books, games and educational apps provide a new interactive experience full of innovative activities which inspire children’s creativity and imagination as well as help caring parents to educate their lovable children in a uniquely enjoyable and fun way.

Take an example of how a TabTale’s interactive storybook entitled *Alice In Wonderland* serve its interactive ways to fulfill children’s activities. *Alice In Wonderland* is chosen here as it is the most popular literary fairy tale of Victorian period. Together with Carroll’s other works, they are amazingly free of religious or social lessons. It is also considered a milestone of children’s literature from instruction to delight.

From this book, we can follow Alice having her adventures. As the title suggests, we can predict that the adventures take place in a land full of wonder, and for a child, that is a world of fantasy where we can do everything freely.

In the course of the adventures, not only Alice but also the interactive book player can experience wonderful stories they have never undergone before. Here, every player (in textbook we may call reader), may discover different experiences from various animations. It depends on what to tap on the screen. Whatever, every single experience must be great and wonderful.

Opening the program, we can choose ‘auto play’, ‘read it myself’, or ‘read me.’ Selecting ‘auto play’ results on having the program read by the device and turn the pages by itself. In condition that we choose ‘read it myself’, we can control the reading by ourselves and turn on the next pages whenever we wish for. Pushing ‘read me’ key makes the device read the story for us but we have to press the next page button by ourselves.

The same enjoyment happens on whatever key we choose. If we have the text, the sentence that is being read turns blue, so that we know which part is going on. We may also have the text on it or not. We can listen to the text being read or record our own voice while enjoying all the animation on hand. Besides that, we may also pick the pictures that are animated while they are being touched. For young children, this part may attract better than the words. Else, we may also pat the top right corner button in which puzzle, counting, jigsaw puzzle, paint, and memory match are available. All deal with the animation provided.

### C. CONCLUSION

Children’s literature has passed many steps on its growth. Its existence really helps children in every step of their life to change for the better. Though text books are without doubt left away as the impact of the rapid development of digital era, children’s literature has to be persisted. The evolution of TabTale interactive books for children may answer the crisis.

As brilliant interactive books for kids, TabTale provide many famous stories for children in which in each title not only can we enjoy the story but games as well. Thus, children can help the characters inside the stories to do certain things, tap a character and see how it transforms, opt whether to read the story by themselves and record the sound or let the media read for them so they know the best way to pronounce the words, do puzzles in between the readings, paint the pictures, count objects, match pictures, and else. Thus, the variations of activities inside motivate children to know more and understand any aspects of education they should get in their early stage of life.

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