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BILINGUAL BALINESE FABLE BOOK SHARING TO PROMOTE EARLY LITERACY AND LOCAL CHARACTER VALUES DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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Abstract: This study explores how sharing bilingual Balinese fable books in early childhood education settings can support early literacy and help develop important local character values in young children. The research was conducted in four PAUD (early childhood education) schools in the Kediri District of Tabanan, Bali, Indonesia. It involved eight teachers, eight children with their parents, and school principals. The researchers used classroom observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis of the fable storybooks to collect data.The findings reveal that the book-sharing activity follows four clear stages: preparing the books, sharing them with children, telling the stories interactively, and engaging children in follow-up activities such as singing, playing, and colouring. Five Balinese fable storybooks were used in this program, including *Siap Selem, I Lutung teken Kakua*, Goat and Tiger, Honest Balinese Starling, and *Angsa teken Empas*. Through these stories, children were exposed to moral messages about honesty, kindness, responsibility, and creativity. Importantly, the study found that this activity helps instil eight character values in children: friendliness, peace-loving attitudes, hard work, creativity, honesty, respect for achievement, discipline, and tolerance. These values are essential for preserving Balinese cultural identity in the face of globalisation. The use of bilingual books—combining Balinese, Indonesian, and English—also helps children become familiar with multiple languages while staying connected to their local heritage. The study concludes that sharing bilingual Balinese fable books is an effective and meaningful way to promote early literacy and strengthen local character in early childhood education. The researchers recommend that more schools adopt this approach to help young children develop both language skills and strong moral foundations rooted in their own culture.
Keywords: *bilingual storybooks; Balinese fables; early literacy; character education; early childhood education; local culture.*

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is a pivotal phase in which education helps establish the foundation for later development (Hosokawa et al., 2024; Rumbidzai & Achebe, 2023; Wildmon et al., 2024). Children must maximise their potential to support growth and development (Berti & Cigala, 2022; Tohara et al., 2021). Consequently, it is imperative to furnish them with appropriate stimulation (Sofiah & Katoningsih, 2023). Children's ability to read and write is a commonly discussed topic in early childhood education, often referred to as literacy (Hadley et al., 2023; Li et al., 2025; Oshchepkova et al., 2023).

Literacy activities, encompassing reading and writing, are fundamental skills imparted to children at an early age (Chuang, 2023; Liu et al., 2024). Acquiring reading and writing skills is an ongoing endeavour (Albashtawi & Al Bataineh, 2020; Sweller, 2023). While early exposure to reading and writing can occur, these skills do not develop without adult support (Andreou & Raxioni, 2024; Papadopoulou et al., 2025). Educators can support children in this context

once they have started preschool, with parental involvement at home being paramount (McConkey, 2024; McCoy & Sabol, 2025; Petronella et al., 2025).

Acquiring reading and writing skills can progress concurrently with enhanced spoken communication (Donolato et al., 2023; Hadley et al., 2023; Kittle et al., 2024). The benefits children derive from auditory and verbal communication should correlate with, or enhance, their reading and writing skills, and vice versa (Annika & Johanna, 2025; van Bergen et al., 2023). By reciting a basic rhyme, students can subsequently align their interpretation of the rhyme and attempt to articulate it (Bear, 2022; Nicholas & Rouse, 2021). Phonological awareness begins when a child can articulate basic rhymes, possibly with minimal adult assistance (Brown, 2022; Holcomb, 2023).

Early literacy refers to the essential skills and comprehension children acquire before attaining proficient reading and writing abilities (Kumar & Behera, 2022; Vinci-Booher et al., 2025). As children begin school and are taught from an early age to read and critically assess texts before articulating their understanding and interpretations, they may pose unforeseen questions. Children actively create their own interpretations. (Christou, 2025; Maria et al., 2024). The educational framework, especially in early childhood education, ought to foster children's passion for actively listening, analysing, reconstructing, and interpreting the material they encounter in school (Timmons et al., 2021).

Developing literacy competencies during early infancy encompasses both verbal and cognitive faculties (Frischen et al., 2022; Snowling & Hulme, 2021). It is accomplished through the engagement of parents, educators, and children, focusing on subjects pertinent to children's daily lives (Zhang et al., 2026). Early literacy involves more than merely reading literature; it includes the capacity to understand and analyse the surroundings (Mecklenburg & Scheithauer, 2026; Zhou et al., 2025). The hallmark of early literacy is the assimilation of knowledge through casual methods, such as participating in pleasurable activities, fostering an atmosphere where youngsters remain unaware of their active learning (Volling & Cabrera, 2025). Preliminary literacy fosters children's linguistic growth, cognitive abilities, creativity, and imagination, while also strengthening connections through shared reading and activities (Bakaraki et al., 2024; Ødegaard, 2021), as well as 21st-century competencies such as communication, teamwork, analytical reasoning, and innovative thinking (Ratama et al., 2021).

Numerous methods exist for fostering early literacy, such as familiarising children with illustrated storybooks. Ensure children have access to a diverse selection of age-appropriate literature (Tohara et al., 2021). These illustrated books typically present uncomplicated narratives resembling fairy tales that depict human nature and morality (Angelaki, 2024). The prevalent narratives presented to youngsters are fables, succinct tales that illustrate human characteristics through anthropomorphised creatures capable of speech and thought (Azizah et al., 2022; Gasser et al., 2022).

Allegorical narratives and ethical lessons have historically been a hallmark of fables, which have been integrated into global literary traditions (Brown et al., 2022). These tales are concise and typically include animals, plants, or inanimate creatures endowed with human traits to provide ethical teachings or life guidance (Treich, 2022). Enduring parables like Aesop's fables and those from other cultural heritages have been utilised for centuries to educate and entertain (Villanueva et al., 2023). Fables are widely used to teach children literacy skills. Fables embody ethical principles inherent to a specific society and tradition.

In numerous PAUD institutions in the Kediri District of Tabanan Regency, Bali, Indonesia, educators distribute picture books featuring local Balinese legends. This task is performed every Friday. Children participate in an introductory activity with picture books, primarily local Balinese fables presented in both Indonesian and English. The characters in this storybook are distinct representations of Balinese culture, with the names of the animal figures reflecting the names of animals in Balinese.

In addition to learning to hold, open, and examine picture storybooks, children are also indirectly exposed to a blend of letters and words in Balinese, Indonesian, and English. In this endeavour, the educator plays a significant role in fostering the child's interest in the book and facilitating engaging related activities. Furthermore, the ethical lesson embedded in this fable is anticipated to cultivate children's character.

The use of bilingual books that combine English and Indonesian or English and Balinese at the Early Childhood Education (PAUD) level offers a literacy approach that is highly adaptable

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to the sociocultural context of Balinese society (Padmdewi et al., 2025; Wayan et al., 2026). Given Bali's position as a hub of international interaction, introducing English at an early age through picture books helps children build vocabulary and develop sensitivity to a foreign language in a natural and non-intimidating way. At the same time, the presence of text in the mother tongue (Balinese) or the national language (Indonesian) on the same page serves as "scaffolding"(Indriani et al., 2026). This accompanying text ensures that children remain grounded in their cultural identity while also making their first language a powerful tool for decoding and understanding the newly learned language (Bagus et al., 2025; Hayes et al., 2026).

From an educational standpoint, this multilingual approach is an efficient way to enhance reading abilities and comprehension (Leonet et al., 2025; Wayan et al., 2026). When children view a story illustration with two language codes side by side, their cognitive abilities are trained to associate visual symbols with different sounds and meanings (Ansoriyah et al., 2025; Campbell & Cunningham, 2025). This process prevents the phenomenon in which children can sound out words without understanding the story's content. Through routine interactive read-aloud sessions of bilingual books led by teachers or parents, early childhood education classrooms can become text-rich environments that encourage children to realise that language, whether their ancestral heritage language or a global lingua franca, is a fun tool for exploring the world.

Research indicates that illustrated storybooks are highly beneficial in fostering literacy, reading, and writing skills during early childhood (Bai et al., 2022; Crawford et al., 2024; Lo et al., 2024; Rahiem, 2021; Safitriani et al., 2025). Regional illustrated narratives often captivate children's interest in reading, enhance students' English literacy, and save local heritage (Chen, 2025; Lestari & Suprapto, 2025). Bilingual storybooks are extensively distributed nowadays to familiarise children with a second language, particularly Basic English vocabulary found within the narratives. (KK Nair et al., 2023; Ollerhead & Pennington, 2026; Read et al., 2021). Previous research by Adrian (2025) and (2022) found that the teacher uses the popular Balinese fable *"I Siap Selem"* (The Black Chicken), which is told using a bilingual storytelling technique (English–Indonesian/Balinese) video, puppet, and story books; however, this approach is still rarely used in schools in suburban areas. This approach has shown positive results in improving children's introduction to English. By presenting fable storybooks to youngsters, they can envision and articulate animal behaviour, thereby acquiring moral or character lessons. Nonetheless, locating prior studies that present local Balinese fable storybooks as instruments for character development and the reinforcement of local Balinese identity is challenging.

The occurrence seen at many PAUD institutions within Kediri District is novel and distinctive, warranting additional examination concerning: (1) What is the nature of the Bilingual Balinese Fable Book Sharing initiative at the PAUD School in Kediri, Tabanan, Bali? (2) What character values emerge and are developed in the Bilingual Balinese Fable Book given to children?

METHOD

To address the research enquiries, a qualitative case study methodology was employed to examine the Bilingual Balinese book-sharing initiative in kindergartens within the Kediri sub-district, the relationships that transpire during the activity, and the local character values that arise. A qualitative case study is beneficial because it seeks to understand the specific challenge of disseminating bilingual Balinese fairy tale books to enhance children's literacy and character value development. The selected PAUD school is ideal for understanding the problem for several reasons. Initially, these institutions distribute Bilingual Balinese literature to the youngsters present. Secondly, several multilingual texts in Indonesian and English narrate local Balinese tales. Eight PAUD institutions are engaging in book-sharing initiatives centred around this Bilingual Balinese Fable Book volume.

This research gathered data from several sources, including comprehensive classroom observations and semi-structured interviews, focusing on the classroom activities of eight educators in the PAUD School. Before initiating the case study, the researcher reviewed literature on curriculum planning and linked it to the book-sharing endeavour. This information gave the researcher deeper insight into the challenges of establishing PAUD schools, particularly in fostering early literacy and cultivating local Balinese character values.

The research engaged all 8 PAUD educators from 4 PAUD institutions in the Kediri sub-district that implemented book-sharing initiatives, including Bilingual Balinese fable book sharing

for children, with the principal also opting to participate. All attendees are properly registered and accredited educators in Kediri, Tabanan, Bali, Indonesia. Participants were assigned to teach children in PAUD, particularly in the TK B class (Year/Grade 5 to Year/Grade 6), at the research location throughout the full research period. They were distributed among four PAUD institutions: TK Luhur Damai School, TK Negeri Kecamatan Kediri, TK Triamarta, and PAUD Growing Tree.

To examine teachers' roles in the activities, the researcher collected varied data to gather supporting evidence from several sources. Data sources included extensive classroom observations; semi-structured interviews with 8 PAUD educators and 8 children, accompanied by field notes; and semi-structured interviews with the principal. To address RQ1, the methodology involved classroom observation, meticulously documenting each occurrence during the Bilingual Balinese fable book-sharing session, as well as capturing key aspects of classroom activities with a Canon 500D DSLR camera. In-depth interviews were conducted using a predetermined list of questions to augment and triangulate the data. The video footage was meticulously examined to assess the educational activities occurring in the classroom, enabling their subsequent classification into several levels.

Addressing RQ2 closely mirrors the approach taken for RQ1, with the addition of a document analysis focused on the ethical principles included in each narrative of the utilised fable collection. In this section, data were collected through three methods: observation supplemented by video recording. The findings were then carefully recorded in a table containing the story title, characters, setting, moral message, and learning activities. Interview results were also cross-referenced with character values and learning activities. Similarly, document analysis was conducted to verify whether the character values that emerged in the learning activities aligned with the plot and moral values in the storybook.

The examination encompassed information from eight interviews with English educators, four interviews with the school administrator, and field notes derived from eight classroom observations. The main data source was interviews with early childhood education instructors. Supplementary evidence came from field notes from classroom observations and discussions with the school administrator. The information gathered from the classroom observation procedure was further processed to eliminate superfluous data. Next, the book-sharing activity procedure and associated exchanges were identified. Subsequently, the character values identified in the activity are presented.

This information is presented based on the entries in the observation sheet and the outcomes of the video recording subscription. In answer to RQ1, the observational data were examined and subsequently showcased as the phases of the Bilingual Balinese Fable Book Sharing initiative at the PAUD School in Kediri, Tabanan, Bali. First, the video recordings were transcribed to obtain clear information on the learning activities. The transcribed data were then grouped according to the emerging patterns (thematic) of these activities, which could later be categorised into stages of learning. Interview data then supported this to confirm the previously obtained results.

Then, to answer RQ2, the document analysis data was combined with data from interviews with teachers and children whose parents guided them, then analysed by mapping the generic structure of the stories and determining the moral value of the story, which was then further analysed using the classification of 18 national character values (Permendikbud, 2018). Document analysis was also conducted by analysing these fable storybooks, starting by creating a table to classify the titles, characters, settings, plots, and moral values contained in the stories. This is where the findings regarding the character values developed during this learning process were obtained.

Subsequently, the information is presented and validated through charts and tables. The information gathered from the interview process serves as supplementary data for the prior findings: responses from each participant are initially condensed, then subjected to thematic analysis, and integrated with data collected during classroom observations during the verification phase. The analysis of fable novels also uses thematic analysis, categorising the local characters into several classifications. The data were examined in accordance with the analytical framework established by Miles & Huberman (1994).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The nature of the bilingual Balinese fable book sharing initiative at the PAUD School in Kediri, Tabanan, Bali

The figure below shows the analysis of observation data on the nature of the Bilingual Balinese Fable Book Sharing Initiative at PAUD

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Kediri Tabanan School. The nature of the initiative consists of several phases, as listed below:

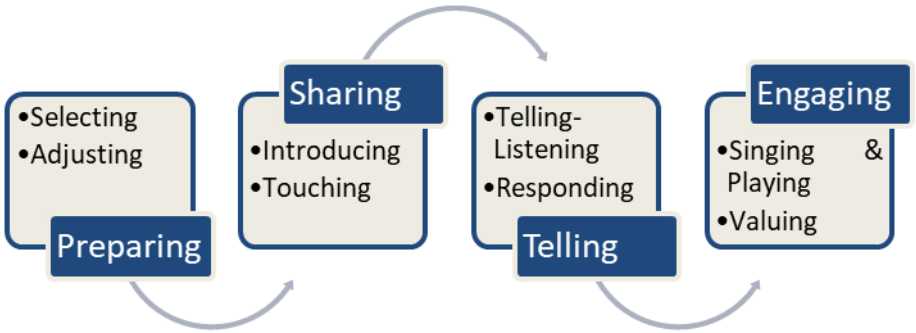


Figure 1. *The nature of bilingual balinese fable book sharing initiative phases in PAUD School, Kediri Tabanan Bali*

Figure 1 above depicts the process of the Bilingual Balinese Fable Book Sharing initiative at the PAUD School in Kediri, Tabanan, Bali. The 4 PAUD schools observed all show the same pattern. The pattern that emerges here consists of four stages. These findings were obtained through classroom observations combined with data from semi-structured interviews with teachers, children assisted by their parents, and the school principal. Broadly speaking, there are four stages, each consisting of smaller steps that make up the activities in this English language introduction program.

First, the teacher selects and prepares a Bilingual Balinese Fable Book suitable for PAUD children. The story's presentation and the diction in the storybook are very easy for children to understand with the teacher's guidance. The prepared books are picture books that contain stories about behaviour, in the form of animal characters, and stories about daily human life in general. These books were chosen because they contain Balinese fables full of local culture and character. The selected books also contain two or more languages, namely Indonesian and English, or Indonesian, English, and Balinese. In this stage, selecting and adjusting storybooks with children is very important.

The second stage is sharing or introducing books to children. At this stage, the teacher brings the prepared books into the classroom. Children are shown or introduced to one book per class session over the next two weeks. In the classroom, children can see and touch the books the teacher will introduce. Children can choose the book they want to read or be told about by the teacher. The teacher then shows the pictures page by page, and children can interact directly by looking at and touching them. Here, the children are also asked stimulating questions about the pictures or the colours in the book.

The third stage is the storytelling stage, where the teacher tells the fable interactively by showing the book's contents and pictures directly. The teacher tells the story in Indonesian, then slips in English and Balinese if the book includes Balinese. The teacher repeats every sentence twice, including the English and Balinese. During storytelling, the teacher also interacts with the children by asking questions about the pictures, characters, and activities each character does in the story. Children can freely listen and watch the teacher tell the story in class. Children can also ask questions and respond to the story.

The fourth stage is engagement. Although interaction occurs in the early stages, engagement here shapes the child's literacy development. Structurally, children are introduced to colours, pictures, letters, morphemes, phonemes, phonetics, stress, words, and sentences. Children also recognise punctuation such as commas, dots, question marks, and exclamation marks. In this section, the teacher uses repetition and emphasis techniques to help children remember and understand the basics of literacy. In addition, the teacher also emphasises English words. These emphases also reflect the teacher's efforts to introduce English in early childhood. Through the interview process, it can be confirmed that the teacher and the principal strive to introduce basic literacy and English from an early age.

In this engagement section, the teacher also provides follow-up activities such as colouring pictures of characters in the fable story and colouring letters that form words contained in the story. Another activity is singing related to the theme and the fable story. Then, play activities, for example, the *megoak-goakan* game and the *meong* and *bikul* game, which relate to the fable

story. At the end of this section, the teacher also gives advice or instructions to children based on the fable's message. For example, do not be arrogant or greedy like in the story of *I Lutung*, and do not have bad intentions like *Meng Kuwuk*, who always wants to eat *Siap Selem* and her child.

The stories often shared with children are Balinese, especially fable stories that develop in the community. Based on observations in PAUD schools in Kediri sub-district, teachers introduce five storybooks to children. The storybooks are (1) *Siap Selem*, (2) *I Lutung teken Kakua*, (3) Goat and Tiger, (4) Honest Balinese Starling, (5) *Angsa teken Empas*. Only these five bilingual fable books are circulating in these four pre-schools. Although there are more storybooks, they are not classified as fables. The interview results also revealed that these bilingual fable books are more popular with pre-school children. This is because children prefer animal characters in stories. However, these fable storybooks are still very limited.

Planning the Bilingual Balinese Fable book-sharing program is inseparable from the success of the activities held by the driving teachers and the PAUD KKG meetings in Kediri sub-district. Although only four PAUD schools routinely implement this program, this program is also a common concern of the KKG PAUD in Kediri District. Teachers routinely discuss the constraints and solutions to the constraints faced. They also discuss the possibility of introducing basic literacy creatively as a variation in PAUD learning in the future.

Characters emerge and develop in the bilingual Balinese fable book given to children

Then, the data obtained to answer RQ2 concern the characters that appear and develop in the Bilingual Balinese Fable Book given to children, obtained through document analysis and interviews. After in-depth analysis, the data is shown in the following table:

Table 1. *Moral values and character values emerge & development based on the fable book*

No.	Balinese Fable Story	Moral Values	Character Values Development
1	Siap Selem	• Do not have ill will toward others. • Do not cheat others. • Stay brave and patient. • Think creatively to find a way out.	• Friendly/Communicative • Peace-loving • Hardworking• Creative
2	I Lutung teken Kekua	• Do not lie to others. • Always take responsibility for your actions. • Do not break promises to others. • Doing bad things will result in bad consequences.	• Honest • Hardworking • Disciplined • Peace-loving
3	Goat and Tiger	• Do not influence others with negative things. • Do not deceive others. • Respect others. • Do not be easily fooled by others.	• Friendly/Communicative • Honest • Peace-loving • Respect for achievement
4	Honest Balinese Starling	• Always be honest in what you say. • Lying to others is a disgraceful act. • Always be loyal to your friends. • Always respect other people.	• Honest• Friendly/Communicative • Peace-loving • Respect for achievement
5	Angsa teken Empas	• Always listen carefully to what others say. • Never underestimate the words of others. • Keep the promises you have made. • Do not be arrogant.	• Respect for achievement • Friendly/Communicative • Honest • Tolerant

Table 1 above is based on a document analysis of the Bilingual Balinese Fable Book Given to Children; the five moral messages show the character values developed in children, following the classification of character values by the Ministry of Education and Culture (2018). In the fable, *Siap Selem*, the moral messages contained in it are (1) not to have bad intentions, (2) not to deceive others, (3) to stay brave and patient, and (4) to think creatively to find a way out. The character values that are grown in children are (1) friendly/communicative, (2) peace-loving, (3) hard work, and (4) creative. The fable *I Lutung teken Kekua* contains moral values (1) not to lie to others, (2) to always be responsible for all actions, (3) not to break promises to others, and (4) doing bad things will get something bad too. The character values grown in children through this story are (1) honesty, (2) hard work, (3) discipline, and (4) love of peace.

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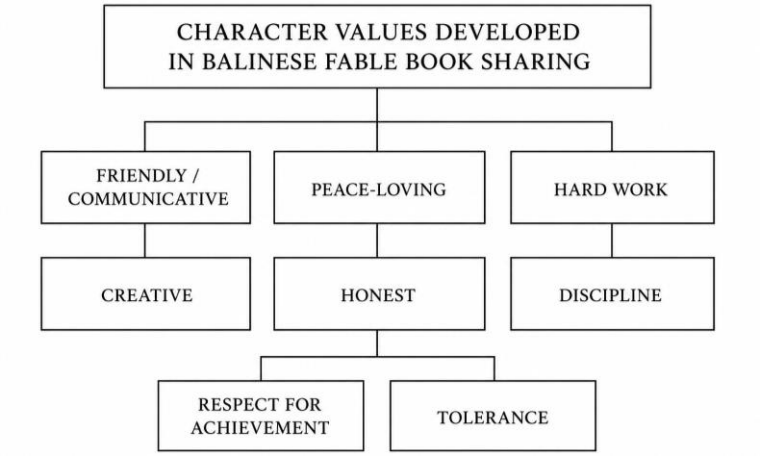


Figure 2. *Character values developed in Balinese fable book sharing initiative in PAUD School, Kediri Tabanan Bali*

Furthermore, the Goat and Tiger fable contains moral messages (1) do not influence others with negative things, (2) should not deceive others, (3) must respect each other others, and (4) do not want to be fooled by others so that the character values that are developed through this fable story are (1) friendly/communicative, (2) honest, (3) peace-loving, and (4) respect for achievement. The fourth fable story is the Honest Balinese Starling, in which there is a moral message: (1) one must always be honest in words, (2) lying to others is an act of disgrace, (3) always being loyal to friends is a good thing, and (4) always respect others. The character values instilled through this fable story are (1) honesty, (2) friendliness/communication, (3) peace-loving, and (4) respect for achievement. The last fable story, *Angsa teken Empas, contains moral messages (1) should always be serious when listening to the words of others, (2) should not underestimate the words of others, (3) be* loyal to promises that have been made, and (4) should not be arrogant. The character values that are grown are (1) respect for achievement, (2) friendly/communicative, (3) honesty, and (4) tolerance.

The findings section shows how the Bilingual Balinese Fable Book Sharing activity took place at PAUD School, Kediri, Tabanan, Bali. This activity is not done spontaneously in the classroom but is planned and structured. Interview data with teachers also show that this Bilingual Balinese Fable Book Sharing activity has been discussed at the KKG (teachers' community) level in Kediri sub-district, and PAUD schools are ready to carry it out in stages. This activity is based on the results of the KKG meeting in Kediri sub-district, which concluded that literacy cultivation must begin at an early age.

Cultivating basic literacy can involve recognising colours, shapes, writing, letters, morphemes, phonemes, phonetics, etc. (Deen et al., 2022; Nair et al., 2023). Children can also learn literature through folktales, especially fables with animal characters (Angelaki, 2024). Children are attracted to animal characters because they are funnier and increase children's curiosity about animal behaviour. Through these fable stories, children also indirectly learn about different kinds of characters, both good and bad, and understand the moral messages in the story (Angelaki, 2024; Villanueva et al., 2023). Through fable stories, children can be instilled with character education values (Azizah et al., 2022; Rahiem & Rahim, 2021).

The Bilingual Balinese Fable Book Sharing activity in PAUD School, Kediri, Tabanan, Bali, is carried out through four stages: preparing, sharing, telling, and engaging. In the first stage, namely preparing, there are two main activities carried out by the teacher, namely selecting the appropriate book, in this case, using the Bilingual Balinese Fable Book, where the book is an original Balinese fable story that contains Balinese culture and uses two or three languages, namely Indonesian, English, and Balinese. The selection of this book was also adjusted to the ability level of PAUD children: it is a picture book with a simple narrative. As in the research by Annika & Johanna (2025), selecting books by adjusting to children's ability when providing reading resources is very important because the learning activity's level, interest, and purpose must be considered.

The second stage is sharing, where children can recognise and touch books in real life. Children can freely open books individually or in groups to see and touch pictures that interest them

and encourage them to get more involved. This stage can arouse children's interest in getting closer to books and, of course, in the fable story that will be told. Introduce books to children in a relaxed way, without forcing them to recognise books. The teacher can show the book's colours, pictures, and elements that can arouse children's interest (Suckert, 2021). The third stage is telling stories, where the teacher reads children's fable stories while children look at pictures and interact actively. The teacher intersperses questions several times so children can respond. This interactive storytelling process can help children listen and speak simply in response to the teacher's questions (Hadley et al., 2023). The teacher also uses bilingualism in storytelling so children can understand both English and Balinese (Maria et al., 2026; Purandina & AR, 2022)

The last stage is the engaging stage, where children are invited to repeat the fable stories they have listened to. Children are invited to sing and play, where the teacher emphasises colours, pictures, letters, letter combinations, words, and how to pronounce words (Lo et al., 2024). In addition, there is also an activity of colouring pictures of characters from the fable story and colouring the combination of letters and words related to the fable story (Garmarini et al., 2021; Sofiah & Katoningsih, 2023). Children are also invited to remember the characters in the story, the nature of each character, and whether children can imitate it (Lo et al., 2024; Rahiem & Rahim, 2021). For example, children can imitate good characters, but not evil ones. This section also introduces moral values; at the end, the teacher gives advice or mandates to children based on the fable shared in class.

Teachers can use children's first language (L1—either Indonesian or Balinese) as a cognitive scaffold to help them understand new vocabulary in a second language or foreign language (L2/FL—namely English) (Indriani et al., 2026; Monige, 2026). Teachers can read the English text aloud first, then encourage children to guess its meaning using Indonesian or Balinese based on the accompanying illustrations. Bilingual texts paired with distinctive Balinese illustrations stimulate the dual-coding theory (KK Nair et al., 2023; Wayan et al., 2026). Children associate a single concrete visual (such as an image of a banyan tree or a temple) with two different linguistic labels. This process enriches children's mental lexicon and accelerates the transition from simply decoding letters to understanding the essence of the story (reading comprehension) (Kargiotidis & Manolitsis, 2026; Salvador, 2026). Children do not merely memorise foreign-language pronunciations but truly understand them because local language equivalents serve as a bridge.

Introducing fable stories is very good for developing children's character education. The moral values in fable stories introduce children to good and bad traits or attitudes (Aerin et al., 2022; Istiyani et al., 2024). This helps children quickly determine which actions are good and bad. More broadly, character education introduces children to good and bad, and various character values as a form of human expression toward their environment. These character traits should be instilled and nurtured from a young age. At this time, children are still innocent and curious about actions and behaviours in their environment (Ollerhead & Pennington, 2026). In addition, childhood is a period of very rapid brain formation (Fauzi et al., 2023). The front part of the brain undergoes a developmental leap, including thinking, reasoning, problem-solving, decision-making, and planning. Then, the back and sides develop in sensory hearing, memory, emotion, speech, and vision functions. (Purnama et al., 2022; Ramamurthy et al., 2024).

In the Bilingual Balinese Fable Book Sharing activity at PAUD School, Kediri, Tabanan, Bali, five Balinese folk fable storybooks were used: Siap selem, I Lutung teken Kakua, Goat and Tiger, Honest Balinese Starling, and *Angsa teken Empas*. All of these fable stories contain moral messages not to have bad intentions towards someone, not to deceive others, to stay brave and patient, to think creatively to be able to find a way out, not to underestimate the words of others, be loyal to promises that have been made, and not to be arrogant. Overall, the character values instilled or developed in Early Childhood Children in Kediri District are friendliness/communicativeness, peace-loving, hard work, creativity, honesty, respect for achievement, and tolerance.

Based on the Ministry of Education's classification of character education values, 18 categories of national character values can be cultivated in students. Similar to the character virtues present in the Bilingual Balinese Fable Book Sharing endeavour in PAUD School, Kediri, Tabanan, Bali, the friendly/communicative character value is a mindset and behaviour that fosters self-motivation to make beneficial contributions to the community

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while acknowledging and valuing others' achievements. A peace-oriented disposition is a mindset and behaviour that motivates an individual to contribute positively to society while acknowledging and valuing others' achievements. The disposition toward diligent effort is a pursuit undertaken earnestly, oblivious to exhaustion. A creative mindset consistently seeks diverse solutions to a problem from multiple perspectives. This is done to develop methods or a new understanding of an existing issue. A sincere disposition is conduct rooted in the endeavour to become an individual who can consistently be relied upon in speech, deeds, and professional undertakings. Esteem for accomplishment is a mindset and behaviour that motivates individuals to provide beneficial contributions to society while acknowledging and honouring the achievements of others. Tolerance encompasses the mindset and behaviours that honour the diversity in religion, culture, ethnicity, viewpoints, beliefs, and behaviours of individuals who differ from oneself. (Permendikbud, 2018).

The attitudes reflected in these character values are important in shaping the nation's character, as children are the nation's next generation (Rahman et al., 2022). Moreover, Balinese children who must always learn Balinese folk culture stories are expected to embody local Balinese character as successors to Balinese ancestors who protect Balinese land and culture from changing times that begin to erode Balinese culture and identity (Purandina & Wedananta, 2021). Balinese people are known for their polite, friendly, honest, tolerant, peace-loving, creative, and appreciative attitude (Putra et al., 2023; Suryawan et al., 2023); they live in harmony and welcome everyone who visits the island of Bali in the context of global tourism. Educating local Balinese character values through the Bilingual Balinese Fable Book Sharing activity in PAUD Schools is one way to strengthen the Balinese character stronghold from a young age. To ensure that children are imbued from a young age with the esteemed principles of Balinese culture, allowing them to communicate with courtesy. Similarly, they acquire the ability to behave with politeness as well.

CONCLUSION

The Nature of Bilingual Balinese Fable Book Sharing initiative at PAUD School in Kediri, Tabanan, Bali was executed in four phases: preparing, sharing, telling, and engaging. In the preparation stage, the team selects and adjusts the materials. In the sharing stage, the team introduces and touches the materials. In the telling stage, the process of telling-listening and responding is carried out. The last stage, engaging, includes singing, playing, and valuing. There are five books of Balinese folk fables entitled Siap selem, *I Lutung teken Kakua*, Goat and Tiger, Honest Balinese Starling, and *Angsa teken Empas*. All of these fable stories contain moral messages not to have bad intentions towards someone, not to deceive others, to stay brave and patient, to think creatively to be able to find a way out, not to underestimate the words of others, to be loyal to promises that have been made, and not to be arrogant. From the overall moral message, it can be seen that the character values instilled or developed in Early Childhood Children in Kediri District are friendliness/communicativeness, peace-loving, hard work, creativity, honesty, respect for achievement, and tolerance. Educating local Balinese character values through Bilingual Balinese fable-sharing activities in PAUD Schools is one way to strengthen the Balinese character fortress from an early age. The study subjects were limited to children of a specific age (e.g., ages 5–6 or Group B), so the impact on younger age groups (toddlers/playgroup) was not explored. Therefore, future research could investigate similar issues among children in Early Childhood Education Group A.

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