

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AS A MEDIUM FOR STRENGTHENING INDONESIAN LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN THE ERA OF GLOBAL COMPETENCE

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Abstrak

Perkembangan teknologi, globalisasi, dan perubahan paradigma pendidikan menuntut pembelajaran bahasa Indonesia tidak hanya berorientasi pada penguasaan keterampilan berbahasa, tetapi juga pada pembentukan karakter dan kompetensi global peserta didik. Dalam konteks tersebut, sastra anak memiliki potensi sebagai media pembelajaran yang mampu mengintegrasikan aspek linguistik, afektif, sosial, dan budaya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran sastra anak sebagai media penguatan bahasa Indonesia dalam pendidikan di era kompetensi global melalui sintesis berbagai hasil penelitian terdahulu. Penelitian menggunakan metode literature review dengan pendekatan naratif yang bersumber dari artikel ilmiah bereputasi internasional, jurnal nasional terakreditasi, buku akademik, dan dokumen kebijakan pendidikan yang relevan. Data dianalisis menggunakan content analysis dan thematic analysis untuk mengidentifikasi tema-tema utama serta menyusun kerangka konseptual. Hasil sintesis menunjukkan bahwa sastra anak berkontribusi pada tiga aspek utama, yaitu: (1) memperkuat keterampilan berbahasa melalui pengembangan kemampuan menyimak, berbicara, membaca, menulis, pengayaan kosakata, dan apresiasi sastra; (2) mendukung transformasi pembelajaran melalui pengalaman literasi multimodal yang mengintegrasikan teks, visual, audio, dan interaktivitas digital; serta (3) membentuk karakter dan mengembangkan kompetensi global melalui penanaman empati, toleransi, berpikir kritis, identitas budaya, komunikasi lintas budaya, kolaborasi, dan kesadaran sebagai warga global. Berdasarkan sintesis tersebut, penelitian ini menghasilkan kerangka konseptual yang menempatkan pengalaman literasi multimodal sebagai mekanisme yang menghubungkan pemanfaatan sastra anak dengan penguatan bahasa Indonesia, pembentukan karakter, dan pengembangan kompetensi global. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa integrasi sastra anak dalam pembelajaran bahasa Indonesia merupakan strategi yang relevan untuk mewujudkan pembelajaran yang kontekstual, adaptif, dan sesuai dengan karakteristik generasi digital.

Kata Kunci: kompetensi global, pendidikan bahasa Indonesia, sastra anak

Abstract

Technological advancements, globalization, and shifts in educational paradigms require Indonesian language education to focus not only on the mastery of language skills but also on fostering students' character and global competence. In this context, children's literature has significant

potential as a learning medium that integrates linguistic, affective, social, and cultural dimensions. This study aims to analyze the role of children's literature as a medium for strengthening Indonesian language education in the era of global competence through a synthesis of previous research findings. The study employed a narrative literature review approach by examining internationally reputable journal articles, accredited national journals, academic books, and relevant educational policy documents. The data were analyzed using content analysis and thematic analysis to identify key themes and construct a conceptual framework. The findings indicate that children's literature contributes to three major dimensions: (1) strengthening language proficiency through the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, vocabulary enrichment, and literary appreciation; (2) supporting learning transformation through multimodal literacy experiences that integrate text, visual, audio, and digital interactivity; and (3) fostering character development and global competence by cultivating empathy, tolerance, critical thinking, cultural identity, intercultural communication, collaboration, and global citizenship awareness. Based on this synthesis, the study proposes a conceptual framework that positions multimodal literacy experiences as the mechanism linking the use of children's literature with the strengthening of Indonesian language proficiency, character development, and global competence. These findings highlight that integrating children's literature into Indonesian language education represents a relevant strategy for promoting contextual, adaptive, and meaningful learning that aligns with the characteristics and learning needs of the digital generation.

Keywords: children's literature, global competence, Indonesian language education

INTRODUCTION

The era of global competence presents increasingly complex challenges for education, requiring not only the mastery of twenty-first-century knowledge and skills but also the ability to communicate effectively, think critically, collaborate, and appreciate cultural diversity (Derana & Huda, 2024; Hafizah et al., 2022). In Indonesia, these challenges are further exacerbated by low levels of reading (Anafiah, 2025), declining students' interest in high-quality reading materials due to the growing dominance of digital media (Rambe et al., 2025), and the urgent need to strengthen character and national identity amid the forces of globalization (Pradhan & Dey, 2025). Within this context, the Indonesian language plays a strategic role not only as a medium of thinking and communication but also as a foundation for national identity and the development of global competence (Hafizah et al., 2022). Consequently, strengthening Indonesian language education has become a key educational priority to enable students to adapt to global changes

while preserving their cultural values and national identity.

Indonesian language education plays a pivotal role in developing students' competencies in a holistic manner. Its objectives extend beyond fostering fundamental language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Efendi et al., 2026; Kurniawan et al., 2024; Rambe et al., 2025), to cultivating critical thinking, promoting respectful and interactive communication (Kurniawan et al., 2024), and fostering character development through the integration of moral values, ethics, and virtuous conduct embedded within instructional materials (Efendi et al., 2026; Maylita et al., 2024). Achieving these comprehensive educational goals requires meaningful and contextual learning resources that facilitate authentic learning experiences (Efendi et al., 2026; Rambe et al., 2025; Sagita Krissandi et al., 2023). One such resource is children's literature, which reflects learners' lived experiences and creates engaging, meaningful, and applicable learning environments that connect classroom learning with everyday life (Anafiah, 2025; Simanungkalit, 2025).

Children's literature is widely recognized as an effective instructional medium for Indonesian language education because its linguistic features and thematic content are aligned with children's cognitive and socio-emotional developmental stages (Anafiah, 2025; Efendi et al., 2026; Hafizah et al., 2022). As an educational resource, children's literature simultaneously enriches learners' vocabulary and enhances reading proficiency through imaginative narratives that resonate with their everyday experiences (Anafiah, 2025; Rambe et al., 2025). Moreover, students' active engagement with literary texts stimulates the development of speaking and writing skills through discussions, role-playing activities, and creative storytelling tasks (Efendi et al., 2026; Maylita et al., 2024). Beyond improving technical language proficiency, children's literature serves as a powerful pedagogical tool for fostering appreciation of language, stimulating imagination, and developing critical and analytical thinking through learners' exploration of cause-and-effect relationships and moral values embedded in literary narratives (Anafiah, 2025; Rambe et al., 2025; Simanungkalit, 2025). Therefore, integrating children's literature into Indonesian language education provides a strong theoretical foundation for developing meaningful and

comprehensive language competence among elementary school students.

Children's literature also plays a crucial role in fostering character development and global competence because its educational value extends beyond the enhancement of language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Efendi et al., 2026; Rambe et al., 2025), to the cultivation of broader humanistic values. Through meaningful engagement with literary narratives, children are encouraged to internalize stories that foster empathy by enabling them to understand and experience the perspectives of others (Alwi et al., 2018; Nurjaman et al., 2025), while simultaneously promoting tolerance toward diverse identities within multicultural societies (Alwi et al., 2018; Kurniawan et al., 2024). Furthermore, sustained exposure to literary works enhances cultural awareness and appreciation of diversity in an increasingly interconnected world (Hafizah et al., 2022; Simanungkalit, 2025). Emotional engagement with literary texts also develops learners' capacity to understand perspectives that differ from their own (Alwi et al., 2018; Anafiah, 2025), a competence that constitutes a fundamental dimension of global competence required for navigating the complexities of contemporary society (Junyanti & Umay, 2024; Simanungkalit, 2025).

National and international studies consistently demonstrate that the use of children's literature, including fables and folktales, significantly enhances students' reading motivation, reading fluency, and reading comprehension through imaginative narratives that are relevant to their lived experiences (Anafiah, 2025; Junyanti & Umay, 2024; Rambe et al., 2025). Furthermore, integrating literature into the curriculum has been shown to enrich learners' vocabulary and promote the comprehensive development of language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing, by providing rich, authentic, and meaningful linguistic input (Fitriyani et al., 2024; Maylita et al., 2024; Simanungkalit, 2025). Across these studies, a consistent pattern emerges indicating that children's literature functions as a strategic pedagogical resource that supports character development and social competence through the cultivation of empathy, solidarity, and cultural awareness, which learners internalize through the experiences of literary characters (Derana & Huda, 2024; Junyanti & Umay, 2024; Nurjaman et al., 2025).

Despite these promising findings, previous studies on children's literature in

Indonesia have largely examined its effectiveness from isolated perspectives, such as character development (Efendi et al., 2026; Hafizah et al., 2022), reading skill enhancement (Anafiah, 2025), or the promotion of foundational literacy (Rambe et al., 2025), without conceptualizing these contributions within a comprehensive pedagogical framework. Although discussions of the *Indonesia's Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (*Pancasila Student Profile*) and multicultural values have increasingly emerged as responses to global educational challenges within the *Kurikulum Merdeka* (Indonesia's Independent Curriculum) (Kurniawan et al., 2024; Simanungkalit, 2025), studies that comprehensively position children's literature as a medium for strengthening Indonesian language education while simultaneously linking it to the development of global competence, particularly intercultural empathy and critical thinking from an international perspective, remain relatively limited, especially in elementary education (Junyanti & Umay, 2024; Simanungkalit, 2025). This limitation can be partly attributed to the longstanding perception of children's literature as merely supplementary reading material or a vehicle for simple moral instruction. Consequently, its strategic potential to prepare learners for the complexities of contemporary global society has not yet been extensively investigated through empirical research in the Indonesian context.

The novelty of this article lies in the development of a conceptual framework that integrates children's literature as a medium for strengthening Indonesian language education with the development of global competence within a unified perspective. Unlike previous studies, which have primarily positioned children's literature as a means of improving reading literacy or promoting character education, this article conceptualizes children's literature as a comprehensive learning medium capable of simultaneously supporting language development, literacy, character formation, cultural appreciation, and global competence. Accordingly, this article seeks to broaden current perspectives on the strategic role of children's literature in elementary education while providing a theoretical foundation for teachers, curriculum developers, and researchers in designing Indonesian language education that is contextual, inclusive, and responsive to contemporary global dynamics.

Based on these considerations, this article aims to examine and analyze the

role of children's literature as a medium for strengthening Indonesian language education in the era of global competence. Specifically, the review synthesizes the relationships among children's literature, Indonesian language education, literacy, character education, and global competence to develop a comprehensive conceptual understanding of how children's literature contributes to adaptive Indonesian language education that addresses both current and future educational challenges.

METHODS

This study employed a systematic literature review (SLR) to examine and synthesize previous research on the role of children's literature as a medium for strengthening Indonesian language learning in the context of global competence. This approach was selected because it enables the integration of diverse theoretical perspectives and empirical findings, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of the relationships among children's literature, language skills development, character education, multimodal literacy, and global competence.

The data consisted of secondary sources obtained from internationally reputable Scopus-indexed journals, nationally accredited journals, academic books, conference proceedings, and relevant educational policy documents. The literature was selected based on its relevance to the research focus, including children's literature, Indonesian language learning, language development, literacy, digital children's literature, multimodality, character education, cultural identity, and global competence. Literature was retrieved from the Scopus, Google Scholar, ERIC, and Garuda databases using the keywords children's literature, digital children's literature, Indonesian language learning, language literacy, multimodal literacy, global competence, and character education. To ensure the relevance and currency of the review, priority was given to publications from the last ten years, while seminal works were retained as the primary theoretical foundations.

The review was conducted through four stages. The first stage involved identifying and retrieving relevant literature using the predetermined search keywords. The second stage consisted of screening the retrieved studies based on topic relevance, source quality, and alignment with the research objectives. The

third stage involved data extraction from each selected study, including information on the research objectives, methodology, research context, and principal findings. The final stage comprised a thematic synthesis of the extracted findings to identify recurring patterns, commonalities, and conceptual relationships across the studies. The extracted data were analyzed thematically through a coding process focusing on the research focus, principal findings, and scholarly contributions of each study. This process generated several synthesis themes reflecting common patterns across the literature, including language skills development, character education, cultural identity, digital transformation of children's literature, multimodal literacy, psycholinguistic foundations, and pedagogical innovation. Subsequently, conceptually related themes were integrated into three overarching themes: (1) children's literature as a medium for strengthening language skills, (2) the transformation of digital children's literature and multimodal literacy in Indonesian language learning, and (3) the role of children's literature in character education and the development of global competence. These three overarching themes served as the basis for developing a conceptual framework illustrating the role of children's literature as a medium for strengthening Indonesian language learning in the era of global competence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of children's literature as a medium for strengthening Indonesian language education in the era of global competence, a review of relevant literature was conducted, including international journal articles, accredited national journals, academic books, and literature review studies. The selected literature was chosen based on its relevance to the scope of this review, which encompasses children's literature, Indonesian language education, digital literacy, character education, and global competence. The selected studies were subsequently synthesized to identify the major themes that form the basis of the discussion presented in this article. A summary of the characteristics of the reviewed literature is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of the Reviewed Literature

Author	Year	Research Focus	Study Design	Main Findings	Concept Adopted in This Article
Krissandi et al.	2023	Indigenous education in children's literature	Qualitative study	Children's literature strengthens cultural identity	National identity through literature
Serafini & Pantaleo	2022	Evolution of digital children's literature	Book chapter	Literature has evolved into multimodal and digital forms	Digital literature and multimodal literacy
Arizpe et al.	2023	Visual literacy	Research review	Visual literacy has become an essential competence	Multimodality in language education
Kurniawan et al.	2024	Multicultural digital literature	Case study	Digital literature supports the <i>Pancasila Student Profile</i>	Development of global competence
Hafizah et al.	2022	Children's literature and character	Literature review	Literature contributes to students' character development	Character education
Rambe et al.	2025	Fables in Indonesian language education	Literature review	Fables enhance the four language skills	Language skill development
Maylita et al.	2024	Implementation of literature in elementary schools	Literature review	Literature enhances cognitive and affective development	Strengthening Indonesian language education
Anafiah	2025	Children's literature and reading	Literature review	Literature improves reading interest and vocabulary	Reading literacy
Nurjamana et al.	2025	Empathy in children's literature	Qualitative study	Literature enhances emotional literacy	Social-emotional competence
Simanungkalit	2024	Literature in the <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i>	Library research	The curriculum provides opportunities for literature-based learning	Curriculum implementation
Junyanti & Umay	2024	Children's literature and child	Mixed-methods study	Literature enhances empathy and theory of mind	Social competence

		developmen t			
Derana & Huda	2024	Literature and the <i>Pancasila Student Profile</i>	Literature review	Literature promotes global competence	Global competence
Efendi et al.	2026	Character education	Qualitative study	Teachers play an essential role in connecting stories with real-life experiences	Contextual learning
Alwi et al.	2018	Cultural values in literature	Qualitative study	Literature serves as a medium for cultural transmission	Cultural identity
Ummah	2025	Chomsky's theory	Descriptive study	Language develops through meaningful experiences	Language acquisition theory

Based on the synthesis presented in Table 1, the reviewed literature can be categorized into five major themes. First, children's literature contributes to the development of learners' language skills and literacy. Second, technological advancements have transformed children's literature into digital and multimodal formats. Third, children's literature serves as a medium for fostering character development, empathy, and cultural identity. Fourth, digital literature supports the development of twenty-first-century skills and global competence through contextual and interactive learning experiences. Finally, the successful implementation of children's literature is strongly influenced by curriculum policies and teachers' roles in facilitating meaningful learning experiences. These five themes provide the conceptual foundation for the subsequent discussion in this article.

The review further indicates that discussions of children's literature in education extend beyond literary appreciation to encompass multiple interconnected dimensions, including language skill development, character development, cultural identity, digital transformation, and classroom implementation. Following a comprehensive process of analysis and synthesis, six major themes emerged, illustrating the strategic role of children's literature as a

medium for strengthening Indonesian language education in the era of global competence. The thematic synthesis is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Thematic Synthesis of the Literature on the Role of Children's Literature as a Medium for Strengthening Indonesian Language Education in the Era of Global Competence

Theme	Synthesis	Implications
Character education	Literature promotes moral values and empathy	Fosters respectful and effective communication skills
Literacy	Literature enhances the four language skills	Strengthens Indonesian language literacy
Multimodality	Digital literature provides new reading experiences	Makes language learning more contextual and engaging

As shown in Table 2, all reviewed studies share a common perspective in positioning children's literature as a learning resource that extends beyond the development of language skills to support character development, cultural identity, multimodal literacy, and global competence. Nevertheless, previous studies have generally examined these dimensions independently rather than as interconnected components of a comprehensive pedagogical framework. Therefore, this article integrates these diverse findings into a unified conceptual perspective to explain how children's literature can function as a medium for strengthening Indonesian language education within the context of education in the era of global competence.

Discussion

Children's Literature as a Medium for Strengthening Language Skills

The synthesis of the reviewed studies indicates that children's literature is an effective medium for strengthening language skills because it provides an integrated language learning experience through listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities. Within the context of education in the era of global competence, strengthening Indonesian language education is no longer viewed merely as fostering mastery of linguistic rules; rather, it encompasses the development of reasoning, effective communication, and national identity in an increasingly interconnected global society (Derana & Huda, 2024; Kurniawan et al., 2024; Simanungkalit, 2025). This perspective is consistent with the OECD Global Competence Framework which emphasizes the ability to understand multiple

perspectives, communicate effectively across cultures, and use language as a tool for critical thinking (OECD, 2018). Consequently, children's literature constitutes a highly relevant instructional medium because it presents the Indonesian language in authentic, meaningful contexts that are closely connected to learners' lived experiences (Anafiah, 2025; Maylita et al., 2024).

The literature synthesis further demonstrates that the strength of children's literature lies in its capacity to integrate linguistic, cognitive, affective, and social dimensions within a single learning experience. Unlike language instruction that primarily emphasizes the mastery of grammatical structures or linguistic rules, literature presents language through meaningful narratives, enabling learners to acquire vocabulary, sentence structures, and language use within authentic communicative contexts. The findings of Anafiah (2025), Rambe et al. (2025), and Maylita et al (2024) consistently indicate that literature-based instruction enhances reading motivation, enriches vocabulary, improves reading comprehension, and simultaneously develops the four fundamental language skills. Accordingly, children's literature functions as a holistic language learning medium because learners acquire not only the formal aspects of language but also an understanding of its communicative functions in everyday life.

From a psycholinguistic perspective, the effectiveness of children's literature in strengthening Indonesian language education can be explained through generative language theory, which conceptualizes language as a creative mental system. Learners possess an innate capacity to construct and generate novel linguistic structures, while the learning environment provides meaningful experiences that enrich this developmental process (Peter & Chomsky, 1968; Ummah et al., 2025). Within this framework, children's literature provides rich linguistic input through diverse vocabulary, varied sentence structures, authentic dialogue, and multiple forms of language use that facilitate the development of language competence. Consistent with Bruner's (1985) perspective, experiences of reading and listening to stories also function as a Language Acquisition Support System (LASS) by providing instructional scaffolding that supports children's language development through meaningful social interaction.

The reviewed studies further demonstrate that children's literature contributes

to the development of all major linguistic domains. Exposure to stories, poems, traditional rhymes, and dialogues enhances learners' phonological awareness through patterns of sound, rhythm, and language play (Anafiah, 2025; Bruner, 1985). Literary narratives also strengthen learners' morphological and syntactic knowledge through exposure to derived words, diverse sentence structures, and authentic communicative dialogue (Tarigan, 2008; Ummah et al., 2025). Furthermore, learners develop a deeper understanding of meaning through narrative contexts, allowing semantic and pragmatic competence to evolve naturally as they interpret moral messages, symbolic meanings, and contextually appropriate language use within social interactions (Derana & Huda, 2024; Hunt, 2005; Junyanti & Umay, 2024; Kurniawan et al., 2024). Consequently, children's literature provides a more authentic language learning experience than approaches that rely primarily on explicit grammar instruction.

Rapid advances in digital technology have further expanded the role of children's literature as a medium for strengthening Indonesian language education. Previous studies indicate that the transformation of children's literature into digital formats, including animated films, digital storybooks, and interactive media, enhances students' learning motivation while enriching their literacy experiences through the integration of text, images, audio, and video (Kurniawan et al., 2024; Maylita et al., 2024). The perspectives advanced by Serafini and Pantaleo (2022) and Farrar et al. (2024) further suggest that digital children's literature contributes not only to reading and writing literacy but also to the development of visual literacy and multimodal literacy, both of which have become increasingly essential in contemporary digital environments. Therefore, strengthening Indonesian language education through children's literature is no longer confined to printed texts but has evolved toward richer, more contextualized literacy experiences that are aligned with the characteristics and learning preferences of the digital generation.

Overall, the synthesized evidence demonstrates that children's literature plays a strategic role as a medium for strengthening Indonesian language education by integrating language skill development, literacy, higher-order thinking, and character development within a meaningful learning experience. Beyond improving learners' linguistic competence, children's literature prepares them to communicate

effectively, think critically, appreciate cultural diversity, and participate responsibly in an increasingly interconnected global society. Accordingly, children's literature should be recognized as one of the fundamental pillars of Indonesian language education in the era of global competence.

Children's Literature as an Instrument for Character Education

Character education occupies a central position in language education because the fundamental purpose of education extends beyond the acquisition of knowledge to encompass the development of learners' attitudes, moral values, and personal character (Efendi et al., 2026). In particular, Indonesian language education serves as a medium for cultivating life values through learners' engagement with various forms of texts that convey meaningful messages and moral lessons. By integrating character education into the language curriculum, educational institutions can foster graduates who are not only academically competent but also possess integrity and demonstrate ethical behavior consistent with societal values (Derana & Huda, 2024). In this regard, children's literature functions as a bridge between the acquisition of linguistic competence and the cultivation of moral awareness that contributes to the development of culturally grounded individuals (Fitriyani et al., 2024; Maylita et al., 2024).

As a medium for character education, children's literature operates by presenting imaginative literary works that are developmentally appropriate for children's emotional and intellectual capacities (Derana & Huda, 2024; Efendi et al., 2026). Through literary narratives, moral values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and self-confidence are conveyed naturally through the actions, decisions, and consequences experienced by story characters, rather than through explicit moral instruction (Efendi et al., 2026). These values generate a nurturant effect, contributing to learners' personality development through gradual processes of reflection and internalization within supportive learning environments (Hafizah et al., 2022).

One of the principal strengths of children's literature in fostering empathy lies in its capacity to stimulate Theory of Mind, namely the cognitive ability to understand the emotions, beliefs, intentions, and perspectives of others (Nikolajeva, 2014).

Engagement with literary texts, whether through written narratives or visual illustrations, enables learners to recognize social contexts, empathize with the joys and struggles of fictional characters, and appreciate diverse perspectives (Anafiah, 2025; Farrar et al., 2024). Previous studies have demonstrated that instructional approaches such as interactive storytelling and the use of folktales significantly enhance children's empathy by encouraging them to understand characters' emotions and translate these understandings into prosocial behaviors in real-life situations (Nurjamana et al., 2025). Furthermore, the distinctive value of children's literature as a medium for character education lies in its ability to engage children's emotions and imagination. Moral messages delivered through direct instruction are often perceived as didactic and less engaging. In contrast, values embedded within literary narratives are more readily internalized because children become emotionally involved with the characters and events portrayed in the story. As explained in *Bahasa & Sastra Anak*, value formation in children's literature should not resemble a "book of moral advice"; instead, moral learning should emerge through the consequences of characters' actions, realistic conflicts, and character development that readers can understand and reflect upon (Trisnawaty & Hasrianti, 2026).

More broadly, children's literature provides a space in which learners' moral imagination can develop in a holistic manner (Nurjamana et al., 2025). Through emotional engagement with literary narratives, learners not only distinguish between desirable and undesirable behaviors but also develop an understanding of the consequences associated with the choices made by story characters (Efendi et al., 2026; Hafizah et al., 2022). Such experiences contribute to the development of social competence and cultural awareness, enabling learners to cultivate tolerance, communicate respectfully, and interact effectively within multicultural societies (Efendi et al., 2026; Nurjamana et al., 2025). Consequently, children's literature represents a strategic educational resource for nurturing learners who are not only literate but also equipped with global competence while upholding universal human values (Kurniawan et al., 2024).

Children's Literature in Strengthening Cultural Identity and Global

Competence

The Indonesian language cannot be separated from culture because it functions not merely as a technical means of communication but also as a social institution through which aspirations, ideas, and representations of social life are expressed (Derana & Huda, 2024). Literature, including children's literature, reflects the lived experiences of society and constitutes an important component of national identity, shaped by the cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and perspectives of its authors (Hafizah et al., 2022).

Children's literature plays a strategic role in strengthening cultural and national identity through several interconnected dimensions. In particular, folktales, legends, and fables provide meaningful opportunities for learners to explore local cultural values while fostering appreciation for their cultural heritage (Junyanti & Umay, 2024; Maylita et al., 2024). Through narratives that embody local wisdom, learners develop stronger connections with their regional identities, thereby cultivating pride in and commitment to preserving their cultural heritage (Junyanti & Umay, 2024; Nurjamana et al., 2025). Historically, children's literature also served as an instrument of Indigenous education, helping preserve national identity during periods in which colonial educational systems were dominated by foreign curricula (Sagita Krissandi et al., 2023).

From the perspective of nationalism, the integration of literary works into the curriculum, including the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, is intended to promote nationalism, patriotism, and a sense of belonging to the nation (Simanungkalit, 2025). These values are communicated through narratives featuring characters who prioritize solidarity and the common good over individual interests (Sagita Krissandi et al., 2023). Consequently, children's literature is regarded as a long-term investment in civilization, contributing to the development of future generations who demonstrate integrity and embody the values of *Pancasila* (Hafizah et al., 2022; Kurniawan et al., 2024).

Within the dimension of diversity and multiculturalism, children's literature functions as a cultural ambassador by facilitating multicultural understanding and fostering appreciation for culturally diverse societies (Hafizah et al., 2022). A contemporary example can be found in digital media such as the animated series

Sopo Jarwo, which incorporates multiple languages, including Sundanese, Betawi, and Mandarin, to portray ethnic integration and harmonious coexistence within a diverse society (Kurniawan et al., 2024). Through exposure to diverse characters and perspectives, learners develop tolerance and learn to appreciate individuals regardless of their cultural or ethnic backgrounds.

Within the framework of global competence, children's literature serves as a bridge that enables learners to develop multidimensional capacities for critically analyzing both local and global issues (Junyanti & Umay, 2024; OECD, 2020). Regular engagement with literary works has been shown to enhance empathy, perspective-taking, and intercultural awareness (Alwi et al., 2018). Through emotional engagement with literary narratives, learners not only strengthen their language proficiency but also develop the cognitive and emotional readiness required to interact respectfully within an increasingly interconnected global society (Simanungkalit, 2025). In this way, children's literature prepares learners to become globally competent citizens without losing connection to their cultural roots.

The Transformation of Digital Children's Literature and Multimodal Literacy in Indonesian Language Education

The synthesis of the reviewed literature indicates that advances in digital technology have transformed children's literature from conventional print-based media into increasingly interactive and multimodal digital formats. This transformation has reshaped not only the modes through which stories are presented but also the ways in which learners access, interpret, and construct meaning from literary texts. Children's literature is now available in the form of digital storybooks, animated films, interactive applications, digital storytelling videos, and social media platforms that integrate text, images, audio, animation, and various interactive features, thereby providing richer literacy experiences than traditional print media (Kurniawan et al., 2024; Maylita et al., 2024; Serafini & Pantaleo, 2022). This evolution demonstrates that Indonesian language education is no longer limited to the linear reading of printed texts but increasingly requires learners to interpret meaning across multiple modes of communication.

This transformation has also accelerated the emergence of **multimodal literacy**

as a core competency within Indonesian language education. Literacy is no longer understood solely as the ability to read and write; rather, it encompasses the capacity to interpret the relationships among language, images, color, sound, movement, and other visual and semiotic resources that interact within digital texts. Farrar et al. (2024) argue that the ability to critically interpret illustrations and visual representations has become an essential competence in societies increasingly dominated by visual media. Similarly, Serafini and Pantaleo (2022) demonstrate that the evolution of children's literature into digital forms has expanded reading from a text-centered activity into a multimodal experience involving active interaction with multiple semiotic resources. Consequently, digital children's literature contributes not only to reading and writing literacy but also to the development of visual literacy, digital literacy, and interpretive competence, all of which are increasingly important in the twenty-first century.

Within Indonesian language education, digital children's literature provides broader opportunities to create contextualized learning experiences that align with the characteristics of the digital generation. Previous studies indicate that the use of animated films, digital stories, and interactive media enhances learners' motivation, enriches language learning experiences, and facilitates comprehension through the integration of verbal and visual elements (Kurniawan et al., 2024; Maylita et al., 2024). Furthermore, digital media enables learners to engage actively with multiple forms of text, shifting instructional practices from teacher-centered approaches toward learner-centered learning experiences. Consequently, the transformation of digital children's literature has expanded its educational function beyond that of reading material, positioning it as a comprehensive instructional medium capable of simultaneously fostering language skills, digital literacy, and creativity.

The literature synthesis further indicates that the transformation of digital children's literature has significant implications for the development of global competence. According to the OECD (2023) global competence refers to learners' capacity to analyze local and global issues, understand multiple perspectives, and interact effectively and respectfully with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Children's literature supports these competencies by fostering narrative empathy and Theory of Mind, namely the ability to understand the

thoughts, emotions, and perspectives of others through engagement with literary narratives (Simanungkalit, 2025). Exposure to diverse literary works, whether classical or digital, not only strengthens literacy skills but also promotes cognitive adaptability, social sensitivity, and awareness of universal human concerns.

Moreover, digital children's literature serves as an instructional medium for strengthening intercultural competence by introducing cultural diversity through formats that are engaging and accessible to contemporary learners. Previous studies have consistently shown that children's literature functions as a cultural ambassador, introducing younger generations to cultural values, traditions, languages, and identities while fostering tolerance and appreciation for diversity (Hafizah et al., 2022; Maylita et al., 2024). The use of digital media, such as the animated series *Sopo Jarwo*, demonstrates how literature can effectively promote intercultural communication while simultaneously internalizing the values of Global Diversity, one of the core dimensions of the *Pancasila Student Profile* (Kurniawan et al., 2024). These findings suggest that the digital transformation of children's literature does not diminish its cultural function; instead, it extends the dissemination of local cultural values to the digital generation through media that are more relevant to their everyday experiences.

Ultimately, the synthesized evidence demonstrates that the digital transformation of children's literature extends beyond technological innovation in instructional media to broaden its contribution to the development of globally competent citizens with strong character. Through learners' engagement with literary characters, conflicts, and social issues, children's literature promotes the development of global citizenship, reflected in empathy, social responsibility, environmental awareness, and commitment to sustainable development (Fitriyani et al., 2024; Junyanti & Umay, 2024; Simanungkalit, 2025). Accordingly, digital children's literature should be recognized as a strategic instructional medium in Indonesian language education because it not only strengthens language skills and multimodal literacy but also prepares learners to become adaptive, culturally grounded, and active participants in an increasingly interconnected global society.

Strategies for Integrating Children's Literature into Indonesian Language Education

The effective integration of children's literature into Indonesian language education begins with teachers' understanding of learners' characteristics in relation to their cognitive and emotional developmental stages (Hafizah et al., 2022). Teachers are encouraged to employ interactive and engaging instructional strategies, such as storytelling, shared reading, and play-based learning activities, to ensure that learning experiences remain enjoyable and meaningful rather than burdensome for learners (Anafiah, 2025; Rambe et al., 2025). Furthermore, literature instruction should not be implemented as an isolated component but should instead be systematically integrated into Indonesian language education to promote the holistic development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills (Maylita et al., 2024). Within this process, teachers assume the role of creative facilitators who carefully select literary materials that are both enjoyable and educational (*sweet and useful*), thereby fostering learners' appreciation of literature while supporting their language development.

Classroom implementation involves a sequence of learner-centered activities that actively engage students throughout the learning process, beginning with read-aloud sessions, followed by guided questioning about the narrative, and continuing with collaborative group discussions to examine the moral messages embedded in the story (Efendi et al., 2026). Teachers guide learners in identifying characters and their traits, interpreting the central messages of the narrative, and participating in role-play or drama activities that enable them to experience the emotions of literary characters and internalize values such as empathy and tolerance through authentic learning experiences (Efendi et al., 2026; Rambe et al., 2025). These instructional strategies are further reinforced through creative activities, including rewriting stories, summarizing texts, and retelling narratives in learners' own words. Such activities enrich vocabulary, stimulate imagination, and enhance learners' critical thinking as they evaluate characters' decisions and actions within the narrative.

In the context of digital technology and contemporary curricula, teachers are increasingly expected to integrate multimodal learning resources, including

animated films, educational videos available on digital platforms, and digital storybook applications, to enhance learners' motivation and literacy engagement (Mahawarni & Suyatno, 2024; Mineri, 2022). These instructional approaches are strategically aligned with the development of graduate competency profiles, whereby literary works, including fables, folktales, and legends, serve as educational resources for introducing local wisdom while simultaneously strengthening national identity within the broader context of global diversity experiences (Derana & Huda, 2024; Kurniawan et al., 2024). Ultimately, the success of these instructional strategies depends on teachers' ability to help learners connect the values conveyed in literary narratives with their everyday experiences so that character values extend beyond cognitive understanding and become reflected in consistent moral behavior.

A Conceptual Framework for Children's Literature as a Medium for Strengthening Indonesian Language Education in the Era of Global Competence

Based on the synthesis of the reviewed literature, this article proposes a conceptual framework illustrating the role of children's literature as a medium for strengthening Indonesian language education in the era of global competence. The framework positions children's literature not merely as reading material or a source of entertainment but as an instructional medium that integrates the development of language competence, literacy, character, cultural identity, and global competence within a unified pedagogical perspective. The framework was constructed through the integration of empirical findings and conceptual insights from previous studies, illustrating the interrelationships among these components within Indonesian language education.

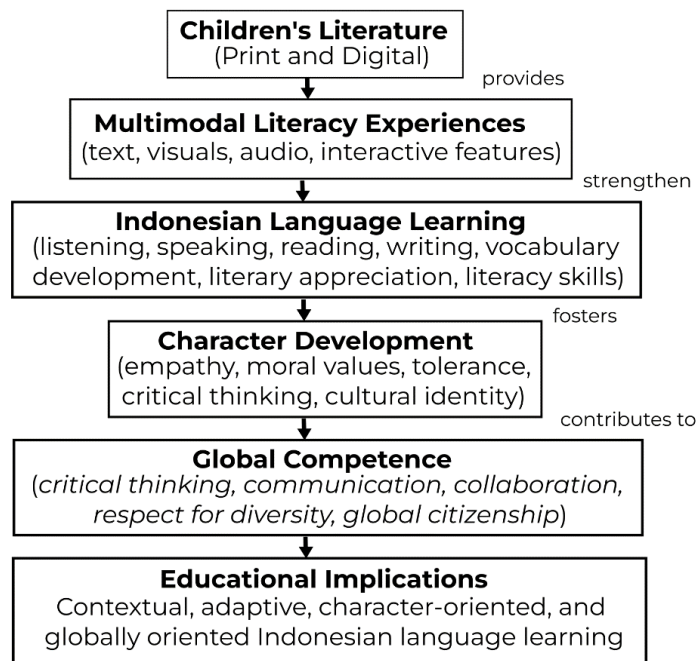


Figure 1. A Conceptual Framework of the Role of Children's Literature as a Medium for Strengthening Indonesian Language Education in the Era of Global Competence

The first component of the conceptual framework positions children's literature, encompassing both print-based and digital formats, as a primary learning resource. Previous studies have demonstrated that the digital transformation of children's literature has enriched learners' educational experiences through the integration of text, illustrations, audio, animation, and interactive features, thereby fostering multimodal literacy experiences that are more closely aligned with the characteristics of the digital generation (Farrar et al., 2024; Kurniawan et al., 2024; Maylita et al., 2024; Serafini & Pantaleo, 2022). Accordingly, children's literature serves as the starting point for providing authentic and contextualized language learning experiences.

Engagement with literary texts subsequently facilitates the strengthening of Indonesian language education through improvements in listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills while simultaneously enriching learners' vocabulary, higher-order thinking, and literacy competence (Anafiah, 2025; Rambe et al., 2025; Tarigan, 2008). At the same time, literary narratives enable learners to cultivate empathy, character, cultural awareness, and the capacity to understand multiple perspectives. Consequently, language learning becomes a holistic process that

encompasses linguistic, cognitive, affective, and social dimensions (Derana & Huda, 2024; Junyanti & Umay, 2024; Nurjamana et al., 2025).

The integration of language competence, multimodal literacy, character development, and cultural identity subsequently provides the foundation for the development of global competence. Through these interconnected learning experiences, learners are expected to develop the ability to communicate effectively, think critically, appreciate cultural diversity, collaborate with others, and act responsibly within an increasingly interconnected global society, as articulated in the OECD Global Competence Framework (OECD, 2018, 2023). Accordingly, children's literature contributes not only to the achievement of the objectives of Indonesian language education but also to the development of the *Pancasila Student Profile* while preparing learners to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

The proposed conceptual framework has important implications for Indonesian language education by emphasizing that children's literature should be viewed as an integrated learning ecosystem that simultaneously promotes language proficiency, literacy, character development, cultural identity, and global competence. Consequently, this framework may serve as a theoretical reference for teachers, curriculum developers, and researchers in designing Indonesian language learning experiences that are contextualized, responsive to advances in digital technology, and aligned with the educational needs of learners in the era of global competence.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the synthesis of the reviewed literature, children's literature represents a strategic instructional medium for strengthening Indonesian language education in response to the educational demands of the era of global competence. In both print-based and digital formats, children's literature not only supports the development of language skills by enhancing listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities but also enriches learners' vocabulary, promotes literary appreciation, and broadens their literacy experiences through multimodal approaches. Furthermore, children's literature contributes to the development of essential character attributes, including empathy, tolerance, critical thinking, and cultural identity, which collectively provide the foundation for the development of

global competence. These competencies encompass effective intercultural communication, collaboration, appreciation of diversity, and the cultivation of global citizenship. Based on this synthesis, the present study proposes a conceptual framework demonstrating that multimodal literacy experiences constitute the underlying mechanism linking the use of children's literature with the strengthening of Indonesian language education, character development, and the development of global competence. Accordingly, integrating children's literature into Indonesian language education represents a relevant and promising strategy for promoting contextualized, adaptive, and learner-centered learning that is responsive to the characteristics of the digital generation.

The findings of this review contribute theoretically by proposing a conceptual framework that explains the role of children's literature as a medium for strengthening Indonesian language education in the era of global competence. They also offer practical implications for teachers, schools, and curriculum developers by emphasizing the importance of systematically integrating both print-based and digital children's literature into instructional practice. Future research is recommended to empirically validate the proposed conceptual framework across different educational levels and to develop children's literature-based instructional models capable of integrating language skill development, character education, and global competence in a more comprehensive manner. Nevertheless, this review is limited by its reliance on the synthesis of existing literature, and the proposed conceptual framework has not yet been empirically validated within elementary school settings. Furthermore, the reviewed literature is predominantly composed of qualitative studies and literature reviews, limiting the availability of empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of children's literature in strengthening Indonesian language education and fostering global competence across diverse educational contexts.

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