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DR. SEUSS' SYMBOLS ON KING STILTS TO CHARACTER BUILDING: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY STUDY OF CHILDREN LITERATURE

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Abstract

Symbol is the used object by the author to convey messages in literary works through learning process to get hidden meanings. In children literature, symbols could become objects as the bridge for parents or teachers to be role models to transfer the positive traits for readers especially children as the next generation of a nation. This research aimed to find the symbols on King's Stilts Children Book referring to character building as nation character traits. A descriptive qualitative was used as a method in this study by using content analysis based on heuristic and retroactive reading referred to checklist of character building assessment to the children book entitled *The Kings' Stilts* written by Dr. Seuss, an American author of children literature. The result showed that King Birtram, Eric, and Lord Droon were symbols for signifiers which were used to represent the signified involving the character traits such as self discipline, hard work, responsible, social care, creative, sense of humor, wise, solemn, deceptive, evasive, uncaring, unfeeling even dishonest. It could be concluded that exploring hidden meanings of the used symbols in children literature could become one of the ways to build the positive characters for children even stimulating the reading habit as the implication of this study.

Keywords: Symbol, Dr.Seuss, Children, Literature, Narrative



Abstrak

Simbol merupakan objek yang digunakan pengarang untuk menyampaikan pesan-pesan dalam karya sastra yang perlu dipelajari untuk mendapatkan makna yang tersembunyi. Dalam sastra anak, simbol dapat menjadi suatu objek sebagai jembatan bagi orang tua atau guru untuk menjadi panutan dalam mentransfer sifat-sifat positif bagi pembaca khususnya anak-anak sebagai generasi penerus bangsa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan simbol-simbol pada Buku Anak *The Kings' Stilts* yang mengacu pada pembentukan karakter sebagai ciri karakter bangsa. Deskriptif kualitatif digunakan sebagai metode dalam penelitian ini dengan menggunakan analisis isi berdasarkan proses membaca heuristik dan retroaktif mengacu pada checklist penilaian pembentukan karakter pada buku anak berjudul *The Kings' Stilts* yang ditulis oleh Dr. Seuss, seorang penulis sastra anak Amerika. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Raja Birtram, Eric, dan Lord Droon merupakan simbol penanda yang digunakan untuk merepresentasikan makna yang melibatkan ciri-ciri karakter seperti disiplin diri, kerja keras, tanggung jawab, kepedulian sosial, kreatif, humoris, bijak, serius, menipu, mengelak, tidak peduli, tidak berperasaan bahkan tidak jujur. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa menggali makna tersembunyi dari simbol-simbol yang digunakan dalam sastra anak dapat menjadi salah satu cara untuk membangun karakter positif bagi anak-anak bahkan merangsang kebiasaan membaca bagi anak-anak sebagai bentuk implikasi dari penelitian ini.

Kata Kunci: Simbol, Dr. Seuss, anak, sastra, naratif

Introduction

Children are the future generation of a nation. Their portraits could be seen from their attitude. When they have good attitudes, their positive characters come naturally. On the other side, Children's Attitudes could not be separated to their thoughts which become the system of signification to give the actual perception to their imagination or environment (Piaget: 1997). Their thoughts grow day to day based on what they get that refers to term of egocentrism. Children literature could be an option which could be used to stimulate the positive traits to their character building. Dr. Seuss, American author of children literature, dedicated his life in literary works. One of his children books which become source of data in this research is *King's Stilts*. It was the picture book in the form of narrative which is good for children reading materials.

Dr. Seuss made the illustration by giving the pictures followed by the texts in each of pages. In the view of an author, messages become the target

which could be interpreted in different aspects such as politic, education, cultures, religion, and others for the readers. However, the aspect of dulce and utile must be appeared (Wellek & Werren. 1956). Dulce means to entertain and Utile means to educate. Encouraging reading habits for children needs supports from the environment such as the role of parents, teachers, government or others including the individual internal factors such as linguistic competent or personal intelligent. However, the human could be conditioned with the proper ways (Skinner.1938). Dr. Seuss used the symbols of characters and they were supported with natural phenomenon illustrated in each of generic structures of narrative texts.

Having excellent generations with strong characters are needed for the nation. It must be supported with many aspects started with the family life. This research on *King's Stilts* written by Dr. Seuss investigated on the meaning of symbols referring to the character building. The role of parents, teachers, and others who accompany the children in the process of reading activity become the key to transfer the positive traits from the given symbols in the children book to the children's thoughts. This exploring symbols is limited to the aspects of education especially on character traits of nation.

The study of signs and symbols related to the meanings and how they are used contextually become the encouraged learning to explore more in order to have the different. Saussure (1966) said that the study of sign was the study of signifier and signified concept. Signifier means that it was the object and signified means that the meaning of the referred object. That concept was supported by Pierce (1991) that a sign was not really sign unless it was interpreted as a sign. He classified a sign in the form of icon, index, and symbol. Icon means the referred object and its meaning have the relation on the resemblance. Index means the referred object and the meaning have the causal connection. Symbol means the meaning of referred object could be interpreted after learning process. In literary works, symbols have the hidden meanings which could be explored in different point of views. It becomes a multidisciplinary study which encourages the learners to analyze the symbols in different perspectives.

Dr. Seuss is one of a great American author who dedicated his life dominantly for the children literature. He was an artist, politician, illustrator, and cartoonist as well. He had been written many literary works in the field of children literature. It was more than 60 children books. One of them was *King's Stilts*, the children book with pictures. It was categorized as the narrative in the form of Children Books. Narrative involves the orientation, complication, evaluation, resolution, and coda (Martin and Rose:2008). According to Labov

(1972) generic structure of the narrative consisted of abstract, orientation, complication, evaluation, resolution, and coda. Labov gave more complex of generic structure for narrative. Kings' Stilts, the narrative children book, was full of symbols created by Dr. Seuss. However they never comes as the symbols so far they could be interpreted as symbols after getting the meanings through process of learning. In the literary works, Jung (1969:4) mentioned that mind creates symbols which have more meaning than their obvious and immediate got from the unconscious aspects which could never be precisely defined or fully explained. It means that symbols belonged to the creator of symbols which were difficult to know their real meanings. According to Wellek and Warren (1956:190), there are three kinds of poetic symbolism: private symbolism, traditional symbolism, and natural symbolism. Private symbolism is a symbol created by a modern author in his/her works and can be interpreted by a careful reader, while traditional symbolism is a symbol that has been used by previous authors, and natural symbolism is a symbol that uses nature, for instance, spring symbolized rebirth or new life and a red rose symbolizes love or passion. Other examples were given by Robertson (2015) to the meaning of symbols of American Flag. White stripes are the symbol of thirteen colonies of America whereas; fifty stars are the symbols of fifty states of America. The use of different colors symbolizes different things such as Red is the symbol of fear, passion, blood and danger. Additionally, the flowers could be the symbol of love, in simple words flowers are considered as the symbol of love and affection (Fontana.1994:53).

On the other point of semiotic study, Berger (1995:73) mentioned that the basic concepts of semiotic are finding the meanings of texts and other phenomena. It means that the study of symbol, a part of sign in semiotics, becomes the multidisciplinary study which could be done by using the content analysis to the literary works. In the process of education, it is familiar as the concept of character building which must be owned by young generation of the nation in order to keep the human values as well as possible. Meaning of symbols may have the positive traits which could encourage the character building Minister of Education and Culture Regulation 2016 Number 024 Appendix 37th mentioned that Indonesia Curriculum of English Subject in the third grade of Junior High School has purposes to enrich four competencies involving spiritual attitudes, social attitudes, knowledge, and skills. There are eighteen values of Cultural Education and National Character. They are Religious, honest, tolerant, punctual, hard work, creative, standalone, democratic, curiosity, spirit of nationality, love the country, appreciating achievement,

friendly, love peace, like to read, environmental care, social care, and responsible.

Research Method

This research is a descriptive qualitative. The source of data is the children book entitled *The King's Stilts* written by Dr. Seuss completed by pictures while the data is the texts referring to the symbol information. The data was collected based on the character traits checklist as the assessment in order to get the accuracy of the type of traits on symbols which are used by the author to convey the hidden messages after conducting the content analysis of the texts. Heuristic and retroactive reading was conducted to get the interpretation of the texts as accurate as possible. Heuristic reading means reading activity which is done to comprehend the meaning of the source data while retroactive reading was conducted to get the second interpretation to be crosschecked deeper to have the valid analysis.

Results and Discussion

It was started by the king of the Bin Kingdom who had a habit to play his stilts out of his Business. Dr. Seuss illustrated in this children book that there were three main characters who were doing interactions intensely. They were King Birtraim, Lord Droon, and Eric. King Birtraim had to keep his kingdom from the sea through looking at the Dike Trees regularly which could protect the kingdom in order to avoid the blood so that the Binn Kingdom was not sunk. Dike Trees were the only key which could keep the Binn Kingdom well, but they were attacked by the Nizzards, birds, who swoop and pecked on their roots. Knowing that, the King Birtram had special soldiers named Patrol Cats to keep the Nizzards away from the Dike Trees.

Every morning with his stilts, the king made sure that the Patrol Cats had already been given the best meat for their food. Thousands of Patrol Cats were more valuable than the navy, army, and fire department. Patrol Cats who kept the Dike Trees regularly in the day and night were divided into some groups in turns. They belonged to largest and smartest cats in all the world. They were trained to catch the Nizzards. That's why they had to get best care by giving the best meat and brushed their teeth. In the early morning the King Birtram had to wake up at five. The illustration which Dr.Seuss gave as follows;

King Birtram had to get up every morning at five. Long before the townsfolk and the farmers were awake, the King was

splashing away in his bath. It was right there, in fact, that his day's work began. With his left hand he could bathe with his royal bath brush, but his right hand he always had to keep dry for signing the important papers of state. Eric, his page boy, brought in these papers on a big silver tray. He stood at attention at the foot of the tub, while old Lord Droon took the papers one by one and held them over the water for His Majesty to sign.

The King Birtram kept his right hand drying because he had to give his signature to the important papers of state while his left hand was used to bath with his royal bath brush. Eric, a little page boy, brought a tray to place the documents of state after getting the signature by the King. On the other hand, Lord Droon always gave a warning to the king to hurry. He showed to the king the documents which had to be given his signature. It showed that the king was used by Dr. Seuss as a symbol to represent the trait of self-discipline. The king set goal to keep the Binn Kingdom by waking up in the early morning at five.

Then, at seven he had to lead the five hundred of Patrol Cats to inspect the root of Dike Trees till five o'clock all the tasks were over. He was aware how to keep the Binn Kingdom well. He could control himself from the sudden urges which could undermine the overall goal. Additionally, the King Birtram was able to imagine how the Binn Kingdom could be without the Dike Trees and Patrol Cats who keep them well from the attacks of Nizzards, the birds pecking the root of Dike Trees. So, he did not let the Nizzards do it and set routines that help him to control his behaviors. After the tiring day at five in the afternoon, he played with Eric by using his stilts to let the boredom away after doing the set of routines. The statement was illustrated by Dr. Seuss about that routines was,

"When King Birtram worked, he really WORKED, and his stilts stood forgotten in the tall stilt closet in the castle's front hallway

It showed that the King could manage his time when he had to work and when he had to play by using his stilts. Dr. Seuss used the symbol of King to represent the hard working. The King found the regular works and enjoyed to do. He knew when he had to work hard and when he had to play by using his stilts as the form of self-appreciation. He did not work overtime as well. He made the schedule for working and what he had done in daily activities was only for getting the worthwhile result for his Binn Kingdom. However, Lord Droon was not happy to look at the King Birtram playing by using his

stilts. Lord Droon was the one who was difficult to get the sense of humor. He did not like seeing the King Birtram and Eric such the following illustration;

Quick, Eric!" he'd shout. "Quick, Eric! The stilts!" Down the slope from the Dike Trees, away from all troubles, the King and Eric would race like two boys-straight to the tall stilt closet in the castle's front hallway. Out came the stilts! Up leapt the king! High in the air, his royal robes streaming, he'd race through the marble halls...out across the terrace...up and down the garden stairs. Black-spotted coach dogs barked and romped beside him, nipping at the heels of his flashing red stilts. The townsfolk looked on from the walls and just loved it. "A grown-up King on stilts, "They'd say, "does look rather strange. But it's hard work being King, and he does his work well. If he wants to have a bit of fun...sure!...let him have it!"

The given illustration above showed that the King had done many things to do. He needed some funs to keep the boredom away. Then, he used his stilts to walk around the marble halls, crossing the terrace, and around the garden with Eric, a little page boy, accompanied him in playing the stilts. Lord Droon had a bad plan looking at the routines as the daily activities. He did not like funs, games, and laughing. He scowled to the King's actions playing for funs. He planned to throw the stilts away. He had known the place where the King's stilts were put. The condition which was disliked by Lord Droon could be illustrated as follows;

Every afternoon when the Stilt Hour drew near, Lord Droon would slink away to his room in the northwest tower and sulk. "Such carryings on!" he would mutter in disgust, as he spied on the King from his window. "Look at this crown! Bouncing up and down on the side of his head! Look at his beard! Flapping in the wind! Look at him laughing! Right out in broad daylight in front of the townsfolk!...I must do something about this." And one day he did.

That condition above was not proper for the king. He liked everything ran properly especially in King daily activities. He thought that the things which made the king mess up were his stilts. His crown and beard were not mess up anymore when the stilts were thrown away. The king would not be laughing too much in the afternoon. Lord Droon tried to change the habit of king which he thought they were not proper for King's actions in the afternoon. The next step was illustrated as follows;

One Wednesday, just before supper, when the thought the King was out, Lord Droon tiptoed down to the front hall. The guards at their posts, were dozing. Without the smallest sound on the hard stone floor, Droon crept to the stilt closet, pulled back the ancient door and reached in....It took only a second. He had the King's stilts! He unbuttoned the top of his long robe and shoved them down inside. Then he sneaked past the guards again and slipped through the door. Down the steep slanting stairway, Lord Droon marched with the stilts. Down to the furnace to burn them! "This is the end of the King's foolish stilt-walking," he mumbled to himself

Lord Droon tried to get the stilts without knowing of the king. It was done on Wednesday before supper when the king was out. He tiptoed and crept to avoid the guards of King and reached the stilts which were put in the tall stilt closet in the castle's front hallway. After getting the stilts, he was in hurry to go out of the hallway. However, the king called his name and walked next to him through the stairs. Lord droon was confused and looked at the opening window of the hall way knowing that Eric was in an alley. He gave command to him as the following illustration;

It was Eric, the page boy. "Psst...You...You..." Lord Droon hissed in a hoarse, nervous whisper. Eric looked up, astonished. "Yes, sir?" He bowed politely. "Take these stilts," commanded Lord Droon. "Take them away...bury them...deep, where no one can ever find them....bury them up by the sea by the Dike Trees. "Lord Droon flung the stilts from the window. The King's Stilts! Bury them? Eric didn't know what to think. "It will spoil all His Majesty's fun!" he stammered

Eric knew that the stilts which were given to him to burry them all were his Majesty's fun. But he had no option and power to reject the Lord Droon's command. Eric could not think what he had to do. The only action he could do was obeying the Lord Droon. He picked the stilts up and passing the road next to sea to throw the stilts away when people or townsfolk were having supper to make the deep hole and buried the stilts in. Dr. Seuss used the symbol of Lord Droon to represent the deceptive trait. In the illustration above, Lord Droon thought that loosing the king's stilts could make the king have good habits as if he were a solemn King. The next afternoon at five after doing his routines the King Birtram looked at his stilts to play. It turned out, they were gone. He was groping in the empty stilt closet looking the stilts

which were not there. The Lord Droon was pretended to be shocked as the illustration follows;

Lord Droon chuckled to himself. He had expected this to happen and was ready with his lie. "It was the townsfolk who did it," he said, peering into the stilt closet and pretending to be greatly shocked. "I have seen them every day, plotting behind the castle walls. 'A King,' they say, 'should behave like a King, and sit with pomp and dignity upon his royal throne. A King," they say, 'should never walk on stilts!' It's too bad, Your Majesty, but you must try to do without them."

Based on the illustration above, Dr. Seuss used the symbol of Lord Droon to represent the traits of evasive. He knew about the kings' stilts, but he pretended to care to the king's problem. On the other hand, Dr. Seuss represented the uncaring, unfeeling traits which were wrapped in the symbol of Lord Droon. He did not want to feel and imagine what the King Birtram felt. He did not concern to the King who was getting pain as well. Lord Droon acted as a cruel to the King. Furthermore, Lord Droon did not care to the happiness of King. The King had to be acted as the real king. Dr. Seuss used the symbol of Lord Droon to represent the dishonest. Lord Droon was a liar when the King asked him about the stilts. He pretended to be shocked as well because he actually had stolen the King's Stilts. Lord Droon tricked the king based on his wishes. After losing the stilts, the King's condition could be illustrated as follows;

He couldn't keep his mind on his work. His commands to the Patrol Cats sounded feeble and faint. The cats seemed to know it and wouldn't obey. Day by day they grew lazier and lazier. Uncombed and unbrushed, they slept most of the day and grew fat. No one bothered to put their P.C. badges on them, for as chasers of Nizzards they weren't worth a thing

The king was getting weaker and weaker. He could not manage the Patrol Cats to keep the Dike Trees regularly. The Patrol Cats was getting lazier and lazier. They were not getting comb and brushed. They did not have any instincts to catch the Nizzards. Day by day the patrol cats could not keep the Dike Trees from the Nizzards. The King did not have any passion to lead the patrols cats after losing the stilts. The spirit was gone away following the stilts. The situation became so frightening as the illustration follows;

The townsfolk began to feel frightened. Housewives couldn't keep their minds on their housework. They heard Nizzards flapping

over their rooftops and poked their heads out for a look. "If the cats don't keep those Nizzards away from our Dike Trees," they asked one another, "What will keep the ocean back out of our land?"

The Nizzards, kind of woodpeckers, came to fly over the Binn Kingdom. They were free to peck the roots of Dike Trees. The housewife could not focus to their jobs because of their worried to the kingdom they lived. Patrol Cats did not have any instincts to catch them all because they were getting lazier and lazier. They slept and did nothing to do knowing the Nizzards flew over the Binn Kingdom. The kind did not have any power to wake them all. All the townsfolk were frightened to the coming of Nizzards who broke the Dike Tress so the ocean would sink the Binn of Kingdom. Eric knew that the condition was getting worse. He knew why the King did not have any power. Then, he planned to tell where the stilts were to the King. However, his plan was known by the Lord Droon. Based on the illustration as follows;

King was strolling sadly on the terrace, with Lord Droon and two guards. Eric rushed up. He must tell the King. Droon or no Droon, he was going to tell! But Lord Droon saw him coming and stepped quickly forward. "Impudent boy, what are you doing here?" Before Eric could answer and push past him to the King, Lord Droon had grabbed him. He looked at Eric sharply and suddenly the corners of his mouth turned up in a grin

Eric as a little boy, was symbolized as having social care to the environment and the King as well. When Eric tried to tell to the Kings what happened, Lord Droon prevented him next to the King. Lord Droon had thought that Eric would tell that the stilts were actually stolen by Lord Droon. It could be detected by the pale face of Eric. However, Eric knew when the stilts were back to the King, the spirit of King would come back. That's was why the Lord Droon prevented Eric's plan by pushing, dragging, kicking him from the King and down the castle stairs. After five minutes Eric was aware that he was in the jail guarded by two spears cross of the door. In that place Eric heard the flap of Nizzards which meant

that the Patrol Cats did not work to protect the Dike Trees. It stimulated Eric to escape from the jail through the window. He tied the spears of two guards then, Eric screamed to them that their spears were tied together by his belt. Knowing the guards were busy to tide it off, Eric escaped and went to the place where he buried the stilts in. When he took the stilts next to the sea, the Nizzards, birds, attacked him. It made the Eric faster to take them. After

getting the stilts, he was in a hurry to go to the castle to give the stilts for the King. However, the stilts had been hurt his shoulders. In the tailor shop he stopped and the Lord Droon with the guards searched to Eric in that tailor shop. There was no way to Eric to use the stilts with the robe pretended to be tall man talking to Lord Droon. He asked the question to them whether they were looking for small boy with no belt. Then Eric informed them that the little boy passed the way to go to the sea. Then, they went to that way based on the given information by Eric. Based on the illustration above, Dr. Seuss used the symbol of little boy to represent the social care, self-discipline, creative, and honest. The braveness of Eric to reject Lord Droon command showed the social care to his environment. He realized when the King's Stilts were not back to the King, The Patrol Cats could not keep the Dike Trees which protect the Binn Kingdom from the sea. The trait of self disciplined was symbolized to the little boy when he could set the goal to give the stilts back to the King. It stimulated him to be creative by escaping from the Measles room. The honest trait was shown when he pretended to be old tall man in the tailor shop

with the robe using the stilts. He informed the accurate fact to the Lord Droon and the guards as well. The fact showed that Eric really passed the way to the sea where he had to take the king's stilts. It was only the time which was different. They could not get Eric because he had passed the road away before they came. Eric was not lying to them. The way Eric avoided the Lord Droon and guards belonged to creative traits. Eric dared to try something which was completely new. He could change his appearance from the young fashion to the old one by putting on the robe and stilts. Soon, Eric went to the castle to meet the King who was sitting next to the gate of Binn Kingdom without putting on his robe. His crown was not also shined. The King looked so sad. Eric called the King whispering to him such in the following illustration;

Down from the stilts leapt Eric, the page boy. Up onto the stilts sprang Birtram, the King. He drew a great Kingly breath-the first one in weeks. His head shot up high; his chest broadened wide. Birtram of Binn was sturdy, straight and strong again, and every inch a King

Eric was getting down from the stilts and put the robe off. It was looked the shining red stilts which was lost a few days ago. Knowing the stilts were back, it was the first time in a week the breath of the King came. The King's face showed the new spirit came back and his broadened wide chest as well. The shining atmosphere could be got by the King Birtram to lead the Patrol Cats

hunting the Nizzards, birds, because of his loudest command to them. What the Patrol Cats did could be illustrated as follows;

From wherever they had wandered, the cats heard the call. They fell in line; they fell in step; they marched ahead a thousand strong. Up the hill to the Dike Trees they followed Eric and the King. "Day Cats to the left flank!...Night Cats to the right! Charge!" the King shouted.

Patrol Cats consisted of Day Cats and Night Cats made in line marching a head. The King and Eric led them up and down the hill to the Dike Trees which were broken by Nizzards, the birds. The strong Patrol Cats were too strong for the wood peckers. Soon, they were gone and could not peck the Dike Trees. The Binn Kingdom was safe because of the back of the King's stilts. All the townsfolk were happy because the Nizzards disappeared. The Lord Droon was gone to the prison by the King. Eric was telling the truth to the King what actually happened. Lord Droon got the dish of Nizzards three times a day. Stewed Nizzard was for his breakfast. Cold Nizzard was for his lunch. Fried Nizzard was for his supper. Every other Thursday, he got the Nizzard hash. Lord Droon was kept by the Patrol Cats with the measles room for its notice. On the other hand, the King asked Eric to get the reward because the little boy Eric could change the condition from the worse to better situation. He asked to the King the stilts which could be played together with the King after five o'clock in the afternoon. So, the King had the carpenter to make the stilts for Eric. The last illustration given by Dr. Seuss was as follows;

And when they played they really PLAYED. And when they worked they really WORKED. And the cats kept the Nizzards away from the Dike Trees. And the Dike Trees kept the water back out of land

It showed that Dr. Seuss used the symbol of King named Birtram to represent hard works and social care traits. On the other hand, he used the symbol of little boy to represent the honest, creative, and also hard works traits. He could accompany the King to lead the Patrol Cats when the attack of Nizzards came pecking the roots of Dike Trees. Eric was getting up and down the hill around the Binn Kingdom to inspect the roots Dike Trees protecting the Binn Kingdom from the sea. The statement "And when they played they really PLAYED". This became a point for Dr. Seuss to arrange the text. He used the symbols of King, Little Boy, and Stilts to have plays. "When they worked, they really WORKED".

It showed that Dr. Seuss illustrated the situation that play and work had to do together in different time. He used the symbols of Cats, Birds, Trees, Lord, Little Boy, and King to show the "WORK". "And the cats kept the Nizzards away from the Dike Trees." It showed the type of works done by the Patrol Cats which Dr. Seuss illustrated in the children book "And the Dike Trees kept the water back out of land" and the trees work to keep the water back to the sea. There are two issues which became the problems. They were Sea and Birds. To solve those problems, Dr. Seuss used the symbols of Trees, and Cats. The water of the sea could be solved by the trees and the attack of birds could be prevented by the cats. Dr. Seuss wrapped those symbols into narrative text in the form of children book to represent the character building through the traits on the used symbols.

Table 4.4 Symbolic Meaning in *King's Stilts*

Characters	Character Traits	Nation Character Traits
King Birtraim	Self-Discipline	X
	Hard work	✓
	Responsible	✓
	Social Care	✓
	Creative	✓
	Sense of humor	✓
Eric, Little boy	Social care	✓
	Self-discipline	X
	Creative	✓
	Honest	✓
	Hard work	✓
	Sense of humor	X
	Wise	X
Lord Droon	Solemn	X
	Deceptive	X
	Evasive	X
	Uncaring	X
	Unfeeling	X
	Dishonest	X

The table above shows that character traits which were represented to the used symbols by Dr. Seuss. There are only two traits owned by the King which are not stated in the nation character traits. They are self-discipline and sense of humor. Other traits such as hard work, responsible, social care and creative are stated in the nation character traits published by The Ministry of Education and Culture (2010: 7). Eric, the little page boy was used by Dr. Seuss as well to represent the traits of social care, creative, honest, and hard work. There are three other character traits which are not stated in the nation character traits, but they were represented to the symbol of little boy involving the sense of humor, wise, and self-discipline.

Conclusion

The study of symbols becomes the multidisciplinary learning that could be seen in different perspective. The used symbols in the author's view could become an object as the signifier and the hidden meaning of the used symbol becomes the signified. The general concepts of symbols usage are used to convey the messages for the readers in order to entertain (*dulce*) and educate (*utile*) the readers. In children literature, the role of people who accompanied the children in the process of reading activity such parents, teachers, or other become the key to explore the meaning of symbols in order to be useful learning to transfer the positive traits from the symbols of source reading materials to character building which could affect to the attitudes of children.

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