

COLLABORATION OF PUBLISHERS AND THE LITERACY COMMUNITIES TO ENHANCE THE READING AND WRITING INTEREST IN JAMBI

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Abstract. This study aims to find out various activities carried out by the publishers and the literacy communities to enhance the reading and writing interest in Jambi. This is a qualitative descriptive study. Several activities found in this study were reading book material production and literacy activities. There are also several obstacles faced, such as: a) it is difficult for the literacy community to reach the public to be involved in the literacy program in Jambi; b) the ebbs and flows of motivation of community members due to various activities; c) lack of funds and facilities provided; d) it is rare for the media in Jambi to accept articles for publication in newspapers; e) book publishers in Jambi are limited; f) there are still many Jambi writers who are not confident in publishing their writings to the readers; and g) distribution of reading materials in Jambi is still limited to cities.

keywords: collaboration; literacy communities; wrtiting interest jambi

INTRODUCTION

Reading and writing are important language skills to sharpen the thinking ability of someone. Reading is not only saying a writing but a series of a complex activities. Akhadiah (Trisiantari dan Sumantri, 2016: 204) defined reading as a unified whole of activities and included several activities such as recognizing letters and words, connecting them with sounds and meanings, and drawing conclusions from a reading. So that reading can practice the brain to think and rewrite it according to his ideas.

Thinking is the earliest step for humans to change so that they will find new ideas. Thinking humans will always find information, one of which is by reading. Fitts and Peterson (Ortlieb, 2013: 146) explained that the acquisition of reading skills is the first step in the advancement of mindset before reaching a higher step, namely obtaining or processing information.

An article from kominfo.go.id contains data that according to UNESCO, the reading interest of Indonesian people is only 0.001%. From one thousand people, there is only one people wants to read. Whereas, reading can expand knowledge and a lot of material can be written and shared to other readers.

Writing is not just stringing words together, but there is meaning, intention and purpose to be delivered. The writing that is made is not only meaningless and formal words. That formal means mere pleasantries to be called as a writer and praised. Even though the writing is a form of dedication to various life problems. So, reading and writing must be interrelated, and cannot be separated from one another. Reading and writing must be connected, and cannot be separated from one another.

If both are positioned as important elements, then there will be born a critical human in looking at all issues. Critical humans will minimize the case of defamation, false information, and other crimes. But it is not easy to enhance the reading and writing interests of the community. The feelings of laziness and reluctance are still very strong in influencing the community's

suggestions. It does not mean that this condition cannot be fixed, in fact this problem becomes a challenge for any parties to create programs and innovations to face it.

The development of the era should facilitate all human activities, including making it easier to develop community interest in reading and writing. Social media, literacy communities, and publishers become several important elements in the literacy world. If one of them does not move, there will be an imbalance.

Social media is useful for spreading information quickly, especially positive information and does not contain elements against the law. The literacy community contains activists who care about the growth of literacy in society, their principle is dedication. The literacy community should make effective programs. Publishers should provide a place for the community to work, as well as provide appropriate reading materials.

Every element must move and collaborate with each other, not only move alone and uphold the ego and prestige. Enhancing community interest in reading and writing, especially in Jambi, requires extra work. All parties must support each other and not follow the ego. If the concept of collaboration is interpreted and implemented properly, useful and sustainable programs will also be born.

Those various reasons make it important for this study to see how far the publishers and the literacy communities collaborate with each other to enhance the community interest in reading and writing in Jambi. It is very important to know the various obstacles and deficiencies that have occurred so far. If every obstacle and deficiency has been described, all parties can mutually evaluate and introspect. Then, higher quality and more sustainable programs will be reborn.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a qualitative descriptive method as an attempt to describe the collaborative efforts between publishers and the literacy communities in developing the reading and writing interest in Jambi. In addition, this study also described obstacles and deficiencies that are often experienced during the collaboration process of various parties.

Data was obtained based on observation and interviews, either in the form of photos, books, or interview results. Observations were done to directly observe various activities carried out, as well as to monitor the development of publishers and the literacy communities. While interviews were conducted to find out information that had not been obtained from the observation process. Interviews were also conducted to know the obstacles faced during carrying out the activity.

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

1.1 The Production of Reading Materials

Growing love for reading must start by producing the reading material first. If the reading material used is interesting, meaningful, and in accordance with the readers' wishes, they will continue to read it to the end. Reading is not a compulsion, but a process and comfort. The community will read if the information is important to them.

The facts on the field should be taken into consideration by various parties working in the literacy field to focus on creating comfort feeling in reading. One of which is by looking at the reading material needed by a group of people. For example, the majority of people living around the Batanghari river work as fishermen, they will need books about fishing.

Especially when talking about culture and traditions, Jambi has hundreds of Intangible Cultural Heritage that contain life values. Jenks (1993:2) considered that culture will lead to a symbolic consideration: that is, what we learn is an ideal aspect of the humanity of society. Through culture, societal rules can be learned, so that they are decent to be adapted or transferred into writing.

The adaptation process allows writers to bring an adaptation culture based on the current development. For example, bringing a folktale into the present setting, so that there are adjustments to the elements of the story. This adaptation as expressed by Damono (2018: 9) is a process of transferring from one type of 'vehicle' to another type of 'vehicle'. For example, transferring the vehicle of oral tradition to written form. Both of them can help writers process folklore, oral literature, and various legends into the reading material. One of which is what *Gemulun* Publisher did, they adapted the oral tradition of Tapa Malenggang into a picture storybook.

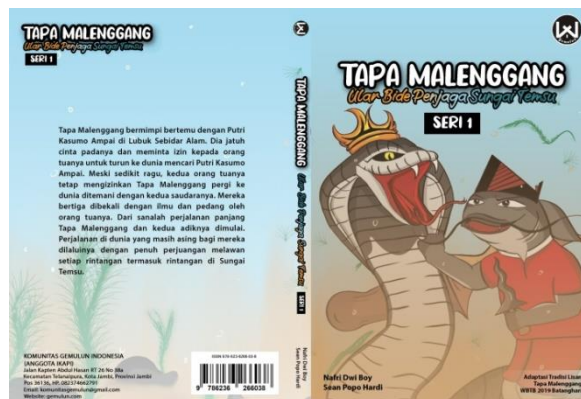


Fig. 1. Tapa Malenggang Book Cover

The Tapa Malenggang picture book is an adaptation of the oral tradition of *Tapa Malenggang* from Batanghari Regency. The book tells the story of Mambang Diawan coming down to earth to find his soulmate who is present in a dream. During living on earth, Mambang Diawan transformed into a Tapa fish. Until now, some of Batanghari people believe that Tapa Malenggang lives in the Batanghari River, so that the preservation of the river must be maintained.

The books published by *Gemulun* contain life values that make humans wiser. So, it is very suitable as reading material for various groups of people. Besides maintaining tradition, it also conveys cultural values to the reader.



Fig. 2. Liburan Kayla di Danau Kerinci Book Cover

Gemulun publisher also collaborated with English Literature students of UIN Sultan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi to produce children's picture storybooks based on myths. The myth raised is about the formation of Lake Kerinci which is one of the attractive tourist destinations in Kerinci Regency. Even more interesting, this book is written in two languages, namely Indonesian and English, so that it can be used as a children's reading book for entertainment and to improve cognitive skills in children's language learning.

Gemulun uses the concept of collaboration through collaboration with students. *Gemulun* publisher believes that students have great potential to produce works, more specifically local reading books. So that Jambi people have many alternative reading books that can be read based on their needs.

The concept of collaboration was also carried out by *Gemulun* publisher with Indonesian Literature students of Jambi University. *Gemulun* and Indonesian Literature students visited the Jambi painting maestro's house. They enjoyed and tried to imply the maestro's paintings that were displayed in his house. After that, the paintings were turned into short stories.

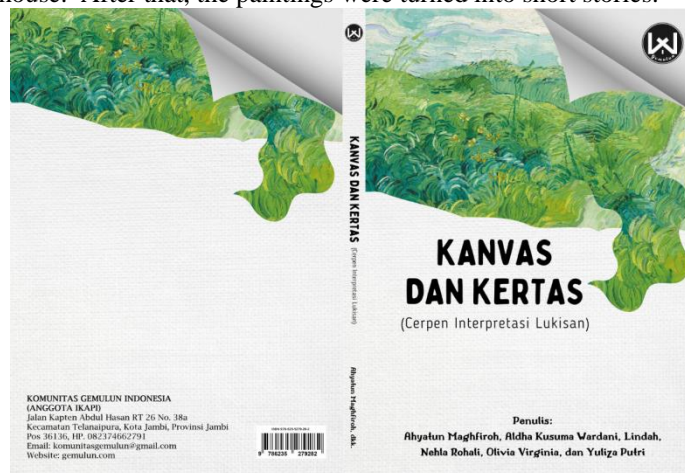


Fig. 3. Kanvas dan Kertas Book Cover

The process of moving from painting to short story produced a book entitled *Kanvas dan Kertas*. This book contains the writer's interpretation of enjoying the paintings by Jambi painting maestros. The author is required to be able to think critically in interpreting the painting. The maestro is also guided by giving an explanation to the writer.

The production of the same reading materials came from the local wisdom, also carried out by the Jambi Language Office.

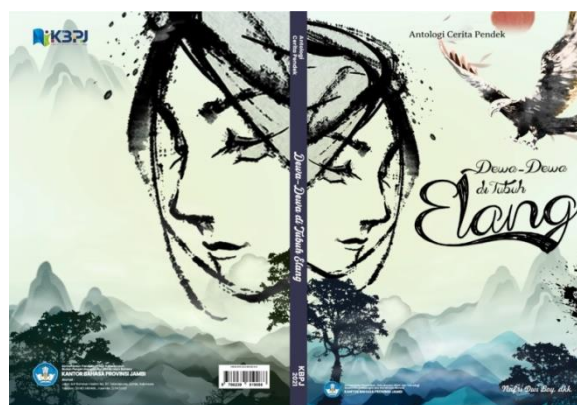


Fig. 4. Dewa-Dewa di Tubuh Elang Book Cover

The book entitled *Dewa-Dewa di Tubuh Elang* is an anthology of short stories written by young Jambi writers. Coming from various local wisdom that is transformed into short stories. Some of the local wisdom that was raised in this book was the *Tari Elang*, *Kenduri Sko*, *Gelang Sebalik Sumpah*, and many more.

Dewa-Dewa di Tubuh Elang has gone through a strict curation process, so the quality of the writing is maintained. It is very appropriate to be the community reading material, especially as an effort to preserve Jambi's original local wisdom. The selected authors have also created the story as best they can.

Reading materials that are still in the publishing process are also being worked on by *Gemulun* Publisher. This reading material is entitled *Baju Baru Inaya* which is intended for readers of elementary school students.



Fig. 5. Baju Baru Inaya Book Cover

The book is minimal in writing, about seventy percent of this book is the pictures. Because readers, who are still in elementary school, are still learning to read. So *Baju Baru Inaya* book is intended as a learning media to read for children.

Writers, publishers, and illustrators must also be given an understanding of the age-appropriate reading limits. If the target audience is elementary school students, do not give them reading material in the form of novels. They can be confused because some of the contents are written. Even though elementary school students prefer to read books that contain pictures.

Reading material is not only in the form of books, newspapers are also one of the reading materials that can be enjoyed. However, there are very few newspapers that contain literature, except for *Jambi Ekspres*, which this year is working with the Jambi Language Office to provide space for writers to publish works.



Fig. 6. Jambi Ekspres Edition May 12th 2022

Jambi Ekspres began giving young Jambi writers space to work on May 12th, 2022. Published works are in the form of short stories, poetry, and essays, with strict curation. This means that the published works have been tested for quality and are worthy to read.

Actually, writers, publishers and various related parties have made many reading materials. The collaboration has been built even though there are still several deficiencies. But, there is still an obstacle in spreading to the community. Such as books published by *Gemulun*, the Language Office, and other publishers have not been able to meet the needs of all people in Jambi.

One of the steps being designed is to distribute the reading material to the schools in Jambi. Certainly, this design cannot be implemented alone, strong collaboration with various parties is needed. Collaboration between writers, publishers and schools is needed so that students can get reading material to spend their time. This program can slowly increase people's interest in reading.

Producing reading materials that are spread become the first step to enhancing the reading interest in Jambi. As Wahyuni (2009: 183) said, the availability of abundant reading materials allows everyone to choose according to their interests and concerns. When reading materials have been published and spread evenly, then appropriate programs are needed to support the development of reading interest in Jambi. The programs must support each other, collaborate, and not run separately.

1.2 Literacy Activities in Jambi

Jambi has no shortage of communities, institutions or foundations engaged in literacy. Such as the *Gemulun* Community which is engaged in cultural literacy, the *Kampus Biru* Art Studio in the world of literature and theater, various community reading gardens, and other fields. In fact, these communities are members of the *Pegiat Literasi Jambi Forum*.

The forum was formed as a collaborative effort between communities to develop literacy in Jambi. Moreover, he also invited related agencies such as the Jambi Language Office, Libraries and other agencies to get involved. Everything is involved in a reciprocal relationship. When a community holds activities, it always invites other agencies to be involved, as well as when an agency holds activities, it always invites the community to be involved.

Many programs have been implemented as a result of this inter-agency collaboration. On July 15th-17th, 2021 the Jambi Language Office held a Young Generation Literacy Training, Short Story Writing Training with the Local Wisdom theme. The speaker was Faisal Oddang, a writer from South Sulawesi. The Jambi Language Office invited the literacy community in Jambi to participate as training participants.

Each community representative was asked to send several delegates, and the result of the training was successful in curating short stories which were published in the book *Dewa-Dewa di Tubuh Elang*. In addition to gaining knowledge about writing, participants who passed the curation were also given free books. The book was distributed to the public as reading material.

The Jambi Language Office is also working with *Jambi Ekspres* providing space for young Jambi writers to publish their works.



Fig. 7. Writing Invitation Flyer

The space is available for one year, with the hope that many young writers will start showing their ability in producing works. The program also shows collaboration between the Jambi Language Office as the originator of the program, Jambi Ekspres as the media that publishes the works, communities and schools in Jambi as targets that produce works.

The literacy program is also carried out by the *Kampus Biru* Art Studio, but the training that is carried out focuses on introducing the Incung script.



Fig. 8. Incung Script Training

It should be noted that Incung is a script from Kerinci, which has now been designated as an Intangible Cultural Heritage. This script is threatened with extinction if its knowledge is not passed on to the younger generation. That is the reason why the *Kampus Biru* Art Studio invited Deki Syaputra ZE, M.Hum. as the author for writing Incung.

This activity was also carried out because of the collaboration among *Kampus Biru* Art Studio, the *Gemulun* Community, the Jambi University, and student organizations. Cultural literacy is the target of the program by creating younger generations who understand how to write Incung. Even though it was only for one day, the participants began to understand the rules for writing Incung.

The *Kampus Biru* Art Studio also implemented the Village Innovation Program (PRO IDE) which was supported by Jambi University. This program is a student dedication in preserving regional culture, one of which is in written form. Students who are members of the *Kampus Biru* Art Studio trained young people in the Jembatanmas Village to enhance the writing skills.



Fig. 9. Writing Training by Kampus Biru Art Studio

The final product that will be produced in this program is a collection of short stories that come from culture. They also invited traditional leaders to provide content strengthening about culture in the Jembatanmas Village. This program also involved various schools around the area, so that the younger generation has quality writing skills.

Besides improving the writing skills of the younger generation, the literacy communities in Jambi also focus on enhancing people's interest in reading. One of them is the Reading Stalls and Discussion program held by the Jari Menari Community.

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Fig. 10. Reading and Discussion Flyer of Jari Menari Community

This program also involved various parties as presenters and participants, and this is the collaboration. The reading and discussion booth was held at the Tugu Keris Park, Kota Baru with the discussion theme "The Birth History of Pancasila". The reading booth also presented various books to read, usually completed by fairy tale performances to entertain participants.

Another program aimed to enhance reading interest was also held by the *Malam Puisi Jambi*. They usually hold events at the cafe, if the visitors in the cafe are usually presented with music, but this time they are presented with poetry readings.



Fig. 11. Malam Puisi Jambi Flyer

This community usually collaborates with artists, writers, other communities and other parties who care about literacy. There is an interesting motto that is always echoed "come, hear, and read your poetry". Cafe visitors are given the opportunity to read poetry on stage. Apart from that, they also have interesting discussions every week.

From all the activities that have been described, the collaboration between parties is already visible, although not optimal. Some communities still find it difficult to reach the wider community to get involved in enhancing literacy in Jambi. So that every activity carried out, the number of participants is still far from the expected target. The slowly fading motivation of community members is also a major obstacle. Because many members are busy with other activities.

Another obstacle is also in the lack of funds and facilities provided. For example, in the world of writing, it is rare for the media in Jambi to accept writing for publication in newspapers. Book publishers in Jambi are also limited, so many young writers are still confused about the steps of publishing a book. On the writing side, there are still many young Jambi writers who are not confident about publishing their writings to readers.

In terms of reading materials, they are still limited to cities, while in villages many people do not have reading materials, especially books which are based on local wisdom. Unequal distribution creates inequality in the literacy world. Although, every effort to write the reading materials and publish them is still ongoing.

Collaboration between publishers and the literacy communities has begun to appear, even though not perfect yet. This proves that literacy in Jambi, especially reading and writing, is also an important concern to be preserved. If people's reading and writing skills enhance, they will also become critical. People who are information literate according to Catts and Lau (Juditha, 2019: 78) can realize that they need, obtain, and evaluate the quality of information, so they can avoid false information.

Currently, reading is not only from books, but has developed into the digital world. Many social media can be accessed by the public, sometimes the information obtained cannot be filtered. Especially if there is a media that makes clickbait titles, then readers who only read the titles will get the wrong information.

The presence of publishers, the literacy communities, and the government is highly expected by the public. Moreover, the younger generation who are currently addicted to gadgets, all parties involved in literacy will give birth to a critical generation. It is not easy, but it can be done with enthusiasm, determination, and collaboration of various parties.

CONCLUSION

Based on the description and analysis of the data obtained from observations and interviews, it can be concluded that:

1. Efforts have been made to produce reading materials in Jambi in the form of the book *Tapa Malenggang, Liburan Kayla di Danau Kerinci, Kanvas dan Kertas, Dewa-Dewa di Tubuh Elang, Baju Baru Inaya*, and a newspaper published every week in Jambi Ekspres as a first step to enhance the reading and writing interest of Jambi people;
2. Various literacy programs have been carried out in the form of Literacy Training for the Young Generation Short Story Writing Training, Writing Invitations, Incung Writing Training, Writing Training at the Jembatanmas Village, Reading and Discussion Stalls, and *Malam Puisi Jambi*;

The obstacles faced during the collaboration process to enhance reading and writing interest in Jambi, namely the literacy community found it difficult to reach the public to get involved in literacy programs in Jambi, the motivation of community members went up and down due to various activities, the lack of funds and facilities provided, there was still little media in Jambi accepts writings for publication in newspapers, book publishers in Jambi are limited, there are still many Jambi writers who are not confident to publish their writings to readers, and the distribution of reading materials in Jambi is still limited to cities.

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