

REPRESENTATIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN ALIYA'S ADVENTURES BY YUNITA CANDRA SARI

Nurjannah

UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto

Email: jannahpiaud@gmail.com

Fatihatul Hikmah

UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto

Email: hikmahfath785@gmail.com

Fauzi

UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto

Email: fauzi@uinsaizu.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

Social-emotional development is a crucial aspect of early childhood education, as it influences children's ability to interact, adapt, and establish healthy social relationships. A common challenge during early childhood is excessive shyness, which may limit children's social participation and reduce their self-confidence. Children's storybooks have the potential to present behavioral models that depict children's social experiences. This study aims to analyze the representation of early childhood social development in the storybook Aliya's Adventures written by Yunita Candra Sari. The research employed a qualitative approach using a library research method. Data were collected through careful and in-depth reading of the text, accompanied by systematic note-taking on narrative structure, character portrayal, dialogue, and events reflecting children's social behavior. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, categorization of social development aspects, and interpretative analysis. The findings indicate that Aliya's Adventures portrays social development as a gradual process. The narrative initially depicts Aliya's shyness and withdrawal through her hesitation to interact and limited participation in social situations. Subsequent events portray her developing empathy through attention to others' feelings, prosocial behavior through helping and sharing, social initiative through initiating interaction, and friendship through increasingly positive and reciprocal relationships with other characters. These narrative patterns illustrate a gradual transition from limited social participation toward more active and positive social interaction. The findings suggest that Aliya's Adventures contains narrative representations of social development that may provide meaningful material for discussions of social behavior in early childhood education. The contribution of this study lies in strengthening the academic understanding of children's literature as a narrative medium for representing social development in early childhood education.

Keywords: Social Development, Early Childhood, Storybooks.

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood social-emotional development is an important foundation in the formation of personality and social adaptability in the future (Sukatin et al., 2023). Studies show that at an early age, children begin to learn to recognize themselves, understand the emotions of others, and build social interaction through direct experience in their surroundings (Khoiriyati et al., 2025). However, not all children are able to go through this stage optimally. Some children experience barriers to socializing, such as excessive shyness, withdrawal tendencies, and difficulty building relationships with peers. Previous studies have shown that shy in early childhood can lead to low social participation and limited communication skills (Dyah & Zulkarnaen, 2022). Children who are too shy tend to avoid social interactions and take longer to adapt to a new environment. If this condition does not receive proper stimulation, the child is at risk of having difficulty socializing in the later stages of development (Intan et al., 2022). Educational strategies are needed that can help children recognize emotions, build empathy, and develop social behavior gradually and enjoyably (Hamzah et al., 2026).

One of the approaches that is widely used in early childhood education is the use of literacy media, especially children's storybooks (Moelyono & Sumargi, 2025). Storybooks not only function as a means of entertainment, but also as an indirect learning medium that presents models of social behavior through characters and storylines. Soxon et al. (2025) Revealing that children's stories can help children understand social values, such as empathy, cooperation, and concern for others. Through the process of identifying the story characters, children learn to interpret social situations and imitate the positive behaviors displayed (Mariatul, 2024). Previous studies have generally discussed the role of storybooks in improving early childhood language skills, imagination, and character. (Zahra et al. (2025) also highlight the influence of storybooks on children's social-emotional development in general (Bening & Ichsan, 2022). Most of these studies still focus on the implementation of storybooks in learning activities or on measuring the impact after the intervention is carried out. Studies that specifically analyze the representation of early childhood social development processes in storybook narratives are still relatively limited.

Previous research has paid limited attention to how multiple dimensions of early childhood social development are represented and interconnected within a single children's storybook. In this study, social development is examined through five analytical dimensions: initial social inhibition, empathy, prosocial behavior, social initiative, and friendship formation. These dimensions represent different but interrelated aspects of children's social functioning, ranging from limited social participation to increasingly active, responsive, and reciprocal interactions with others. Examining these dimensions within a single narrative is important for understanding how children's social experiences and behavioral changes are constructed through story characters, dialogue, and social events. This gap indicates the need for research that focuses on the content and meaning of social development representations in children's storybooks. Based on this gap, the present study analyzes the representation of early childhood social development in the storybook *Petualangan Aliya* by Yunita Candra Sari. The storybook was selected because it portrays a child character experiencing changes in social behavior through a series of interpersonal experiences. Rather than examining the

effectiveness of the storybook in changing children's behavior, this study focuses on how social development is represented through the narrative.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the aspects of early childhood social development represented in the storybook *Petualangan Aliya*, including shyness, empathy, prosocial behavior, social initiative, and friendship formation. Through this analysis, it is hoped that the research can provide a comprehensive picture of the process of children's social development as represented in the narrative of the story. The contribution of this research is expected to enrich the study of children's literacy and provide academic references for educators and parents in utilizing storybooks as a means of stimulating early childhood social development.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with the type of literature research (*library research*) to understand and interpret the representation of early childhood social development in narrative texts. The primary data source is the storybook *Aliyah's Adventures* by Yunita Candra Sari, while supporting sources include books, journal articles, and scientific papers relevant to early childhood social development and children's literacy. Data were collected through meticulous, in-depth, and repeated reading of the storybook. The primary data consisted of narrative passages, dialogues, character actions, and events representing children's social behavior. The use of literature research is appropriate because this study focuses on analyzing meaning, values, and social messages contained in the narrative rather than quantitatively measuring variables.

Data coding followed a deductive approach based on the conceptual framework established before the analysis. Deductive qualitative analysis allows researchers to examine meanings and narrative phenomena using an established theoretical or conceptual framework (Rizky & Wulandari, 2023). Five analytical dimensions were predetermined: initial social inhibition, empathy, prosocial behavior, social initiative, and friendship formation. Initial social inhibition was identified through hesitation, reluctance, or limited participation in social interaction. Empathy was identified through the recognition, understanding, or response to another person's feelings or needs, whereas prosocial behavior was identified through observable actions intended to benefit or assist others, such as helping, sharing, or cooperating. The distinction between empathy and prosocial behavior is supported by research showing that empathy and prosocial behavior are related but conceptually distinguishable aspects of young children's social functioning. Social initiative was identified through active efforts to initiate or participate in social interaction, while friendship formation was identified through the development of positive and reciprocal relationships between children, consistent with research emphasizing friendship as an important component of children's developing social understanding. A single narrative event could receive more than one code when it contained clearly identifiable dimensions of social development. Coding was based on the meaning and function of each action within its narrative context rather than on isolated words or sentences.

Data credibility was maintained through repeated reading, contextual checking, and theoretical comparison. Each coded passage was reviewed in relation to the surrounding narrative to ensure that its interpretation was consistent with the context and the operational definition of the relevant analytical dimension.

Ambiguous passages were re-examined through repeated reading and comparison with relevant theoretical concepts and previous research on early childhood social development. These procedures were used to enhance the consistency and plausibility of the interpretation. Since the primary data were derived from a single storybook, the study did not employ source triangulation across multiple primary texts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research focuses on the fairy tale book *Petualangan Aliya* by Yunita Candra Sari. Based on the analysis of narrative and plot content, this book continues to depict the complexities of early childhood social development through the main character, Aliya. Aliya is presented as an early child who faces social difficulties in the early phases of the story, including guilt and a desire to escape social situations. This characterization is a useful starting point for explaining children's social development in a progressive and realistic way.



Image. 1. Aliya's Adventure Storybook

At the beginning of the story, Aliya is shown as an early child who likes to play alone in the park rather than with other children. He avoids direct social contact, rarely initiates conversations, and maintains a calm demeanor in social situations. This picture illustrates moderate asociality that is prevalent in early infancy, especially in children with high fear. This situation shows that Aliya does not have the courage and social readiness to actively participate in relationships with peers. Aliya's humiliation can be noticed not only in her distant behavior, but also in her emotional reactions when she is with other children. Aliya is considered nervous, reluctant, and insecure when speaking, which is why she chooses a safe attitude by staying separate from the group. These results suggest that shy is a substantial barrier to children's social development because it reduces their chances of learning through direct engagement.

When the book is revealed, Aliya's social attitude gradually shifts. This transformation does not happen overnight, but through repetitive and meaningful social interactions. Aliya begins to show interest in the activities of other children, while she is initially wary. This stage represents the early stage of social engagement, where the child learns to pay attention to and understand social dynamics before actively engaged. The findings of the investigation also reveal an increase in empathy in Aliya. In some parts of the story, Aliya begins to show concern for the well-being of her friends, such as paying attention to the emotions of

others and reacting to social situations more openly. This capacity to empathize is essential for children's social development because it helps them understand the other person's point of view and form more meaningful relationships.

Aliya's character begins to show pro-social behavior. Sharing, helping, and being kind to peers are examples of pro-social behavior. Although she was initially worried, Aliya eventually began to engage in collaborative activities and showed a desire to collaborate. These results imply that pro-social behaviors grow along with children's greater sense of security and confidence in social situations. The findings of this study further highlight the importance of social initiatives. Aliya, who is passive and waits at the beginning of the story, begins to take the initiative by approaching friends, inviting them to play, or responding positively to social invitations. This social initiative is an important step forward in children's social development because it demonstrates the child's capacity to actively participate in the formation of social relationships.

The social learning process that Aliya goes through throughout the story is closely related to the growth of her social project. Aliya found that social participation was a fun and fulfilling experience. This increases the child's intrinsic incentive to engage and participate in group activities. Social initiatives arise as a consequence of good and repetitive social interactions. In addition, the findings of the study show that Aliya went through the process of developing friendships. Aliya began to have playmates and participated in social events regularly after initially playing alone. A thriving friendship is defined as a basic yet significant relationship characterized by closeness, mutual support, and acceptance. This process suggests that when emotional barriers such as guilt are overcome in early infancy a strong social bond can emerge.

The development of friendship in the story is portrayed through increasingly positive social interactions that are accompanied by greater confidence in expressing oneself, openness toward the social environment, and comfort in group settings. These narrative elements indicate that friendship is presented as an important context for Aliya's social and emotional experiences. Overall, the analysis found that *Aliyah's Adventures* portrays early childhood social development through a sequence of interconnected social experiences. The narrative begins with Aliya's shyness and limited social participation and subsequently depicts empathy, prosocial behavior, social initiative, and friendship formation. These elements are constructed through character interactions, dialogue, and social events throughout the story. The findings therefore indicate that *Aliyah's Adventures* provides a narrative portrayal of children's social experiences, including challenges in social participation and subsequent changes in patterns of interaction. The study does not establish that these narrative patterns correspond directly to actual developmental trajectories; rather, it identifies how early childhood social development is constructed and expressed within the story. The findings contribute to the understanding of children's storybooks as literary texts that portray social experiences and behavioral interactions relevant to early childhood social development.

A study of the content of Yunita Candra Sari's storybook *Petualangan Aliya* revealed that the story consistently depicts many elements of early childhood social development. This representation develops not only from the language and actions of the main characters, but also from the narrative sequence of events that depict

the slow process of changing people's behavior. Each event in the story has a narrative role as a model of social behavior, helping the child's reader to pay attention, understand, and internalize the social ideals shown. To explain the results of the study, Table 1 presents the characteristics of social development depicted in fairy tales, significant narrative events, narrative functions, and their consequences on early childhood development.

Table 1. The social aspect of the storybook of Aliya's Adventure

Social Aspects Represented	Key Narrative Events	Narrative Function (Modeling)	Implications of AUD Development
Shyness/Sociality	Aliya is a shy child, loves to play alone in the park.	Establishes key emotional conflicts that the reader can identify, validating feelings of shame.	Indicates a starting point that requires a change in the regulation of emotions.
Empathy and Pro-social	Aliya helps cats who are in trouble in the river.	Altruistic actions are a catalyst for courage and self-esteem enhancement.	Develop sensitivity and empathy for living beings. Building confidence through usefulness.
Social Initiatives	Meet and get acquainted with new friends.	Social conflict resolution model; Positive transition to the Erikson Initiative Stage.	Encourage children to take the first steps in social interaction.
Friendship Formation	Learn to make friends and help each other.	Teach the value of trust, cooperation, and sustainable social skills.	Improvement of cooperative skills and good social adjustment.

Table 1 shows that the Aliya Adventure storybook depicts early childhood social development in a complete and sustainable manner. The characteristic of shyness or asociality is described as the initial state of the character of Aliya, which helps confirm the child's emotional experiences and indicates the need for emotional management. The emergence of empathy and pro-social behavior through deeds helps mark a pivotal moment in Aliya's social development, contributing to her increased self-esteem and social concern. Aliya's courage in making new acquaintances shows a favorable shift towards more active social participation. The process then develops into a friendship characterized by an attitude of collaboration and mutual help, which shows improved social skills and adaptive qualities in early childhood.

The results of the study show that storybooks *Aliyah's Adventures* represents early childhood social development as a dynamic and gradual process. These stages start from the appearance of shyness and a tendency to withdraw, then develop towards empathy, prosocial behavior, social initiative, to the formation of friendship relationships (Salamah & Depalina, 2025). This representation suggests that a child's social development does not take place instantaneously, but rather through repeated social interactions and meaningful emotional experiences (Armin & Novi, 2025). These findings are in line with the view of social development theory that emphasizes the importance of social experience as the foundation for the formation of early childhood social competence (Fitriyah & Rokhmawan, 2025).

In the early part of the story, the character Aliya is described as experiencing shame and difficulty adapting to the new social environment. This condition reflects the reality of early childhood social development which is often characterized by social anxiety and self-doubt (Muzdhalifah, 2026). Shame in early childhood is a natural emotional response, especially when the child is faced with an unfamiliar situation or demands social interaction (Nugraha, 2025). However, in contrast to some studies that view shame as an obstacle to social development, the findings of this study suggest that shame can function as an adaptive initial stage if children have supportive and safe social experiences (Dwi et al., 2023). This story not only depicts social problems, but also shows the potential for emotional transformation of children.

The development of empathy shown through Aliya's concern for the environment and other living things marks an important shift in the social development of the character. Empathy in this story is not described as a ability that appears suddenly, but rather as a result of emotional experience and reflection on the feelings of the other person (Purnamasari & Wibawanti, 2025). These findings are in line with the results of previous research that confirms that empathy develops through the process of social learning, observation, and internalization of social values (Ikhwan et al., 2026). Children's stories act as a symbolic medium that allows children to understand other people's emotions without having to experience the situation directly. Prosocial behaviors that emerge after the development of empathy suggest a close relationship between emotional understanding and social action (Scott, 2026). Aliya is described as starting to help, care, and show a cooperative attitude towards other figures. This corroborates the findings of previous research that states that empathy is a major predictor of prosocial behavior in early childhood (Ahmad, 2025). This research makes an additional contribution by showing that story narratives are able to represent the relationship between empathy and prosocial behavior in a concrete and contextual way, making it easier for children to understand as readers.

The social initiatives displayed by Aliya reflect increased confidence and readiness to be actively involved in social interactions. The character no longer acts passively or waits, but begins to take a role in building social relationships (Umairi, 2025). These findings are in line with research that states that social initiatives develop when children feel emotionally secure and have positive social experiences (Susilowati et al., 2026). However, in contrast to previous research that emphasized the role of the school or family environment directly, this study shows that storytelling media can also serve as an effective means of indirect social learning (Hidayatussolihah et al., 2026). The formation of friendships that occurs at the end of the story shows the peak of the social development of the characters. Friendship in a story is not portrayed instantly, but rather as the result of a process of continuous interaction, empathy, and cooperation (Maulidian & Sativa, 2025). These findings support the view that friendship skills are an important indicator of early childhood social development success (Apsari, 2023). This story shows that friendships not only provide social benefits, but also contribute to emotional well-being and belonging in children.

The findings of this study confirm the results of previous research that emphasized the importance of children's literacy as a medium for social-emotional development. This research also expands on existing studies by highlighting the

representation of sequential stages of social development in a single children's story work. The main contribution of this research lies in strengthening the argument that children's storybooks do not only function as a medium of entertainment or language development, but also as a strategic pedagogical medium in instilling social and emotional values contextually. This research has several limitations (Asmara & Wijayanto, 2026). The analysis is only focused on one storybook so that the results of the research cannot be generalized to all children's literary works.

CONCLUSION

Yunita Candra Sari's storybook *Petualangan Aliya* portrays aspects of early childhood social development through a gradual narrative involving initial social inhibition, empathy, prosocial behavior, social initiative, and friendship formation. Aliya's character is depicted as experiencing changes in patterns of social interaction, from limited participation toward more active and positive engagement with her social environment. Through these narrative elements, the storybook presents social experiences that are relevant to children's social-emotional learning, including responding to others' feelings, initiating interaction, helping others, and developing relationships. Although this study does not examine the effects of the storybook on children's behavior or learning outcomes, the findings indicate that *Petualangan Aliya* has potential pedagogical relevance as a narrative resource for discussing social and emotional experiences in early childhood education.

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