



## Representation of the Relationship Between Father and Son in the Picture Story Book *Ayahku Seorang Nelayan* by Zunda

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### ABSTRACT

This research is predicated on the urgency of the “fatherless” phenomenon in Indonesia and the scarcity of children’s literature that comprehensively represents paternal emotional involvement. This study aims to elucidate the representation of the father-child relationship in the picture book *Ayahku Seorang Nelayan* by Zunda. The research employs a descriptive qualitative method utilizing a Children’s Literature criticism approach (Peter Hunt’s perspective), integrated with multimodal discourse analysis for visual elements and hermeneutics for textual elements. The findings demonstrate that the father figure is represented in a multidimensional and egalitarian manner. The findings include: (1) a high level of paternal involvement in the domestic sphere; (2) a relationship quality characterized by democratic interaction, communicative engagement, and emotional warmth; (3) parenting and education implemented through role modeling in daily activities integrated with nature; and (4) paternal roles and responsibilities that function not only as a breadwinner but are also fully engaged in fulfilling the child’s psychological and developmental needs. The conclusion asserts that this work presents an ideological construction offering a counter-narrative to the issue of father absence, rendering it relevant as an educational medium for the internalization of fatherhood values within the family.

*Keywords:* relationship, father and son, picture story book

## Representasi Hubungan Ayah dengan Anak dalam Buku Cerita Bergambar *Ayahku Seorang Nelayan* Karya Zunda

### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh urgensi fenomena ketidakhadiran peran ayah (*fatherless*) di Indonesia serta kelangkaan literatur anak yang merepresentasikan keterlibatan emosional ayah secara komprehensif. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengelaborasi representasi hubungan ayah dengan anak dalam buku cerita bergambar *Ayahku Seorang Nelayan* karya Zunda. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif dengan pendekatan kritik Sastra Anak perspektif Peter Hunt, yang diintegrasikan dengan analisis wacana multimodal untuk elemen visual dan hermeneutika untuk elemen tekstual. Hasil penelitian mengindikasikan bahwa figur ayah direpresentasikan secara multidimensional dan egaliter, mendekonstruksi peran tradisional yang terbatas pada fungsi nafkah semata. Temuan penelitian meliputi: (1) tingginya tingkat keterlibatan ayah dalam ranah domestik dan pengasuhan aktif; (2) kualitas hubungan yang ditandai dengan interaksi demokratis, komunikatif, dan kehangatan emosional; (3) pengasuhan dan pendidikan anak yang diimplementasikan melalui keteladanan (*role modeling*) dalam aktivitas keseharian yang terintegrasi dengan alam; serta (4) peran dan tanggung jawab ayah yang tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai pencari nafkah, tetapi juga terlibat penuh dalam pemenuhan kebutuhan psikologis dan tumbuh kembang anak. Simpulan penelitian menegaskan bahwa karya ini menghadirkan konstruksi ideologis yang menawarkan narasi tandingan (*counter-narrative*) terhadap isu *fatherless*, sehingga relevan sebagai media edukatif untuk internalisasi nilai-nilai keayahan dalam keluarga.

*Kata kunci:* hubungan, ayah dengan anak, buku cerita bergambar

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## INTRODUCTION

The relationship between father and child is a crucial foundation for a child's psychological, emotional, and social development (Nuroniya, 2023:173). This relationship plays a role in fostering a sense of security, emotional attachment, and the child's ability to build social interactions later in life. In the context of Indonesian families, the traditional father-child relationship is still influenced by conventional parenting patterns that place the father as the primary breadwinner, while emotional care is primarily borne by the mother (Wihaji, 2024). Social, economic, and cultural changes demand a shift in this parenting paradigm. The involvement of fathers and mothers in childcare can no longer be viewed as separate roles, but rather as a shared responsibility in shaping the child's character and psychosocial well-being (Wihaji, 2024). However, social reality shows that father involvement in childcare in Indonesia remains relatively low.

The phenomenon of fatherlessness, or the absence of a father's role in a child's life, is an issue that is gaining increasing attention. The Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection confirms that father involvement in childcare in Indonesia is still minimal, ranking Indonesia as one of the countries with the highest rates of fatherlessness in the world (Sari, 2024). This phenomenon not only refers to the physical absence of a father but also encompasses the psychological absence of a father, who is physically present but not emotionally involved in parenting (Fajriyanti et al., 2024). UNICEF data shows that approximately 20.9% of children in Indonesia grow up without a father figure due to divorce, death, or geographical distance due to work (UNICEF, 2021). This finding is reinforced by the 2023 Susenas (National Survey) data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), which shows that only 37.17% of children aged 0–5 years are cared for by both biological parents simultaneously (BPS, 2024). This low figure indicates structural issues in childcare, particularly regarding father involvement.

The absence of a father's role has a significant impact on child development. Children who grow up without paternal involvement are at risk of emotional regulation disorders, low self-confidence, social difficulties, and obstacles to academic development and social well-being (Ahmadi, 2015:38; UNICEF, 2024). In fact, a father's role deficit is associated with increased vulnerability to various social problems such as juvenile delinquency, bullying, and antisocial behavior (Hidayat, 2024). In such situations, strengthening positive representations of father-child relationships is crucial. One medium that has the potential to shape children's perspectives on family relationships is children's literature. Literature functions not only as a means of entertainment but also as a medium for social and moral education, representing the cultural values of society (Semi, 2012:8).

Children's literature has developed as a genre tailored to children's cognitive and emotional worlds. Nurgiyantoro (2005:12) states that children's literature is designed to fulfill children's imaginative worlds while shaping personality and moral values through the child's perspective. The theme of family, particularly the relationship between parents and children, is a crucial theme in children's literature because it directly relates to the emotional experiences of young readers. One form of children's literature widely used in children's literacy is the picture book. Picture books combine verbal text and visual illustrations to construct narrative meaning in a multimodal manner (Krisnawan, 2017:24). The interaction between text and images allows children to understand the story more concretely and fosters empathy and emotional awareness from an early age.

The picture story *Ayahku Seorang Nelayan* by Zunda (2024) presents a representation of the father figure that differs from conventional depictions. Fathers are depicted not only as breadwinners but also as companions, mentors, and emotional figures present in children's lives. This representation offers an alternative father figure who is emotionally involved and educational amidst the persistent phenomenon of fatherlessness in Indo-



nesian society. In addition to the crisis of the father's role in the real world, Indonesian children's literature also faces the problem of a lack of in-depth representation of father figures. Many works of children's literature only briefly depict fathers, leaving the emotional dynamics and role of fathers in character development underexplored. This situation creates double deprivation: children lose a father figure in real life and cannot find one in their imagination through reading (Fajriyanti et al., 2024). This gap between children's psychological needs for a father figure and the lack of such representation in children's literature underlies the urgency of researching the picture story *Ayahku Seorang Nelayan* by Zunda.

Based on the background of the problem described, the research problem is formulated as follows.

- 1) How is father involvement represented in the picture book *Ayahku Seorang Nelayan* by Zunda?
- 2) How is the quality of the father-child relationship represented in the picture book *Ayahku Seorang Nelayan* by Zunda?
- 3) How are child care and education represented in the picture book *Ayahku Seorang Nelayan* by Zunda?
- 4) How are father roles and responsibilities represented in the picture book "My Father is a Fisherman" by Zunda?

Referring to the problem formulation above, this study aims to describe and uncover:

- 1) The representation of father involvement in the picture book *Ayahku Seorang Nelayan* by Zunda.
- 2) The representation of the quality of the father-child relationship in the picture book *Ayahku Seorang Nelayan* by Zunda.
- 3) The representation of child care and education in the picture book *Ayahku Seorang Nelayan* by Zunda.
- 4) The representation of father roles and responsibilities in the picture book *Ayahku Seorang Nelayan* by Zunda.

Theoretically, this research enriches the study of children's literature on the representation of family relations through Peter Hunt's children's literature approach. Practically, the research results are expected to be a reference for educators, parents, writers, and illustrators in presenting positive and balanced father figures in children's literature. Children's literature is a construction of adults who represent the world of children based on certain ideologies (Hunt, 1991:61–64). Picture books build meaning through the relationship between text and visuals that are multimodal (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006:15). The representation of father figures in children's literature functions as a medium for instilling family relationship values and forming children's social identities (Nurgiyantoro, 2005:12).

Three articles relevant to this research are presented below:

- 1) Muhammad Alfito Althaf and Sidiq Setyawan (2025) analyzed the representation of fathers in the short film "Father" produced by Paniradya Kaistimewan using descriptive qualitative methods and John Fiske's semiotic analysis. *Jurnal Aktif: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 9(2), 467–486. <https://jurnal.umsu.ac.id/index.php/interaksi/article/download/24348/pdf>.
- 2) Fita Dwi Febrianti (2024) analyzed the representation of fathers in the film "Later We'll Tell Stories About Today" using descriptive qualitative methods and John Fiske's semiotic analysis. *Jurnal Komunikasi Universitas Garut*, 10(2), 284–303. <https://doi.org/10.52434/jk.v10i2.41438>.
- 3) Alvina Amallia Putri Damayanti, Lintang Ratri Rahmiaji, and Primada Qurrota Ayun analyzed the representation of fatherhood in the film *Miracle in Cell No. 7* (2022) using descriptive qualitative methods and John Fiske's semiotic analysis. <https://eprints2.undip.ac.id/id/eprint/15431>

## METHOD

This study employed qualitative research, aiming to examine in depth how the relationship between father and son is represented in the picture book *Ayahku Seorang Nelayan* by Zunda. Qualitative research was chosen because the object of study is a children's literary text that combines verbal and visual elements, thus requiring an interpretive approach to capture the meaning, symbols, and ideological relations at work within it. Qualitative research is oriented toward an in-depth understanding of phenomena, rather than measuring or statistically testing variables (Sugiyono, 2019:15).

Qualitative research allows researchers to position literary texts as constructions of meaning that do not stand alone but are connected to social, cultural, and ideological contexts. In the study of children's literature, a qualitative approach is considered relevant because children's literature functions not only as entertainment but also as a medium for educating children about values and internalizing social norms (Nurgiyantoro, 2005:12). Therefore, an in-depth and contextual interpretation of the text and illustrations is necessary. This research is descriptive, aiming to systematically describe and explain the representation of the father-child relationship as found in the research object. Descriptive research is not aimed at testing hypotheses or proving causal relationships, but rather at describing phenomena as they are based on the data found. With this descriptive nature, this study seeks to present a detailed picture of the forms of father involvement, the quality of emotional relationships, parenting and educational practices, and the roles and responsibilities of fathers as represented in picture books.

The approach used in this research is a children's literature approach, drawing on Peter Hunt's theory. Hunt asserts that children's literature is a discourse shaped and controlled by adults and imbued with ideological values directed at child readers (Hunt, 1991:61–64). From this perspective, children's literature is understood as a medium that

reflects adults' views of the child's world, including views on family, parental figures, and social relations considered ideal. Through Peter Hunt's children's literature approach, this study positions picture books as texts that are not neutral, but rather as deliberately constructed ideological representations. The father figure depicted in picture books is understood not only as a character in the story, but as a projection of adult values and expectations regarding the role of fathers in the family.

In line with this approach, this research procedure was carried out in stages and systematically. The initial stage of the research began with a thorough reading of Zunda's picture story *Ayahku Seorang Nelayan* to gain a comprehensive understanding of the plot, characters, and consistently emerging visual patterns. The next stage was the identification of data in the form of narratives and illustrations representing the father-child relationship. The identified data were then classified according to the research analysis dimensions, analyzed using hermeneutics for textual elements and multimodal analysis for visual elements, and reconstructed to answer the research questions.

Thus, this approach is relevant for uncovering how the father-child relationship is represented, normalized, and presented to child readers through narrative and visuals. Based on this framework, this study analyzes the representation of the father-child relationship through the dimensions of paternal involvement, the quality of the father-child relationship, child care and education, and the father's role and responsibilities. All dimensions were analyzed qualitatively and descriptively with the aim of uncovering the meaning contained in the text and illustrations and linking them to social realities, particularly the phenomenon of fatherlessness and low paternal involvement in childcare in Indonesia.

The primary data source for this study is the picture storybook *Ayahku Seorang Nelayan* by Zunda, published in 2024 by Hujan dan Bumi Publishers. The book consists of 40 pages,



dominated by expressive visual illustrations and relatively brief verbal text. The book received the 2024 Best Indonesian Children's Literature award from TaCita, recognizing its narrative and visual quality within the Indonesian children's literature scene.

This picture storybook is told from the perspective of a boy who lives with his father, a fisherman. The narrative and illustrations depict the life of a coastal community, such as fishing, mending nets, and interactions with the marine environment. In addition to depicting daily activities, the book also highlights the emotional dimension of the father-son relationship through simple dialogue, body gestures, and visual expressions that convey closeness and warmth. The selection of the picture storybook *Ayahku Seorang Nelayan* by Zunda as a data source was based on several academic considerations, namely:

- 1) Zunda's book, *Ayahku Seorang Nelayan* explicitly addresses the theme of the father-child relationship, making it relevant to the research focus.
- 2) Zunda's book, *Ayahku Seorang Nelayan* depicts the father not only as a breadwinner, but also as an emotional companion, educator, and role model for children.
- 3) Zunda's book, *Ayahku Seorang Nelayan* is rich in visual symbols, particularly sea symbols, allowing for in-depth multimodal analysis by linking text and illustrations.

The selection of data sources also took into account the social context underlying the research, namely the phenomenon of fatherlessness and the limited representation of father figures in Indonesian children's literature. This picture book offers an alternative depiction of an involved and caring father figure, making it relevant for study as an ideological representation in contemporary children's literature.

The data in this study consist of qualitative data obtained from the verbal and visual elements in Zunda's picture book, *Ayahku Seorang Nelayan*. Verbal data includes words, phrases, sentences, dialogue, and narratives that demonstrate forms of

paternal involvement, emotional closeness between fathers and children, parenting and educational practices, and fathers' roles and responsibilities. Visual data includes illustrations depicting character expressions, gestures, social distance, perspective, color, and visual composition that construct meaning within the father-child relationship.

Data indicators in this study include the use of active verbs indicating paternal involvement, forms of educational advice, dialogue expressing emotional warmth, and illustrations depicting fathers as protectors, companions, and educators. Furthermore, visual data is also analyzed based on how the illustrations construct relations of power, closeness, and equality between fathers and children through specific visual aspects. This data was collected and analyzed to answer the research problem formulation regarding the representation of father-child relationships in picture books. By combining verbal and visual data, this study seeks to generate a comprehensive understanding of the representation of father-child relationships as textual and visual constructs in children's literature. This research is document-based and therefore not tied to a specific geographic location unlike field research. Data collection was conducted through document study of the picture book *Ayahku Seorang Nelayan* by Zunda in the researcher's office. Data collection took place throughout the research process until all data relevant to the study's focus was deemed sufficient for comprehensive analysis.

The data collection technique used in this study was documentation. Documentation is used to obtain data in the form of written and visual documents relevant to the research focus (Sugiyono, 2019:240; Razak, 2017:212). In the context of literary research, documentation is considered appropriate because the object of study is a static text that can be analyzed repeatedly. The application of documentation in this study was carried out systematically to ensure the data collected was relevant and adequate. The data collection process was not carried out in a single

reading, but rather through in-depth and repeated readings to capture narrative and visual details that may have been missed during the initial reading. The data collection steps in this study are as follows.

- 1) Read the entire picture storybook *Ayahku Seorang Nelayan* by Zunda carefully and repeatedly to gain a comprehensive understanding of the text and illustrations.
- 2) Identify and record narrative excerpts and dialogue relevant to the research objectives, particularly those demonstrating paternal involvement, emotional closeness, and parenting practices.
- 3) Group illustrations representing the father-child relationship based on the established analytical dimensions.
- 4) Record initial interpretations to connect the verbal and visual data with Peter Hunt's theoretical framework for children's literature.

The data analysis technique in this study employed multi-layered analysis, combining hermeneutic analysis and multimodal discourse analysis. This analytical technique was chosen based on the characteristics of the study object, a picture storybook that combines verbal text and visual illustrations as a unified meaning. Therefore, the analysis cannot be conducted solely through reading the narrative; it must also involve systematic visual reading to uncover the representation of the father-child relationship constructed through these two modes (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006:15).

Hermeneutic analysis is used to interpret the meaning of the narrative and dialogue in picture books. From a Gadamerian hermeneutic perspective, the meaning of a text is not understood as something static and entirely determined by the author, but rather as the result of a dialogue between the text, the interpreter, and the surrounding social context (Rahardjo, 2007:55). Thus, the researcher plays an active role in constructing and reconstructing the meaning of the representation of the father-child relationship contained in the text.

Meanwhile, multimodal discourse analysis is used to dissect the illustrations as a visual sign system with its own potential for meaning. Kress and van Leeuwen emphasize that visual meaning is constructed through the principles of interaction, representation, and visual composition (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006:15). In this study, illustrations are positioned as a semiotic mode equivalent to verbal language in constructing the discourse of the father-child relationship. The data analysis process is carried out through the following stages.

- 1) whole reading. The researcher conducted thorough and repeated readings of Zunda's picture story *Ayahku Seorang Nelayan* to gain a comprehensive understanding of the story's structure, characterization, and consistently emerging narrative and visual patterns.
- 2) transcription and identification of units of analysis  
The visual data were transcribed into verbal descriptions. Units of analysis included narrative fragments, dialogue, and illustrations representing the father-son relationship. The units of analysis were selected selectively, considering their relevance to the research focus.
- 3) tabulation and coding. The identified data were then coded and grouped into thematic categories and visual modes. This coding process aimed to organize the data and facilitate the researcher's identification of recurring patterns of representation.
- 4) data interpretation and analysis. The tabulated data were analyzed using a simultaneous hermeneutic and multimodal approach. The researcher moved in a circular fashion between understanding the parts and the whole text to ensure consistency and coherence of the representation's meaning.
- 5) father's involvement in the father-child relationship. The results of the study indicate that the father figure in the picture book *Ayahku Seorang Nelayan* is



represented as actively involved in the child's life. This involvement is evident through direct interactions that are consistently established in various scenes, both through verbal communication and nonverbal actions. The father is depicted as physically and emotionally present in the child's daily life, such as when telling stories, accompanying the child in activities, and sharing life experiences. As seen in data excerpt 1, "Father told me about the many things he learned from the sea." (Zunda, 2024:12). This excerpt demonstrates a form of direct interaction between father and child that is established through verbal communication.

## RESULT

### 1. Father's Involvement in Father-Child Relationships

The father's involvement is also evident through the use of active verbs in the narrative, which positions the father as the subject of actions, for example in activities such as working, guiding, and interacting with the child. Visually, the illustrations depict the close distance between father and child, represented by close body positions, aligned gazes, and gestures that convey warmth. For example, in data 6 (Zunda, 2024:31-32), two connected pages of a book display a view of a bustling coastal area. In the bottom right corner, there are three panels depicting different father and son activities. The first panel shows the son waving to his father, who is returning from the sea to the mainland. In the second panel, the son makes a kissing gesture, or "salim," for his father, and in the third panel, the son is depicted helping to carry his father's catch. Of course, these visual data are inseparable from the accompanying textual elements. In this data, the quote "Then, Father also talked about his gratitude to the sea..." (Zunda, 2024:31-32) also shows that the father is actively involved in sharing life experiences through storytelling. Furthermore, these findings demonstrate that the father's involvement is not

merely symbolic, but is concretely demonstrated through a series of repeated actions and interactions.

### 2. Quality of the Emotional Relationship between Father and Child

The results of this study indicate that the quality of the emotional relationship between father and child is represented as warm, trusting, and close. The narrative in the picture book displays dialogic and supportive communication, where the father not only speaks to the child but also listens and responds to the child's emotional needs. For example, in data 18, "I am proud that my father is a fisherman." (Zunda, 2024:36). This quote is an explicit and conscious form of emotional declarativeness, where the child character directly conveys the positive emotion that he is "proud" of his father. Visually, the quality of the emotional connection is shown through the character's gentle facial expressions, the use of warm colors, and the composition of the image that places the father and child in a unified frame. There is no representation of conflict or a rigid hierarchical relationship between the father and child. In contrast, the emotional relationship is presented as equal and intimate, demonstrating a sense of security and comfort for the child in the father's presence.

### 3. Child Care and Education

The results of the study indicate that child care and education in the picture book "My Father is a Fisherman" are represented through informal and contextual daily activities. The father is depicted as providing education to the child through direct experiences, such as introducing the profession of fishing, the sea, and the values of hard work and perseverance. The narrative demonstrates that the educational process is not delivered in an instructive or patronizing manner, but rather through stories, behavioral examples, and togetherness. Figure 33 (Zunda, 2024:35-36) illustrates this with two continuous pages. On the left page, the father is seen conducting a sales transaction with a customer, witnessed directly by

the child standing beside him. The child's presence serves as an eyewitness to the entire process, directly observing how the father carries out his professional role and responsibilities. A quote that balances this data is, "I'm proud my father is a fisherman." The child looks at his father as they walk side by side in seemingly unison steps along the beach on the right page. The burden appears to be shared; the father carries the larger fishing basket, while the child deftly carries the smaller one. The illustration supports this finding by depicting the father guiding the child in daily activities without a rigid authority gap. This finding demonstrates that childcare and education are represented as processes integrated into daily life and the emotional relationship between father and child.

#### 4. The Role and Responsibilities of Fathers

The research reveals that the role and responsibilities of fathers are represented multidimensionally. Fathers are depicted not only as breadwinners through their profession as fishermen, but also as companions, protectors, and educators for their children. For example, in data 42 (Zunda, 2024:2-4), there is the quote, "I live on a small island... ..with my father, a great fisherman." This quote directly demonstrates the father's role as a motivating figure for his child. The narrative depicts a father who is responsible for the child's well-being, both materially and emotionally. Visually, a father's responsibility is demonstrated through the depiction of a father working hard, ensuring the safety of his child, and being involved in the child's growth and development. As illustrated in data 42 Zunda, 2024:3), the activities of a father and child are seen during their morning activities; the child wakes up, while the father prepares fishing equipment, then cooks rice and side dishes for their breakfast. The illustration visualizes the role of a single father as the primary caregiver. Every action shown is a concrete manifestation of an active and attentive parenting process. The father figure takes full responsibility for raising his child. The father is

not depicted waiting or ordering, but rather directly intervenes to ensure that his child's primary needs are met. This representation shows that a father's responsibility is not limited to the economic realm alone, but includes emotional and social involvement in the child's life.

#### DISCUSSION

This discussion argues the research findings regarding the representation of the father-child relationship in the picture storybook *Ayahku Seorang Nelayan* by Zunda. The argument is structured by linking the research findings to Peter Hunt's theoretical framework for children's literature, the social context of the fatherlessness phenomenon in Indonesia, and relevant research findings. Therefore, the discussion does not repeat data but rather interprets the meaning, implications, and ideological position of the text within the Indonesian children's literature.

#### Representation of Father Involvement as a Critique of Fatherless Culture

The findings regarding the father's active involvement in the father-child relationship indicate a construction of the father figure that contradicts the dominant social reality in Indonesia, where father involvement in parenting remains relatively low. The representation of the father as physically and emotionally present in this book can be read as a cultural response to the phenomenon of fatherlessness, both in the form of the father's physical absence and psychological absence in the child's life. From a children's literature perspective, this representation is not neutral, but rather a form of adult ideological control that offers a model of ideal fatherhood to child readers (Hunt, 1991:61-64).

Peter Hunt asserts that children's literature functions as a medium for transmitting values designed by adults to shape children's perspectives on the world. Therefore, the father's involvement depicted in this book can be understood as a normative effort to instill the idea that a father's presence in parenting is natural and expected. This



representation implicitly corrects the conventional construction of the father, who is positioned solely as a breadwinner, lacking emotional involvement in the child's life.

This finding aligns with research by Althaf and Setyawan (2025), which shows that father figures in visual media are often constructed as symbols of affection and sacrifice to balance the rigid image of the father in patriarchal cultures. However, unlike that study, which focused on the representation of fathers in films, the picture book *Ayahku Seroang Nelayan* offers a more subtle approach through children's language and illustrations, thus conveying its ideological message more subtly to child readers.

### **The Quality of the Emotional Relationship between Father and Child from a Children's Literature Perspective**

The quality of the warm and equal emotional relationship between father and child in this book indicates a shift in the representation of power relations within the family. In many conventional children's literature texts, father-child relationships are often depicted hierarchically, with the father as a distant authority figure. In contrast, this book depicts a dialogic and intimate relationship, in which the father acts as an emotional companion. Within the framework of Peter Hunt's children's literature, this egalitarian representation of relationships can be read as a form of adult agenda that simplifies the social world for children by presenting a father figure as safe, friendly, and trustworthy. The world presented is one that has been "sanitized" to suit the child's psychological needs (Hunt, 1991:63). Thus, the ideal quality of emotional relationships in this book does not merely reflect social reality, but rather represents a projection of adult values about expected family relationships.

This finding is also relevant to research by Fahira & Ahmadi (2024), which asserts that the emotional relationship between fathers and children in literary works plays a crucial role in shaping a child's personality. However, this study

offers novelty by demonstrating that these emotional qualities are not only constructed through narrative but also visually reinforced through illustrations, composition, and consistent character expression.

### **Parenting and Education as Cultural, Not Instructive, Processes**

The discussion of parenting and education in this book shows that education is presented as a cultural process integrated into everyday life, rather than as a formal or instructive activity. Fathers are not depicted as explicitly teaching values, but rather through experience, example, and collaboration. This pattern reflects the implicit educational approach common in children's literature, where values are instilled through stories, not lectures. From Hunt's perspective, this strategy is an effective form of ideological control because children do not feel they are being "taught," but rather absorb the values through emotional engagement with the story (Hunt, 1991:64). Thus, the parenting and education portrayed in this book serve as a means of indirectly internalizing the values of hard work, responsibility, and family closeness.

### **The Role and Responsibility of Fathers as an Ideological Construct**

The representation of the role and responsibilities of fathers in this book is multidimensional, encompassing economic, emotional, and educational roles. Fathers are not reduced to breadwinners, but are presented as relational subjects involved in the child's growth and development. Within the context of a patriarchal culture, this representation can be read as a progressive ideological proposition. Through the lens of Peter Hunt's children's literature, the father figure in this book can be understood as an ideal father figure constructed by adults to normalize father involvement in the domestic and emotional spheres. This representation serves as "narrative therapy" for child readers who may live in less-than-ideal family realities. In the context

of the phenomenon of fatherlessness, this text offers an imaginative space for children to identify with a present and caring father figure.

Research by Damayanti et al. (2023) on the representation of fatherhood in film shows that the quality of the father-child relationship is often central to the narrative, building audience empathy. However, this study shows that in children's literature, these representations operate earlier and more subtly, namely during the formation of children's imaginations and perceptions of family.

### Strengths and Limitations of the Study

The strength of this study lies in the use of Peter Hunt's children's literature approach, which allows for an ideological reading of picture books as texts constructed by adults. Furthermore, the use of multimodal analysis enriches the study by examining visual meanings often overlooked in children's literature research. However, this study also has limitations.

- 1) The data source is single, so the findings cannot be generalized to all Indonesian children's literature.
- 2) This study did not involve a reader reception study, so it cannot empirically measure how children or parents interpret the representation of fathers in the book. This limitation opens up opportunities for further research involving comparisons between texts or reader reception studies.

### CONCLUSION

Based on textual and visual data analysis, this study concludes that Zunda's illustrated storybook, *Ayahku Seorang Nelayan* consistently and multidimensionally represents the father-child relationship. The father figure is depicted as not distant, but actively present in the child's life through direct interaction, emotional involvement, and presence in daily routines. This involvement extends beyond the father's role as breadwinner to encompass nurturing, mentoring, and meeting the child's needs, thus forming the foundation of a quality relationship.

The quality of the father-child relationship in this book is demonstrated through warmth, effective communication, and a supportive reciprocal relationship. The child responds to the father's attention and understanding through respect, admiration, and pride in the father figure. Honest and dialogic communication, along with the father's ability to understand the child's physical, social, and educational needs, strengthens the emotional bond between the two and supports the ongoing parenting and education process through role modeling.

Ideologically, the representation of the father-child relationship is constructed through the synergy between narrative and illustration. Hermeneutic and multimodal analysis shows that the father is constructed as an egalitarian, close, and nurturing figure through the use of parallel perspectives and intimate visual distance. From the perspective of children's literature theorist Peter Hunt, this construction reflects the ideological agenda of adults who present the ideal father model in response to the phenomenon of fatherlessness and stereotypes of traditional masculinity, thus making the picture book *Ayahku Seorang Nelayan* a strategic educational medium for instilling ideal family values in child readers.

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