

Passage

Vol. 9 No. 2, November 2021, pp.1–21

Available online at:

<https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/psg/article/view/38897>

An Analysis of Bullying in Three Children Books by Trudy Ludwig

Alya Inayyah, Dr. Rd. Safrina Noorman, M.A.

English Language and Literature

Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia

alyainayyah@gmail.com, safrina@upi.edu

ABSTRACT

Bullying is a phenomenon that is commonly known in society. It usually refers to an act of someone hurting other people intentionally. The depiction of bullying includes unpleasant actions to someone. Bullying is present in the stories titled *My Secret Bully* (2005), *Just Kidding* (2006), and *Trouble Talk* (2008) by Trudy Ludwig which are the subject of this text analysis. The purpose of this study is to understand the representation of acts of bullying in the stories along with meanings construed from it. Using the story scripts as its data source, this study is consequently qualitative, employing textual analysis to explore the data. The study uses Hall's (1997) theory of representation and Foucault's (1982) theoretical framework of power. Based on the analysis, the study finds that power is used by the bullies, the bullied, and adults for their own respective interests. The study reveals that children have the potential to bully and adults' role is essential in handling bullying. It is also implied that adults should play a more active role and should not underestimate children's discourse. Therefore, this study signifies an awareness-raising on the bullying issue and that the notion of power play can be found in children's discourse.

Keywords: awareness-rising, bullying, children's discourse, power play, representation

Passage

Vol. 9 No. 2, November 2021, pp.1–21

Available online at:

<https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/psg/article/view/38897>

INTRODUCTION

Young people even children might experience aggression, such as bullying, once in their life. This kind of aggression can cause trauma and have lasting effects into adulthood. It has become one of the most serious issues faced by many children. The word *bully* itself is a buzzer word and has become commonplace as if it is an inevitable part of growing up.

Bullying can occur almost everywhere. It usually happens in a place that has a large number of people. According to a survey by National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) in 2010, bullying appears to occur most frequently in schools, especially in areas where adult supervision is not available. School bullying can happen in many areas of the school. The act of bullying can happen in an open space where a lot of children may see and watch them, too. However, usually, the bullies do not carry out their actions in front of adults. Bullying in the absence of supervision from older people shows that the bullies are cautious in their actions.

Based on the Global School Health Survey (GSHS) in 2015, around 18 million children age 13-15 are reported to have experienced bullying in Indonesia. This data then strengthened with the data from the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection which states there were over 37.000 cases of bullying in a period of 9 years, from 2011 to 2019. Bullying in education or social media reached 2,473 cases, and this trend continues to increase. Unfortunately, complaints about child cases are like an iceberg phenomenon where it is likely that the number of children who are victims of bullying is more than the number that has been reported. As reported by United Nations agencies, there are more than 246 million children in schools every year suffer gender-based violence, one in three students encounters bullying and physical violence, and half of the world's teenagers experience school-based peer abuse.

Bullying does not only appear in real life but also often featured in a story. In literary context, the problem of bullying is also featured in children's literature. In relation to children's stories, for example, in

Passage

Vol. 9 No. 2, November 2021, pp.1–21

Available online at:

<https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/psg/article/view/38897>

the famous well-known story of Cinderella, besides being treated harshly by her two sisters and stepmother, Cinderella also often received harsh words and curses. In Indonesia, a similar story can also be found in the folklore of Bawang Putih and Bawang Merah. Just like the story of Cinderella, Bawang Putih and Bawang Merah also told about the oppression that was carried out by Bawang Merah and her mother to Bawang Putih. This story describes a lot of bad treatment received by Bawang Putih such as insulting, threatening, and abusing. These two stories are examples of whether the reader is aware of it or not, is acts of bullying. This seems to be proof that bullying has risen to the fore as a major concern since a long time ago.

There have been several studies that have looked into bullying in children's books. One of the studies is a study conducted by Wiseman and Jones (2018) that focuses on the representation of how bullying is portrayed in Children's picture books. They focused only on children's picture books that publish for the last 20 years starting from 1997-2017. They examined the forms in which bullying in children's literature is portrayed by considering the

psychological, literary, and visual elements of picture books. Wiseman and Jones argue that to analyze and understand how bullying is portrayed is essential. The study found that verbal and physical bullying are the most prevalent types of bullying described in the texts with the Caucasian boys in the schools setting are the predominant bullies compare to the girls. Another findings also explained to various responses of bullied, bystanders, and adults.

Bullying is one of the most well-known literary themes. One of the authors that often raises issue about bullying is Trudy Ludwig. Ludwig, in her books, is often raises the issues of friendship and bullying that occurs among children at the elementary school level. Her storybook works manages to present bullying in various forms of bullying aggression. Trudy Ludwig has produced a lot of children book that specifically raises the issue of bullying. In her books, there is always one character that bullies other characters. It is possible to examine and analyze the bully characters in Ludwig's children's books since the interactions of the characters themselves are stacked with acts and responses against one another. Moreover, it is thought-provoking to

Passage

Vol. 9 No. 2, November 2021, pp.1–21

Available online at:

<https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/psg/article/view/38897>

analyze further about bullying that appears in Trudy Ludwig's work because it may produce other meanings. Therefore, the author's efforts to raise the issue of bullying in entertaining works such as children's stories also need to be researched, in an attempt to convey ideas represented. Thus, this research is expected to provide a deeper insight into the field of children's literature.

To contribute to the literature on the representation of the bully characters in literary work, this study is carried out in order to look into the portrayal of bullying and its potential underlying meanings by using Hall's (1997) theory of representation and Foucault's (1982) theoretical framework of power.

METHODOLOGY

The study will use a qualitative analysis design. According to Adedoyin (2020) qualitative research deals with collecting and interpreting data to find an explanation about social issues. Meanwhile, Mohajan (2018) defines qualitative research as the way people define something and be understandable to the social reality. It allows researcher to explore and interpret certain situation in order to get an insight.

Since the research is aimed at exploring how bullying phenomena in Ludwig's selected texts is constructed and to learn about the representations of the constructions, the qualitative analysis design is considered suitable for this research. To do so, the study applied textual analysis and limited the data to the word choices, sentences, and utterances that contain evidence for the constructions of bullying in the stories. In order to conduct the research, Hall's framework of representation theory is used to support the study.

The study was designed to take the following procedure. First, identifying the parts that shows bullying incidents. Second, classifying the identified bullying incidents into data based on the characters taking part in the incidents. Finally, the textual evidence that have been classified is then interpreted to discover and explore to construct the representation of the acts of bullying and its meanings.

The data for this study is taken from three selected children's books by Trudy Ludwig that were published by Tricycle Press. The titles of the books are *My Secret Bully*, *Just Kidding*, and *Trouble Talk* that were released in 2005, 2006, and 2008. All of

Passage

Vol. 9 No. 2, November 2021, pp.1–21

Available online at:

<https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/psg/article/view/38897>

the 32 page-books are in the form of picture book. One of the reasons these three books were chosen was because the author seemed to deliberately portray a bully character. Ludwig, the author of the books, seems to have her own concern about the issue of bullying after the same problem happened to her daughter. The stories are capable to presents and captures the act of bullying in friendship between peers.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The stories – *My Secret Bully*, *Just Kidding*, and *Trouble Talk* – present descriptions of bullying among children from the bullied perspectives. The presentation is through the bullying incidents perceived by the bullied. The study indicates that the acts of bullying in the three stories represents power imbalance existing in children environment.

Power becomes prominent in the stories. Some of the characters have showed that they are more powerful than others. From the data, it was found that the three selected children's stories – *My Secret Bully*, *Just Kidding*, and *Trouble Talk* – indicate the power imbalance among the bully, bullied, and adult characters. The stories present two

leading characters who exercise power: the bully and the adult. With the power they wield, these two significant characters have their own objectives. The bullies use their power to oppress the bullied for fun, while the adults use the power as part of their role to take side and to help solve the problem. The study found that in the stories such bullying mostly occurs in a school environment, and in places where there is no supervision from adults. It is found that there are sixteen textual evidence which depicts the bullies oppressing the bullied. In this cases the adults are involved in solving the bullying problems as a parent, a teacher, or a school counselor. The three stories illustrate that there is always a potential for bullying even among children because as the stories indicate power can never be balanced.

The Bully and the Bullied

Power and knowledge are intertwined, and because of that they cannot be separated, and one can affect the other. The study found that the bullies are mostly portrayed as someone who tends to oppress. In the stories, the bullies usually derive power from information and insight related to the bullied. Thus, the bullies used this power as weapon to bully and hurt their peers. From the

Passage

Vol. 9 No. 2, November 2021, pp.1–21

Available online at:

<https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/psg/article/view/38897>

analysis, verbal and social bullying were the most prevalent forms of bullying in Trudy Ludwig's three books. It frequently takes place in the school environment, whether it's on the field, in class, or in the school bus. Examples for verbal bullying in the three stories can be seen in the following excerpts.

MONICA

I noticed Katy whispering to a group of girls and looking at me.

I went up to them and asked Katie what they were talking about.

KATIE

Oh nothing, **Mon-ICK-a**. I'll tell you later

MONICA

Then some of the other girls giggled like it really was something and that made me feel bad.

(p.4)

In the beginning of the story *My Secret Bully*, Monica describes how she was close and a good friend of Katie, but it all changed when out of nowhere Katie turned to be mean to Monica. Katie starts to make fun and to

gossip about Monica to their friends. This make Monica uncomfortable and feel left behind. Not only that, apart from bullying Monica in front of their friends Katie also began to limit Monica's space.

KATIE

If you play with her, I won't come over to your host tomorrow

MONICA

Then she let go of my arm and skipped away as if nothing happened. But something did happen. And it didn't feel right to me.

I wasn't sure what to do. I really wanted to get together with Katy, but I wanted to play this with Sarah too. So I just ignored

(p.5)

In the story, it was found that Katie's verbal bullying of Monica was not only insulting, but also threatening. Katie threatens to stay away from Monica if Monica befriend others. Moreover, the study also found that there are also several attempts of Katie gaslights

Passage

Vol. 9 No. 2, November 2021, pp.1–21

Available online at:

<https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/psg/article/view/38897>

Monica. Below is one of the examples where Katie tried to gaslight Monica.

KATIE

No I'm not *mad* at you. **You are so-o-o-o sensitive about stuff.**

Well I have to do my homework see you later

MONICA

Maybe she was right, maybe I was too sensitive.

(p.10-11)

As it can be seen from the evidence above, Monica realizes there is something wrong between their friendships, she tries to talk to Katie and ask about the problem, but instead of giving her an explanation Katie gaslighted Monica and said she was too sensitive. Katie's bullying behavior demonstrates that she has the ability to create a discourse in which it seems as if Monica is the one who has problems and is oversensitive about things, leading Monica to question her own sanity.

The exact same thing also happens in the story *Trouble Talk*. Bailey, a new student in Hoover Elementary School, tends to say hurtful things to her friends and it all got worse to the point when she turned into a

complete bully. It all started when Bailey, Maya, and Keisha had a sleepover at Keisha's home and played a truth or dare game.

BAILEY

No offense, but **that shirt you're wearing is way too small. Did your clothes shrink or are you just getting fatter?**

Oh c'mon, it's just a game. Besides, I'm doing her a favor by telling her the truth

(p.6)

From the evidence above, it can be seen that the bully tends to say hurtful things without thinking about the victim feelings. This is described through the way the bully expresses her opinion in a disrespectful way. During the game, Bailey bluntly criticizes Keisha's shirt harshly and even insults Keisha's body.

Another verbal bullying is also found in the story *Just Kidding*. When D.J moved out to his new school, everything was just fine until he got a position as a goalie for his soccer team. This is where Vince, one of D.J's friends, starts bullying D.J and made fun of him in front of their friends.

D.J

Passage

Vol. 9 No. 2, November 2021, pp.1–21

Available online at:

<https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/psg/article/view/38897>

Hey, Vince! Coach Dibbs said I'd make a great goalie for the team!

VINCE

Did ya hear guys? D.J.'s gonna be our new girlie!

And the kids laughed as Vince pranced around the soccer field with a goofy look on his face

D.J

I laughed along with them because Vince was so funny. But it really bugged me that he made a joke instead of congratulating me.

(p.7-8)

The study found that verbal bullying is not only in the form of saying hurtful things and threatening its victim but also teasing accompanied by certain movements. In this evidence, Vince is bullying D.J and even make mocking expressions. Seeing D.J laughing too – even though he does not like it – make Vince getting bolder to bully D.J in front of their friends.

Besides doing verbal bullying, several evidences show how the bullies doing

social bullying, as can be seen from the following evidence.

MONICA

Things didn't get any better after a while. In fact, they got worse. Much worse. It got to the point where no one would play with me at recess. I was all by myself and there was Katie hanging out with my other friends laughing and being all sweet and nice to everyone ... but me. (p.12)

MONICA

I walked right up to Katie during morning recess, waiting for her to do her worst. She looked at me and started whispering to her circle of friends. (p.18)

Besides verbal bullying of Monica, the study also found several attempts of Katie trying to influence her friends to be hostile to and stay away from Monica. In order to achieve her purpose, Katie deliberately excludes and spreading rumors about Monica to her friends over and over again until it reaches up to a situation when no one wants to play with Monica. The same thing also happened in the story *Just Kidding*, where Vince, the bully,

Passage

Vol. 9 No. 2, November 2021, pp.1–21

Available online at:

<https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/psg/article/view/38897>

tries to damage D.J.'s reputation in front of their friends. The evidence can be seen below.

VINCE

Hah! You lose, Cody! D.J.'s on your team.

D.J

I look at the guys. Nobody says anything about Vince's dumb way of choosing whose team I'm on. Suddenly, I don't feel like playing and I start heading home.

(p.4)

From the evidence above, it can be seen that the bully intentionally mocks and emphasizes that the losing team must accept D.J in their team. Seeing no protest from the other children seemed to confirm that what Vince said was true. Thus, the image of “a loser” is what the other kid will see in D.J in the future.

This study reveals that in the three stories by Trudy Ludwig bullies used their power in the form of bullying, and the two main types of bullying behavior that emerged the most are verbal and social bullying. Bullies always bully their victims in the school environment, either personally or in front of their friends. This bullying has a bad impact on its victims because the victims

become uncomfortable. In addition, the study found that there is always adults' intervention in solving the bullying problem. These three stories illustrate that basically, children have the potential to exploit imbalanced power, although in the end, they turn to adults in the process of solving the problem.

The Role of Adults

The study found that there is also an imbalanced power play involving adults. It is found through nineteen textual evidence that show how adults using their power. Adults in these three stories are described as having absolute power in the process of solving bullying problem. Raven (2008) categorizes it as legitimate power. It is a condition in which a person or group of people tends to obey someone who has a higher position than the others. In relation to this, a person who has a higher position described as a teacher, a school counselor, or even parents. The following evidences will elaborated more about adults' role in the stories *My Secret Bully*, *Trouble Talk*, and *Just Kidding* by Trudy Ludwig.

MONICA'S MOM

Passage

Vol. 9 No. 2, November 2021, pp.1–21

Available online at:

<https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/psg/article/view/38897>

Why don't you give her a call and talk to her about it?

(p.9)

MONICA

Mom and I talked about what I could do to stand up for myself. We even did what mom calls “role-playing” where she acted like she was Katie and I got to practice out loud what I wanted to say to her without sounding like a bully myself. (p.16)

Two evidences above states how Monica’s mother helps Monica to deal with Katie by playing a game called “role-playing”. It is a game in which Monica’s mother played as the bully while Monica played as the bullied. The purpose of this game is to help Monica practice what she wants to say to Katie without being a bully herself.

Therefore, it can be concluded that adults play a significant role in resolving bullying in these three stories. Each of these adults has their own way of helping children deal with bullying, be it through counseling or giving tips. However, the existence of these adults should be questioned because they always emerge later. It is known when the

bullying accident in the three stories occurred, adults were not shown. The study indicates that adults often fail to identify bullying behavior that occurs among children. From the three stories that have been identified, it was found that this adult character appeared and played a role after the bullying incident occurred, and not before. The study argues that the author seems to intentionally bring up the adult role at the end of each story. The appearance of the role of adults that is deliberately shown at the end seems to have a meaning, along with the representation of power imbalanced that is found in the three selected stories.

Meaning Construed from the Representation

The three books *My Secret Bully*, *Just Kidding*, and *Trouble Talk* have represented imbalanced power play among children, where the problem solving involves the participation of grownups. This power imbalance is shown through the form of bullying that is carried out by one child to another child. The role of adults is always shown as a figure who helps solve the bullying problem, either through counseling sessions with teachers and school counselors, as well as in special ways that were taught by

Passage

Vol. 9 No. 2, November 2021, pp.1–21

Available online at:

<https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/psg/article/view/38897>

parents of the bully victims. Such representations in the texts for children indicate that it shows bullying as a serious issue and both teachers and parents must play a role, where these three texts place adults as key figures. Therefore, it can be said that one of the prominent meanings is the effort to raise awareness about bullying. Derived from this, the researcher sees two factors in awareness raising, namely children as a self-aware participant and adults as a knowledgeable participant and as a bystander.

Children as a Self-Aware Participant

It has been mentioned before that the bullies get power from the information related to its victims. This shows that actually everyone has power, including children. However, from these three stories it was found that children not only use power to bully others, but also use power to seek help and increase their awareness of bullying issues. This is found through the steps taken by victims of bullying in solving bullying problems that befell them. It can be seen through the following evidence.

MRS. RODRIGUEZ

Why don't you go to the counselor's office and talk with Ms. Bloom?

MAYA

It sounded like a good idea. Ms. Bloom always cared about what I had to say. (p.18)

The evidence above states how Maya, the bullied, in the story *Trouble Talk* decided to follow her teacher's advice to meet and to tell her problem to the school counselor, Ms. Bloom. The meeting is then followed with some advice from Ms. Bloom to Maya, as it can be seen in the following evidence.

MRS. BLOOM

In the meantime, Maya, keep doing what you've been doing, don't join in and don't pass on rumors. Just change the subject and hang out with kids who make you feel safe. (p.21)

During her meeting with Ms. Bloom, Maya received guidance and direction on what to do in the future, namely not to pass the rumors and play with children who made her feel comfortable. In the following evidence,

Passage

Vol. 9 No. 2, November 2021, pp.1–21

Available online at:

<https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/psg/article/view/38897>

steps taken by Maya in handling the bully is also elaborated, as it can be seen below.

MAYA

I ended up staying away from Bailey. I knew it made her sad, but it's hard to be friends with someone you don't trust. And I didn't trust Bailey. (p.22)

From the evidence above it is found that the bullied decides to follow the school counselor's advice to spend time and play with children who make her feel at ease. The bullied decide to stay away from the bully because she knew she does not trust her. The same thing is also found in the story of *Just Kidding* when the bullied decides to do the same thing like Maya in the story *Trouble Talk*, which is to stay away from the bully. It can be seen through the following evidence.

D.J

So I followed Mrs. Winter's advice, and Vince eventually stopped bugging me so much. Don't get me wrong. It's fun to kid around with your friends and family. But I learned the hard way that when a joke has a sharp

edge to it, it can cut you to pieces.

Now I hang out with Brian, Joe, and Miguel. We horse around and have fun –without “making” fun of each other. And that's just the way we like it.
(p.23)

As it can be seen from the evidence above, after all the bullying incidents and counseling session, D.J eventually follows all of the school counselor's suggestions. This is illustrated through the bully who slowly stops bothering D.J. Furthermore, D.J also learned that if a joke goes too far, it can hurt other people's feelings. In the end, D.J is depicted playing with other children who can make him feel comfortable without feeling like a joke or a loser. Another evidence related to the steps taken by the bullied in the story *My Secret Bully* can be seen in the next evidence.

MONICA

Will I ever be friends with Katie again? I don't think so. I just want to be around people who really like me.
I'm feeling much better about myself these days. I've made new

Passage

Vol. 9 No. 2, November 2021, pp.1–21

Available online at:

<https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/psg/article/view/38897>

friends at school and on my gymnastics team and I don't get stomachaches like I did before. Having a secret bully was eating up my insides. But now that the secret's out I don't feel bad anymore. It's nice to know that whatever I do I'm going to be just fine.

(p.20)

The evidence above states how the bullied making decisions in handling the bullying problem she has. From the evidence, the bullied realize how bad it was for having a secret bully and she does not want that kind of treatment from her friendship anymore. Thus, Monica made a clear decision for not to be friends with the bully ever again, and only wants be friends with kids who really likes her.

Therefore, it can be concluded that awareness can also be raised among children and taught explicitly. This awareness can be provided through guidance by adults, both school counselors and parents. The steps taken by these children in increasing awareness are, first, telling their problems to adults. Second, follow the advice given. Finally, keep away children who like to bully

others and play with children who can respect each other.

Adults as a Knowledgeable Participant and as a Bystander

The data analysis reveals that in the stories power is not only exercised by children, but also adults. Foucault (1982) states that when someone exercises power and the stronger his exercise on power, the better he controls discourse. In relation to this, adults have power to create discourse and say that bullying should be taken lightly or seriously. Based on the analysis, adults in the stories are divided into two, both those who are serious about the bullying problem and those who take it lightly. The difference of each response can be seen from the following evidence.

MAYA

Ms. Bloom said that she would work with Bailey to turn her trouble talk into healthy talk. She'd also speak to the rest of the kids about not spreading rumors.

MRS. BLOOM

Passage

Vol. 9 No. 2, November 2021, pp.1–21

Available online at:

<https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/psg/article/view/38897>

In the meantime, Maya, keep doing what you've been doing, don't join in and don't pass on rumors. Just change the subject and hang out with kids who make you feel safe. (p.21)

The evidence above shows a conversation between Maya, the bullied, and Mrs. Bloom, the school counselor, after Maya tells her about the problem she has with Bailey, the bully. During the counseling there is a problem solving and giving suggestion process between the bully victim and the school counselor. By providing guidance and suggestions, the bullied will most likely to be more aware and know what to do next. Thus, the study also found a similar thing when the bullied try to talk to parents, as it can be seen from the following evidence.

MONICA

Mom says there are some problems in life that aren't easily solved and this is one of them. But it helps to know that I'm not alone.

MONICA

Mom and I talked about what I could do to stand up for myself.

We even did what mom calls "role-playing" where she acted like she was Katie and I got to practice out loud what I wanted to say to her without sounding like a bully myself. (p.16)

Based on the analysis of the evidence above, it was found that just like teachers and school counselors, the role of parents is also very much needed in dealing with bullying that occurs among children. When there is sharing and discussion between parents and children, the child will tend to be more open and relieve that she is not alone in experienced this problem. Conversely, when adults tend to underestimate the discourse of bullying that occurs among children, then what happens is only confusion and give another burden for the children. This depiction is shown in the data below.

MONICA'S BABYSITTER

That's just the way girls are, so you better get used to it. (p.16)

The excerpt above is a response given by the caregiver of one of the victims of bullying when she told the problems that she has between her and the bully. The response that tends to be underestimate is a proof that this

Passage

Vol. 9 No. 2, November 2021, pp.1–21

Available online at:

<https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/psg/article/view/38897>

the problem of bullying has occurred since a long time ago and people seem to normalize it.

The two adult responses above show a very significant difference in the handling of bullying that occurs among children. When adults are responsive to reports from victims, the steps usually taken are guidance for both bullied and bullies, as well as tips for dealing with bullies. On the other hand, if adults are not responsive and tend to underestimate the discourse of bullying among children, these children tend to be confused and cannot do anything because they do not have the power to confront the statement. This research has shown that adults has power to determine and give a discourse to children that bullying can be considered important or trivial.

Based on the characters analysis above, the stories *My Secret Bully*, *Just Kidding*, and *Trouble Talk* have succeeded to represent power imbalance among children. To show power imbalance among children, the author of the stories put power play into the children's discourse so that each of the characters exercises the power to carry out their agendas. Within the agendas is the use of power to bully others.

In relation with this, bullying as a discourse is seen as all ideas and viewpoints on how this act of aggressive behavior is described. It manifested through actions, words, and deeds done by the bully to the bullied. From the stories, bullying can occur among children as long as the children are aware of their power. Through the stories, it can be said that in the three books bullying was portrayed in an arresting manner so that it may have raised awareness about bullying problems among children. In addition, illustrations also have functioned as a reminder of adults' role in the children environment. This indicates the author believes that there should always be an adult there to help and resolve the problem; these three books demonstrate that they do not believe that children can address bullying problems on their own and that adults must always be present to help. This reinforces the study's argument that there is authorial intention in highlighting the adults' role at the end of each story.

The bullying contained in these texts is also very relevant to the current situation in society. For so long, society has only focused on the issue of bullying which only appears among teenagers and adults, when in fact

Passage

Vol. 9 No. 2, November 2021, pp.1–21

Available online at:

<https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/psg/article/view/38897>

there is a potential of bullying among children. In this case, Trudy Ludwig, the author of the three stories, places power as part of children's discourse, and in the interaction among children, there is a child who claims power because she/he dares to determine discourse. This power is then exercised in the form of bullying. However, the discourse stopped when there are more mature people who seized the discourse, or in this case adults. This shows that actually everyone has power, including children, and each of these children has their way and purpose of using power. Orientation activities carried out by students in schools is an example of bullying relevant to our today's society. Orientation activities are one of the activities carried out every year in order to welcome new students, in this activity students who become activity administrators are usually given the power to make activity plans during the orientation period, including making provisions such as what items must be brought by the new students during the orientation period. Not only making rules and regulations, students who manage this activity are usually also given the power to make punitive sanctions for new students who violate, and not

infrequently these sanctions lead to hazing. From the orientation, the school seems to institutionalize and strengthens the power given to students which makes bullying is hard to get rid of.

This research has made me believe that the environment where children grow and develop is extremely prone to bullying. I agree with Trudy Ludwig that awareness-raising needs to be spread through children's books like this so that teachers and parents become realize and aware of issues like this in children's environment, considering the fact that adults play a significant role in stopping and preventing bullying from happening again. Therefore, from the analysis of the stories and the example of how bullying is done in our society, we need to be careful and alert to children's activities because the possibility of bullying is always there anytime and anywhere. With the stories that raise the issue of children bullying, it is hoped that it can increase both adult and children awareness that bullying can occur only with the presence of power imbalance.

Thus, for me, bullying in elementary schools or among students is a severe problem that requires immediate treatment. Hence, grown-ups need to be aware of

Passage

Vol. 9 No. 2, November 2021, pp.1–21

Available online at:

<https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/psg/article/view/38897>

bullying potentials and have to prioritize their role in children interactions and put forward their role in solving bullying problems in children's environments. The problem of bullying is fundamental, where bullying at the elementary school level must be stopped, lest this bullying act be institutionalized. By realizing the large role of adults in these three stories it is only logical that bullying knowledge must be spread more widely among adults. It is because adults have the capability to spread awareness to their children and surroundings. The study argues that adults should be aware of their role, that they have the power to stop bullying and create a discourse that bullying is a serious issue and requires serious handling as well. Adults also must not be bystanders and must not be the masters of discourse that underestimates children's problems.

Other than that, by addressing the issue of bullying in children's books, it will most likely create a connection between the children with the story characters and their feelings, which can help them develop self-confidence, empathy, and insight. In addition, children will learn how important it is to share their problems with trusted adults, it can be their parents, teachers, or a school

counselor. Bullying books help children comprehend behavioral issues while also encouraging them to come up with solutions. Thus, children may also learn valuable knowledge from these books that may help them in their life. I believe that publications like this should be written and distributed in Indonesia and that teachers and parents should be given more information about bullying.

The findings of this study appear to be in accordance with previous research conducted by Lashley (2015) on how bullying is presented in young adult literature. However, in contrast to this study, which highlights the act of bullying to construct representations and meanings construed from Ludwig's children's books, Lashley's study focuses on the story's elements of actions and connect the concept of bullying to see how bullying affects people, group, and social classes.

Substantially, even when the stories are fictional, aspects within the stories exist in the real world. Therefore, stories like this deserve to be disseminated, aside from enjoyment to the readers, they can also serve as enrichment for teachers for class discussions. In other words, the lessons

Passage

Vol. 9 No. 2, November 2021, pp.1–21

Available online at:

<https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/psg/article/view/38897>

contained in the stories may reflect the actual world where power is present anywhere and anytime, including in children's discourse, and anyone who has power has the ability to do anything including constructing discourses.

CONCLUSION

The study aims to discover the representation of acts of bullying in the three selected stories *My Secret Bully*, *Just Kidding*, and *Trouble Talk* by Trudy Ludwig. Based on the data analysis, the study reveals that bullying activities shown in the three stories represent power imbalance in the children's environment and there are two leading characters who possess their power: the bully and the adult. The bullies in the stories are portrayed as children who likes to oppress their peers, as it is found through sixteen evidence. The adult, on the other hand, is a figure that exist to help resolving the bullying problem. It is found through nineteen textual evidence in the stories. Using power the bullies gain from information related to the victims, the bullies tend to bully their peers in place that there are no adults' supervision such as on the field, in the class, or even in the school bus. The most common forms of bullying found are verbal and social bullying.

Verbal bullying is carried out not only by bully characters played by girls, but also boys. All forms of verbal bullying such as teasing, taunting, threatening, spreading gossip, mocking, nicknaming, and even gaslighting are found in these three stories.

Furthermore, these three stories by Trudy Ludwig also show the form of social bullying carried out by the bullies in the stories including defamation, deliberately exclude, destroying the victim's confidence, and humiliating the victim in front of many people. These three books have succeeded in showing that children have the potential become bullies. Additionally, adults are also involved in an unequal power play and has a pivotal role in helping children in dealing with the bullying problem. From the analysis it is found that adults always appear in every story and are described as helping figures such as parents, teachers, and school counselors. These adults help by providing a space for the bullied to talk about the problem they face. Thus, the steps taken by adults are to provide guidance and tips for dealing with bullies. This finding confirms Foucault's (1982) idea that power spreads through society and anyone has a potential to exercise power.

Passage

Vol. 9 No. 2, November 2021, pp.1–21

Available online at:

<https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/psg/article/view/38897>

The imbalanced power in children's environment is a representation of what our society needs to do. People should be more aware with the bullying problem. This is something that needs to be considered because bullying is part of an issue that is continues to be a concern for society and both children and adults must be prepared to deal with things like this. In view with this, awareness raising can be grown by providing guidance and introduction to bullying and how to overcome bullying itself. This study reveals that once children are aware of the bullying problem, then they are aware with the acts of bullying in their surroundings. In addition, adults must be more responsive, not only in dealing with bullying but also in identifying this issue earlier. Adults must also avoid being bystanders and masters of a discourse that ignores children problem. Bullying books assist both children and adults in understanding the bullying problem while also motivating them to devise resolutions. As a result, both children and adults may learned from these books that might aid them in their daily lives. The study points out the idea that awareness-raising on bullying can be socially construed through the representation of power imbalanced. As a

consequence, this study strengthen the view of power play can be found in children's discourse through acts of bullying.

REFERENCES

- Abraham, M. H. (1957). *A glossary of literary terms*.
- Adedoyin, O.B., (2020). *Qualitative Research Methods*. Near East University.
- Ansary, N.S., Elias, M.J., Greene, M., Green, S. (2015). *Guidance for Schools Selecting Antibullying Approaches*, 44 (1), doi: 10.3102/0013189X14567534
- Athealth. (2014). *Bullying – Where does bullying occur?*. Retrieved January 31, 2014, from <https://athealth.com/topics/bullying-where-does-bullying-occur/>
- Craig, W., Pepler, D. (2007). *Responding to Bullying: What Works?*. Sage Publications.
- Entenman J., Murnen T.J., Hendricks, C. (2005). *Victims, Bullies, and Bystanders in K–3 Literature*. , 59(4), 352–364. doi:10.1598/rt.59.4.5
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/Knowledge: Selected Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon. New York: Pantheon
- Foucault, M. (1982). The Subject and Power. *Critical Inquiry*, 8(4), 777-795.

Passage

Vol. 9 No. 2, November 2021, pp.1–21

Available online at:

<https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/psg/article/view/38897>

- Retrieved August 1, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1343197>
- Graham, S. (2016). *Victims of Bullying in Schools. Theory Into Practice*, 55(2), 136–144. doi:10.1080/00405841.2016.1148988
- Gregory, K., Vessey, J. (2004). Bibliotherapy: A strategy to Help Students With Bullying. *The Journal of School Nursing*, 20:3, 127-33.
- Hall, S. (1997). *Representation: cultural representation and signifying practices*. London: Sage Publications & Open University
- Indonesian Child Protection Commission. (2020). Retrieved February 10, 2020, from <https://www.kpai.go.id/berita/sejumlah-kasus-bullying-sudah-warnai-catatan-masalah-anak-di-awal-2020-begini-kata-komisioner-kpai>
- Lashley, K. (2015). “Fire is catching!” and So Is Bullying. *Bullying in Popular Culture: Essays on Film, Television and Novels*, 91.
- Lynch, R. A. (2014). Foucault’s theory of power. In *Michel Foucault* (pp. 21-34). Routledge.
- Marleku, Alfred. (n.d). Representation – the production of meaning through language. (s.n) Retrieved from [\(PDF\) Representation - the production of meaning through language | Alfred Marleku, PhD - Academia.edu](#)
- Meyer, E.J. (2011). New solutions for bullying and harassment. In E.J. Meyer (Eds), *A post-structural, feminist approach*, doi: 10.1017/CBO9781139226707.013
- Mohajan, H. K. (2018). Qualitative research methodology in social sciences and related subjects. *Journal of Economic Development and People*, 7:1, 23-48, doi: 10.26458/jedep.v7i1.571
- National Bullying Helpline. (n.d). Gaslighting at work – spotting the signs of subtle workplace bullying. Retrieved from <https://www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk/gaslighting.html#:~:text=Gaslighting%20is%20classic%20abuse%20of%20power.>
- National Centre Against Bullying. (n.d). *Types of Bullying*. Retrieved from <https://www.ncab.org.au/bullying-advice/bullying-for-parents/types-of-bullying>
- Olweus D. (1993). *Bullying at school: What we know and what we can do*. Malden, MA: Blackwell
- Olweus, D. (1994). *Bullying at school: Long-term outcomes for the victims and an effective school-based intervention program*. New York, NY: Plenum Press.
- Olweus, D. (1994). *Bullying at school. In Aggressive behavior* (pp. 97-130). Springer, Boston, MA.
- Pfeffer, J. (2010). *Power play*. Harvard business review, 88(7/8), 84-92.

Passage

Vol. 9 No. 2, November 2021, pp.1–21

Available online at:

<https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/psg/article/view/38897>

Raven, B. H. (2008). The Bases of Power and Power/Interaction Model of Interpersonal Influence. *Analysis of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 8(1), 1-22

Unicef. (2020). *Evaluation of the Roots Indonesia: Peer violence and bullying prevention pilot in South Sulawesi and Central Java*. Retrieved October 2020, from <https://www.unicef.org/indonesia/reports/evaluation-roots-indonesia>

Wiseman, A. M., Jones, J. S. (2018). Examining Depictions of Bullying in Children's Picturebooks: A Content Analysis From 1997 to 2017. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 32, 190-201, doi: 10.1080/02568543.2017.1419320