



E-ISSN [2828-9218](#)

Submission Date : 2025-06-13

Revision Date : 2025-07-01

Acceptance Date: 2025-07-10

Correspondence Address :

Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya,  
Indonesia.

E-mail: [syaifulbasri@unesa.ac.id](mailto:syaifulbasri@unesa.ac.id)

## Keris Siamang Tunggal Alih Wahana Film Upin & Ipin: Representation of Cultural Identity and Educational Values in Educational Theater

Syaiful Qadar Basri <sup>1</sup>, Setyo Yanuartuti<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Surabaya State University, Surabaya, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Surabaya State University, Surabaya, Indonesia

Email: [syaifulbasri@unesa.ac.id](mailto:syaifulbasri@unesa.ac.id)<sup>1</sup>, [setyoyanuartuti@unesa.ac.id](mailto:setyoyanuartuti@unesa.ac.id)<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract:** This article explores the educational theater adaptation of the film *Upin & Ipin: Keris Siamang Tunggal* by students of the Sendratasik Education Study Program at Universitas Negeri Surabaya. Using a qualitative-descriptive method, the study analyzes how this adaptation communicates cultural identity and educational values to a student audience. The theatrical adaptation, developed as a final project for the "Teater Pendidikan course," highlights local wisdom, multiculturalism, and character education. By examining the process and performance during the implementation of Phase D in the course, this paper illustrates how educational theater serves as a medium of learning, value transformation, and identity reinforcement in performing arts education.

**Keywords:** educational theater, cultural identity, character education, Upin & Ipin, adaptation

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Educational theater is not only a forum for artistic exploration, but also a space for the transformation of cultural values and identities. In the midst of the rise of children's entertainment media, the film *Upin & Ipin: Keris Siamang Tunggal* is present as one of the works that contains strong moral and cultural values. This film tells the story of the adventures of two children's characters in the world of Malay fairy tales, conveying a message about courage, friendship, and the importance of preserving cultural heritage.

In the Educational Theater course at the FBS UNESA Central Education Study Program, students were given the task of adapting this film into a theater performance as the final project in phase D of the school curriculum. This project aims to develop students' creative, pedagogical, and collaborative abilities in creating theater that is able to become an educational medium.

Education Theater is a strategic vehicle in shaping students' character, creativity, and social competence through art media. In the context of performing arts higher education, educational theater is not only a space for aesthetic experimentation, but also a vehicle for the formation of students' attitudes, values, and pedagogical skills. One of the innovative methods used in the learning process is vehicle transfer, which is the process of adapting from one form of media to another—in this case, from film media to theater performances.

This article reviews in depth the process of adapting the popular animated film "Upin & Ipin: Keris Siamang Tunggal" into the form of a theater performance by students of the Sendratasik Education Study Program, State University of Surabaya, in the Educational Theater Phase D course for the 2024/2025 academic year. This work was chosen as the main product of the course because of the content of



moral, cultural, and character education values contained in the film, which is very relevant to the objectives of the Educational Theater learning. This article discusses how *the Keris Siamang Tunggal* theater performance is not only an artistic work, but also a means of instilling important values of character education and cultural identity in the context of art education.

Based on this background, the main question arises in this study: *how can the process of transferring the film "Upin & Ipin: Keris Siamang Tunggal" into the form of a theater performance represent cultural identity and educational values in the context of Educational Theater?* To answer this question, this research is directed at several sub-formulations of the problem: (1) how is the process of adapting stories from film media to theater medium carried out by students in learning projects? (2) to what extent is the representation of Malay cultural identity displayed symbolically and narratively in the theatrical performance? and (3) what are the values of character education that are embodied through the dramatic structure, the role of the characters, and the production process that students go through? The formulation of this problem becomes the basis for an analysis of the creative process and learning outcomes in the Educational Theater course, as well as contributing to the development of art learning methods based on local culture and popular media.

## 2. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with an analytical descriptive method. The main data sources come from direct observation of performances, interviews with production students and lecturers teaching courses, as well as documentation during the rehearsal and staging process. The analysis was carried out by highlighting the process of transferring film rides to theater, processing the aesthetics of the stage, and the meaning of the educational and cultural values raised in the performance.

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a focus on an in-depth understanding of the process and results of theater performances as a form of product of the Phase D Educational Theater course by students of the S1 Education Study Program, State University of Surabaya. The material object in this study is the theatrical performance "*Keris Siamang Tunggal*", while the formal object is the process of transferring vehicles and representing cultural and educational values in the context of Educational Theater

The material object of this study is the theater performance produced by students, while the formal object is the process of transferring vehicles and the representation of cultural and educational values in the form of theater performances. This activity is carried out collaboratively as a form of Project-Based Learning (PjBL), which not only emphasizes the final result in the form of performances, but also on the creative process, character building, and integration of educational values in it.

Data analysis is carried out thematically, with stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The researcher identified key themes based on keywords such as: *vehicle transfer*, *cultural identity*, *educational value*, *collaborative work*, and *project-based learning*. The data collected were analyzed using theoretical frameworks that underlie formal objects, namely cultural

representation theory (Hall, 1997), vehicle transfer theory (Jakobson, 1959), and PjBL learning model (Thomas, 2000).

Film With this approach, the research is able to present a rich and detailed picture of how students transformed the film "Keris Siamang Tunggal" presents a narrative that is full of elements of adventure, morality, and local wisdom of Malay culture. Within the framework of character education, the film contains values such as courage, honesty, cooperation, and love of culture, all of which are very relevant to be internalized through the process of art-based creative learning. In the process of switching from vehicles to theater forms, students are required to conduct an in-depth analysis of the story structure, characters, conflicts, and socio-cultural context of the film, then rearrange it in a communicative, aesthetic, and educational stage performance format into an educational theater performance that is not only aesthetic, but also educational and reflective of local culture.

Based on the results of observation and documentation of the performance process, students showed the ability to rearrange theater scripts from film sources, conduct artistic explorations both in the aspects of acting, directing, artistic arrangement (sets, costumes, props), and conduct pedagogical reflections on the meaning and message of the performance. Within the theoretical framework, the approaches used include intersemiotic translation theory, cultural representation in the performing arts (Hall, 1997), and project-based learning theory (Thomas, 2000). These three approaches are the foundation for understanding the process and results of this educational theater activity.

Thus, this article not only presents a descriptive explanation of the theatrical version of the performance work "Keris Siamang Tunggal", but also provides a conceptual and theoretical analysis of the process of cultural education based on culture and popular media. This shows that educational theater can be an effective medium in conveying moral and cultural messages, as well as strengthening the pedagogical competence of future art teachers.

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **3.1 Transformation of Film Stories to Theater Stage**

Students adapt the film's narrative into a dramatic structure that fits the theater medium. Elements of adventure, fantasy characters, and cultural conflicts are simplified but still retain the essence of the story. This adaptation is carried out with a collaborative approach: a team of scriptwriters, directors, actors, artistic arrangers, and course instructors play an active role in the creative process.

The process of transferring the film ride "Upin & Ipin: Keris Siamang Tunggal" into a theater performance by students of Phase D of the S1 Sendratasik Education Study Program, State University of Surabaya is an integral part of the implementation of the final project of the Education Theater course. This performance is the culmination product of a series of project-based learning designed to develop students' creativity, collaborative skills, and pedagogical abilities in the context of culture-based performing arts.

The adaptation stages are carried out through:

1. **Film script reading and analysis:** Students identify the main themes, narrative conflicts, key characters, and moral and cultural values contained in the film.
2. **Screenplay rewrite:** Movies that are more than an hour long should be condensed into a performance scenario that is about 45 minutes long. Adjustments are made by paying attention to Aristotelian dramatic structures (beginning, middle, end) and Brechtian dramatic principles to build the critical awareness of children's audiences.
3. **Production and artistic team formation:** Students are divided into several divisions, namely: scripting, directing, artistic (stage decoration, costumes, makeup, props), documentation, and promotion. The organizational structure of the production mimics professional show management.
4. **Intensive training:** Held for four weeks, three times a week, in the FBS UNESA campus studio. Each training session is accompanied by formative evaluation by the teaching lecturer and daily reflection by students.

In this transfer process, students retained central figures such as Upin, Ipin, Mat Jenin, Raja Bersiong, and other Malay legend figures. The fairytale world setting is tailored to the visual and technical needs of the stage by relying on multifunctional properties such as panels set in batik fabric, royal miniatures, and multi-storey stages. Gestures and expressions are enlarged according to the needs of children's theatre, with an emphasis on communicative and dynamic visual aspects.



**Figure 1.** The Opening Scene of the Single Season

**Stage Conditions and Field Findings:** The performance was held at the Graha Sawunggaling Building of FBS UNESA with an audience

consisting of students, lecturers, elementary school students, and general invitees. Technical conditions such as lighting and sound are still limited to campus equipment, but they are successfully maximized with simple lighting planning that supports the atmosphere of the scene. One important finding is the effectiveness of gesture and intonation improvisation in building direct communication with children's audiences. Some dialogues are made interactive to encourage audience participation, in line with the theory of Participatory Theater (Boal, 1979).

Another finding was an increase in student awareness of the importance of cross-media adaptation. They realized that not all aspects of film could be transferred to the theater directly. This process encourages them to think critically about the essence of the message they want to convey and how to convey it aesthetically and educationally. In this case, the theory of vehicle transfer by Jakobson (1959) becomes relevant, where the transformation between semiotics (from animated visuals to verbal performatives) requires creativity and active interpretation from the actor.

In addition, the application of the PjBL theory (Thomas, 2000) is very visible. Students show a complete cycle starting from planning, implementation, to evaluation of art products that involve the deep learning process. The performance of "Keris Siamang Tunggal" in this context is not only a means of artistic expression, but also a vehicle for character formation, pedagogical competence, and strengthening the cultural literacy of prospective art educator students.

### **3.2. Representation of Malay Cultural Identity**

The performance of *Keris Siamang Tunggal* prioritizes Malay cultural elements such as traditional costumes, background music with Malay gamelan, and stage props that resemble the setting of the kingdom and village. The language and dialogue are also preserved in a thick Malay feel, presenting an authentic cultural experience for the audience.

In the performance of "Keris Siamang Tunggal" which was staged as the final project of the Phase D Education Theater course, students of the UNESA Sendratasik Education S1 Study Program emphasized the representation of Malay culture as the main narrative and aesthetic foundation. This representation is not only symbolically realized, but also as a form of internalization of local cultural values in the context of art education.

Elements of Malay culture are displayed through the following aspects:

1. **Traditional Costumes:** The main characters such as Upin, Ipin, Mat Jenin, and other legendary figures wear typical Malay clothing such as baju kurung, tanjak, songket cloth, and loose trousers. Costumes are made with bright color adaptations to attract the attention of children's audiences, while still maintaining the traditional form as a cultural identity.





**Figure 2.** The costumes used by Mat Jenin and the residents

2. **Property and Layout:** The stage setting is designed to resemble the atmosphere of a classic Malay kingdom and village with visual elements such as wooden gates, batik fabric decorations, and miniature palaces. Properties such as daggers, urns, and replicas of coconut trees are used to strengthen the cultural atmosphere.



**Figure 3.** Settings and properties

3. **Language and Dialogue:** The use of thick Malay language and accent is the main feature. Students consciously maintain Malay-toned dialogue to create an authentic linguistic experience and add depth to the character's identity.
4. **Music and Sound Accompaniment:** The accompaniment music adapts Malay musical instruments such as tambourine, gambus, and drums with rhythmic patterns that match the atmosphere of the scene. Music is played live by students, reinforcing the dramatic nuances and values of tradition.



**Figure 3.** Keris Sakti Siamang Tunggal Malay Style Singing

**Staging Conditions and Field Findings:** In the performance that took place at the Graha Sawunggaling Building FBS UNESA, the atmosphere of the audience showed high enthusiasm, especially from the children's audience who seemed interested in the visual elements and ethnic sounds. Some interesting findings from the performance include:

- **A positive response to the use of the Malay language** that provides a unique sensation and enriches the linguistic experience for audiences from outside the culture.
- **An increased emotional engagement of the audience** when traditional musical accompaniment is used in scenes of conflict or climax. This shows the symbolic power of music as a transcultural medium.
- **The adaptation of costumes and props is simple but effective**, showing the creativity of students in overcoming the limitations of the production budget **without** losing the essence of culture.



**Figure 3.** The costumes used by King Besiong and his father

These findings confirm that cultural representation in theater is not just decorative, but is a process of identity construction that is performative and educational (Hall, 1997). Students as actors and creators play an important role in reproducing culture through the medium of performing arts.

From a pedagogical perspective, this cultural representation becomes a vehicle for contextual learning, where students not only understand culture as theoretical knowledge, but also bring it to life in performances that touch the affective and social realms. Stuart Hall's theory of cultural representation and an approach to intercultural aesthetics in theatre (Barba, 1995) support this finding, that performance can be an arena for the production of meaning that synergistically combines local identity and artistic media.

Thus, the theater version of "Keris Siamang Tunggal" has succeeded in becoming a concrete example of how performing arts can function as a tool for cultural preservation, learning media, and a means of aesthetic exploration that is cross-generational and cross-context.

### **3.3. The Value of Education in Educational Theatre**

This performance contains character education values such as cooperation, courage, empathy, and responsibility. The cultivation of value is carried out narratively and symbolically: through relationships between characters, choice of stage actions, and moral emphasis in the climax of the story. In addition, the theater production process itself becomes a space for students to learn soft skills, including production management, communication, and artistic ethical reflection.

The performance of "Keris Siamang Tunggal" as the final product of the Phase D Education Theater course is not only an artistic performance, but also a medium for exploring the values of character education and holistic learning. The show explicitly and implicitly instills values such as cooperation, courage, empathy, and responsibility, both through storytelling and student-run production practices.

#### **Values of Character Education in Narrative and Stage Action:**

1. **Cooperation:** Seen in the relationship between characters such as Upin and Ipin who work together to save the fairy tale world. This is shown in a collaborative scene that illustrates the importance of mutual cooperation, in line with the principles of national character education.
2. **Courage:** Shown by the main character who faces a major conflict with the antagonist (King Bersiong). This value is displayed narratively in a dramatic structure as well as symbolically through stage blocking that depicts combat and decision-making.
3. **Empathy:** Appears in scenes when the character helps other oppressed characters, providing a message about social care. The expression of empathy is supported by lighting and musical illustrations that build an emotional atmosphere.
4. **Responsibility:** Emphasized in the storyline that shows the consequences of the character's choices. This value also appears in the depiction of a just and wise leader.

**Soft Skill Learning through the Production Process:** In addition to the story content, the performance production process is a means of learning soft skills for students, such as:



- **Production Management:** Students learn to manage practice time, divide tasks, create budgets, and handle group dynamics.
- **Effective Communication:** Seen in the coordination between production divisions and during the presentation of concepts in front of teaching lecturers and collaborative partners.
- **Artistic Ethics Reflection:** Students are invited to reflect on moral values in stories and ethical responsibilities as artists-educators in conveying cultural messages to children's audiences.

**Staging Conditions and Field Findings:** The show is held in the open and enjoyed by a diverse audience, including school children and the local community. Findings from observations and interviews show that:

- The children's audience seems to capture the moral message well, especially in the climactic scene which is designed with an emphasis on dialogue and symbolic gestures.
- Students experience an increased understanding of the importance of educational messages in the arts, as evidenced by written reflections that show awareness of the function of theater as a medium of character formation.
- The training process is a place to internalize the value of responsibility and perseverance, especially when facing technical limitations and internal conflicts in production.

These findings are reinforced by the theory of art-based character education (Dewey, 1934) which states that aesthetic experience can reflexively shape an individual's moral consciousness. In this context, the Education Theater becomes a social laboratory that integrates students' cognition, affection, and psychomotor as a whole.

Thus, "Keris Siamang Tunggal" is not only a representation of cultural values, but also a concrete space for students to develop professional competencies as ethical, communicative, and characterful art educators.

### 3.4. Implementation in Educational Theater Courses

This performance is a student final project project in phase D of the Education Theater course. The entire production process, starting from research, script writing, directing, to post-performance evaluation is carried out in a structured manner based on learning outcomes. The evaluation shows that students understand the role of theater as an educational medium, not just entertainment.

The performance of "Keris Siamang Tunggal" is an implementation of the final project of Phase D students in the Educational Theater course at the S1 Education Study Program, State University of Surabaya. This performance not only serves as a medium for evaluating learning outcomes, but also as a vehicle to prove the achievement of students' pedagogical, artistic, and collaborative competencies in real terms.

The entire production process is designed and implemented based on the Graduate Learning Outcomes (CPL) which includes the ability to design culture-based art learning, direct educational theater performances, and reflect moral values and messages in the context of character education. Students work in an organizational structure of mini theater productions that involve roles as scriptwriters, directors, actors, artistic teams, musicians, as well as those in charge of promotion and documentation. This process lasted for six weeks

intensively, with direct assistance by the teaching lecturer and supervision sessions between groups.

**Stage Conditions and Field Findings:** The performance was held in the open space of FBS UNESA, presenting audiences from various circles, including cross-generational students, lecturers, and elementary school students. Field findings show that:

- **Students are able to organize performances independently and collaboratively**, including problem-solving when facing technical obstacles such as limited sound equipment and changing weather.
- **Post-performance reflection** shows that students understand the function of theater as an educational medium. This can be seen from the results of written evaluations, group interviews, and end-of-class discussions that reflect an understanding of educational values conveyed through storylines and stage symbols.
- **Students show significant development in the ability to compile culture-based learning media**, which can be applied when becoming educators at the elementary or junior high school level.

These findings are reinforced by contextual learning theory (Johnson, 2002), which emphasizes the importance of active engagement and authentic experiences in learning. In this case, theater as an educational vehicle becomes a real learning laboratory, not a simulation. Students experience firsthand how to build learning that touches cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects.

In addition, the theory of social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978) also supports the approach used in this course. Students build knowledge and meaning through social and collaborative processes in concrete art projects. They are not only performers, but also developers of art curricula and facilitators of cultural values and character through creative and communicative approaches.

Thus, "Keris Siamang Tunggal" is not only a final aesthetic achievement, but also a tangible manifestation of the application of pedagogical principles in the curriculum of the Educational Theater. This performance illustrates how art learning can run in an integrative, participatory, and relevant manner to the needs of the times and the values of local wisdom

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The transfer of the film Upin & Ipin: Keris Siamang Tunggal into an educational theater shows the great potential of theater as an educational and reflective medium. The representation of Malay cultural identity and the values of character education contained in the performance is proof that performing arts can be a vehicle for strengthening multicultural education. The Educational Theater course is expected to continue to encourage students to present works that are not only aesthetic, but also educational.

#### AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

The first author compiled a conceptual framework and collected field data. The second author conducts data analysis and writes the results and discussion sections. The third author completes the literature review and conclusion.

## THANK YOU

Gratitude was conveyed to the lecturers of the Educational Theater course and all Sendratasik students who were involved in the performance of Keris Siamang Tunggal.

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