CHARACTER EDUCATION REINFORCEMENT IN EFL CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

This study aims at discussing the needs of character education reinforcement in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) Classroom. Character education plays an important role in developing students' affective education which is concerned with faith, affections, justice, politeness, morality, responsibility, and attitudes. Recently, Indonesian education is facing a degradation dealing with students' behaviour. Some examples that can be observed nowadays are bullying, gang fighting, sexual harassment, and robbing. Such manners need to be controlled and prohibited. Therefore, English teachers who take a part in the classroom should also help their students in overcoming this situation by way of reinforcing character education in teaching and learning process. The condition shows that English teachers are required to reinforce and engage the values of character education as one of the significant aspects that essentially be considered in order to make Indonesian education have a good quality.

Keywords: Character Education, Reinforcement, EFL Classroom

INTRODUCTION

Currently, Indonesian young generation has pathetically faced a moral degradation. It can be seen from social media, news, and television that show Indonesian teenagers do fighting between students, sexual harassment, bullying, free sex, drug abuse, and hedonistic lifestyle. These values and norms seem to deteriorate not only in urban areas but also in rural areas. Definitely, this indicates the condition of Indonesia that encounters a lack of moral education in the present day. There are still many deviant behaviours carried out by Indonesian people that are not in accordance with applicable norms or rules. Today's morality crisis commonly occurs among adolescents who start to move towards the maturity phase. In this case, it might be due to the age of adolescence who are busy looking for their identity and very easily to get influenced by other people in any case.

The declining spirit of spirituality and morals which should be guidelines for the community is also become one of the factors that cause morality degradation in Indonesian society. This spiritual and moral crisis is an impact of the globalization era that has changed the concept, harmony, and stability of a society today from fashion, food, language style in communication, and various behaviours that are not in agreement with the norms prevailing in social life. Affan and Maksum (2016) say that most of

Indonesian youth try to do 'westernization' subconsciously in order to adopt the ideas, customs, practice, lifestyle, clothing, politics, etc. which then lead them to lose their nation and state as a feature to show themselves that they are Indonesian citizens.

According to Iskarim (2016), there are some factors that can bring students to do deviance such as (1) less religious, (2) lack of moral guidance supported by family, school, and society, (3) strong-tasting of materialistic, hedonistic, and secularistic world, and (4) less support from government in building morality in the society. Since morality is one of the aspects that can succeed people in developing a country, these four things need to be carried out well. Likewise, government plays an important role in educating someone's character for its nation where it can provide an information for parents and society who do not know about the importance of character education to genuinely take care of their children especially in teaching good behaviour and attitude for them, and integrate character education in school curriculum.

In fact, Ministry of national education system in Indonesia has already mentioned about character education in Indonesian law number 3 year 2003. It is said that the role of national education is to develop the capability, build a character, and civilize the dignified nation in order to educate the nation's life. National education aims at fostering the learners' potential to become a person that faithful, virtuous, noble, healthful, knowledgeable, intelligent, creative, independent, and responsible. Therefore, to achieve these goals, every single level of education must be programmed and systematic in terms of cultural and character education and should integrate the content of cultural values and national character to produce intelligent and competitive Indonesian people.

However, the weakness of national education system applied in Indonesia which is offered by the government turned out the spiritual and moral crisis for young generation (Bahri, 2015). The previous national education system prioritizes academic values and forgets to implant moral education for students from their practical world. It can be seen from some last few years of Indonesian education that have undergone several curriculum changes. Our curriculum has been considered too complex to burden students because it focuses more on intellectual intelligence. As a consequence, a few students are unable to take the learning materials and feel uncomfortable at school which subsequently move away their activities with things that can harm themselves. To respond to this phenomena, education reform that contains an educational curriculum which has cultural values and national character is very important. Consequently, Indonesian current curriculum namely Curriculum 13 offered character education as one of the aspects that need to be taught by the teachers explicitly and implicitly at school.

Curriculum 13 has also been a way to reinforce character education for the students because it contains four core competencies that should be applied in the classroom. They are competency 1 which focuses on religious values, competency 2 that relates to social humanitarian values, competency 3 contains knowledge, and competency 4 focuses on the learning process. In competency 1 and 2, there is no material taught but it becomes enthusiasm in each subject taught. For instance, when a teacher teaches English subject, she must make students appreciate and be grateful for what God has given them in this world. Then, she also needs to

educate them the values of honesty, discipline, and responsibility and care which must be instilled earlier in order to make them be good people.

Implementing character education is not only a responsibility for teachers who teach religion and civic education but also all subject teachers. English as one of the subjects stated in curriculum should also contain character education in its materials. Even more, in English subject it contains western culture that can cause a misconception among students which can be a reason of doing westernization. Thus, English teachers plays a significant role in explaining the similarities and differences between western and Indonesian culture to the students. They should pay attention to the way how they impart knowledge to them about the differences among various culture learned in English subject so the students will not try to copy paste all the culture from Westerns which are occasionally contradicted to the East culture.

CHARACTER EDUCATION REINFORCEMENT

Several years ago, character education has been introduced in Indonesia. It starts from elementary to high school with various names. There are those who call character education, moral education, education manners and so on. Nonetheless, character education given at that time was less comprehensive where it focused more on theory and memorization rather than contextualization. Character education is previously given through the subjects of religious and civic education, which are not inherent in the context of the lessons learned. They are asked the students to memorize and become knowledgeable but are less practice-oriented which then lead to a non-optimal result. Essentially, character education is

about the attainment and reinforcement of virtues (qualities), values (ideals and concepts), and the capacity to make wise choices for a well-rounded life and a thriving society (Bialik, Bogan, Fadel, and Horvathova, 2015). So, the teachers have to insert the good values which relates to the students' life experience and the topic taught in the classroom so as to build affection for them.

According to Gray (2010), character education is an effort to protect negative and unhealthy impacts that will come and affect someone's behaviour. This is a preventive initiative that a person must have with the intention to help the development children's emotion both physically and mentally from their original nature towards a better person. As well as Arthur, Kristjansson, Harrison, Sanderse, and Wright (2017) that define character education as "an umbrella term for explicit and implicit educational activities that help young people develop personal strengths that we call virtues." This means, teaching character education has to begin as early as possible to a child, especially at their golden age. Children will know the ethics and behavior of what they should and should not do in the society, and this will develop virtues that are good for the their individual and society.

Bialik, Bogan, Fadel, and Horvathova (2015) also mention six essential character qualities framework that a person must have that are mindfulness, curiosity, courage, resilience, ethics, and leadership. The table below describes those six framework.

Top Qualities	Associated Qualities and Concepts
Mindfulness	wisdom, self-awareness, self-management, self-actualization, observation, reflection, consciousness, compassion, gratitude,

Top Qualities	Associated Qualities and Concepts
	empathy, caring, growth, vision, insight, equanimity, happiness, presence, authenticity, listening, sharing, interconnectedness, interdependence, oneness, acceptance, beauty, sensibility, patience, tranquillity, balance, spirituality, existentiality, social awareness, cross-cultural awareness, etc
Curiosity	Open-mindedness, exploration, passion, self-direction, motivation, initiative, innovation, enthusiasm, wonder, appreciation, spontaneity etc
Courage	bravery, determination, fortitude, confidence, risk taking, persistence, toughness, zest, optimism, inspiration, energy, vigour, zeal, cheerfulness, humour etc.
Resilience	Perseverance, grit, tenacity, resourcefulness, spunk, self-discipline, effort, diligence, commitment, self-control, self-esteem, confidence, stability, adaptability, dealing with ambiguity, flexibility, feedback, etc.
Ethics	Benevolence, humaneness, integrity, respect, justice, equity, fairness, kindness, altruism, inclusiveness, tolerance, acceptance, loyalty, honesty, truthfulness, authenticity, genuineness, trustworthiness, decency, consideration, forgiveness, virtue, love, helpfulness, generosity, charity, devotion, belonging, civic-mindedness, citizenship, equality, etc.
Leadership	responsibility, abnegation, accountability, dependability, reliability, conscientiousness, selflessness, humbleness, modesty, relationship skills, self-reflection, inspiration, organization, delegation, mentorship, commitment, heroism, charisma, followership, engagement, leading by example, goal-orientation, focus, results orientation, precision, execution, efficiency, negotiation, consistency, socialization, social intelligence, diversity, decorum, etc.

This was taken from Bialik, Bogan, Fadel, and Horvathova (2015)

Similar to the traits above, Indonesian curriculum (Curriculum 2013) also provides the values of building character education for the learners. Based on Indonesian Government Guidelines of Implementation of Character Education (2011), there are 18 values that must be implemented. They are are deduced from religion, Pancasila, culture, and national education objectives, i.e. 1) religiousness, 2) honesty, 3) tolerance, 4) discipline, 5) hard work, 6) creativity, 7) independence, 8) democracy, 9) curiosity, 10) spirit of nationality, 11) nationalism, 12 achievement appreciation, 13) friendliness/communicativeness, 14) love of peace, 15) love reading, 16) environmental care, 17) social care, and 18) responsibility. From these values, the teachers can decide on the values that fit in with their lesson plans in accordance with the basic and core competencies that they taught.

CHARACTER EDUCATION AND ITS IMPORTANCE AT INDONESIAN SCHOOLS

Reinforcing character education is a foremost key in building a child's personality. It needs to be applied in schools and social environments. Basically, education has a goal to help people to be intelligent and make them grow to be good people. Character education, as one of good ways to hinder teenagers from negative effects is being neglected nowadays. Even though it is stated in the curriculum, the implementation in school area is not successful yet. There are still many cases of students who act inappropriate behaviour inside and outside school. Agustian (2018) wrote in the news that currently Indonesian culture has been worsen. Most of young generation lose politeness in adressing people who are older than them. They try to immitate Western culture that address people's name directly to older people. It is normally accepted in their culture but it is considered rude and impolite in Indonesia. Then, he also said that teenagers these days like to use sexy clothes which is not acceptable in Eastern culture.

Moreover, Putra (2019) reported a death incident acted by a junior high school student to his teacher at Madura. The teacher was trying to warn him not to smoke in the classroom, but the student got angry. Then, he fought and hit the teacher hardly which then cause death on his brainstem. Another case informed by Junaidi (2019) who additionally explained a bullying done by junior high school students in Kalimantan because of fighting for a boyfriend. These lack of morality that have occurred might be because they are watching more television and are being exposed to more and more adult-oriented materials. At the same time, this give them mixed messages about the importance of good character.

Since a good character cannot build instantly, it takes time and needs support from the circumstances. There is a process that someone should have and experience. Family, teachers, and environment will shape the future character of a person. Therefore, they should know the importance of implementing character education in order to create a good young generation. Teacher as the second parent take an important part in shaping students' character because most of the time students spent are at school. Pala (2012) describes 10 benefits that teacher brings to his students if he instils students' character values, such as:

1. It will assist students to develop important human qualities like integrity, persistence, sympathy, manner, and bravery, and make them understand the importance to live by them.

2. It will foster the development of students' character through the exploration of ethical issues across the curriculum.

3. It will create a good harmony among students, teachers and staff, parents, and communities.

4. It will teach the students in solving problems and obstacles in life justly, make a safer and more favourable school that is no longer dealing with bullying, anxiety and cruelty.

5. It will not only enrich students' minds, but also nurture their hearts.

6. It will create a caring, safe, and successful school environment where students realize the importance of virtues.

7. It will educate the students about the principles of how they can turn out to be a successful and productive citizen.

8. It will build an integrated civilization that supports and challenges students and adults to struggle for a better life.

9. It will create schools that students feel secure since they are in a good atmosphere that respect virtues, responsibility and kind-heartedness, not

because of a guard or metal detector is put up at the door.

10. It will teach adults and students to appreciate, engage in, respect, and take action on core ethical values for self and others in school and as part of a larger society.

In addition, Agboola and Tsai (2012) say that by instilling character values in classroom, it will increase students' achievement in academic skills, make fewer suspension for students like dropout, and minimize risk behaviours caused by students. When students have a good defence for themselves, they will not be easily get influenced by other bad behaviours that can harm them.

SOME WAYS TO REINFORCE CHARACTER EDUCATION IN EFL CLASS

Teachers as the agents to facilitate knowledge at school must be aware of reinforcing 18 character values that are stated in curriculum 13 in designing their lesson plan. Especially English teachers who are closely dealing with western culture that nowadays influence people's life styles. They must be able to transfer information well particularly in explaining the different culture between Indonesia and western. The process of sorting out the culture becomes a big duty for them as English teachers so that the cultural identity of Indonesian can be maintained and will not be vanished. There are many ways in instilling character values in English subject. Putri, Harto, and Moecharam (2017) explain that teachers can use children's literature as media to educate students' character particularly in teaching narrative text. This text contains moral and social values, beliefs, customs, and local wisdom. Hence, the students are required to find the messages and to recognize the

differences between good and bad characteristics presented in the story. By doing so, it is hoped that the students will carry those values in their real life.

Ratin (2017) argue that cooperative learning can also be used to incorporate character education in EFL class. Some activities can be elaborated in the classroom as well as by asking students to do a pair work or group work. The students can participate and engage in the process of teaching and learning. When their friends do not know about the topic, they can ask their friends who have already mastered it. Likewise, the students who are good at that topic will share their knowledge and experience to them. This will definitely be very fruitful for them as it can increase their social skills.

Additionally, Wiyaka, Lestari and Susanto (2019) say that mini-drama performance can also foster students' traits. It is stated that performing a drama in English class might be one of best ways in activating and involving students' participation. There will be some characters played in the stage and watched by people. The students could engage in the story with their characters and the audience could catch the moral values contained in the mini-drama. Hopefully, it can promote empathy with the ideas, attitudes and feelings of others, encourage students' creativity, help students to solve problems in life, gain a healthy relationship among other students, and nurture unity and diversity in the class.

Incorporating character education should start from the beginning until the end of teaching and learning process. Doing praying before the teachers teach English lesson will also remind students of God and this could make them be grateful of what they have. The teachers might also let the students develop their character traits such as honesty,

dicipline, hard work, creativity, independence, and responsibility in doing task and homework; care, kindness, and tolerance in discussing with friends; and respect, nationalism, and patriotisms in teaching texts that provide local heroes as media. These are all can be applied in the topics taught in the EFL classroom

CONCLUSION

Building character education is not a simple matter. It needs support from every element in person's circumstances including family, schools, and environment. When one of them do not work as it should be, then it will impact to someone's behaviour. Teacher, as one of the role models for the students takes a big part in shaping their behaviour. Consequently, it is a must for him to make a big effort to reinforce character values in the process of teaching and learning inside and outside the classroom. English teachers who commonly teach students about Western culture has a responsibility to find best ways in preventing Westernization that is now prevalently followed by young generation. Furthermore, they also should be precluded from bad behaviour and morality that are caused by wrong environment. The threatening effects must be avoided as early as possible in an attempt to create a good civilization.

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