

ELT Teacher Strategies in Implementing Character Education

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Abstract

This qualitative research was conducted to analyze the teacher strategies in implementing character education in English learning. The subject of the research was active students at Eighth Grade and an English teacher of SMP Negeri 5 Kalis in the Academic Year of 2020/2021. The sample was selected using a purposeful sampling technique. The technique of data collection applied in this research were documentation, observation, and interview. Documentation was used to get data from the lesson plan. The observation was used to get data in the process of teaching and learning activities to know about the implementation of character education. Meanwhile, an interview was conducted with English teachers to get more information about teachers' strategies in implementing character education. Based on the results of documentation, observations, and interviews, it can be concluded that the English teacher has implemented character education. The implementation strategies of character education that teachers use are role models, habits, assignments, discussions, cooperation, punishments, or rewards, as well as linking life values with the material being studied.

Keywords: teaching strategies, implementation of character education, English language teaching based on the character value

INTRODUCTION

Character education is the process of instilling moral ideals in students to help them grow into knowledgeable and characterful individuals (Muslich, 2011:84). Character education, on the other hand, is the process of developing good habits in students so that they can determine between right and wrong, have sympathy and empathy, and apply them in everyday life (Mendikbud, 2011:1). Character education, on the other hand, is the process of developing character values through education. Character education is a habit that should be developed to be able to feel (affective domain) about good worth (Thresia, 2014:55). Character education is a particular curriculum that must be designed to teach students about positive qualities and traits (Retnawati, *et al.* 2018: 373).

The implementation of character education in the learning process at schools is needed to deal with the current era. Developing science and technology is very rapidly make cheating and plagiarism behavior very easy to do, such as taking answers and taking other people's work easily on the internet (Koswara, 2018). Additionally, the development of social media applications such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube have allowed bullying such as putting unpleasant and offensive comments on other people's posts easier to perform.

As a result, formal, informal, and non-formal learning activities are used to carry out the character education process (Mendikbud, 2011). Educational

objectives are formulated through three dimensions, namely cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor aspects, to ensure accommodation for the development of hard skills and soft skills in the learning process in each educational unit (Zurqoni, *et al.*, 2018). It aims to strike a balance between pupils' intellectual abilities and their traits. Students who possess strong intellectual abilities but lack positive attitudes or personalities will struggle to adapt to changing circumstances. Even the learning process that only focuses on the cognitive aspect tends to make students apathetic and these students find it difficult to interact with their social environment. This is also the reason why the development of aspects of attitude or character is very important in the learning process.

The importance of good character for students is to equip them with the necessary skills to be able to overcome various challenges and problems in their social environment. By having good character, they are also expected to be able to apply these moral values in everyday life, become responsible individuals, and become good citizens (Nurhasanah and Nida, 2016). The good character should have three inseparable aspects, namely the moral aspect of knowing, the moral aspect of feeling, and the moral aspect of action (Lickona, 1991 cited in Retnawati, *et al.*, 2018: 373). This is also stated in Law Number 20 of 2003, which aims to help students develop their capacity to be faithful and believe in the One Godhead, as well as to be healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and responsible citizens. Character education is a major priority in Indonesia's 2013 curriculum.

Curriculum 2013 focuses not just on the cognitive growth of students, but also the development of their abilities (Mendikbud RI, 2013). There are 18-character components specified in the 2013 curriculum, which derive from religion, culture, and national education objectives. These characters are: 1) Religious, 2) honest, 3) tolerance, 4) discipline, 5) hard work, 6) creative, 7) independent, 8) democratic, 9) curiosity, 10) national spirit, 11) love of homeland, 12) appreciate achievements, 13) communicative, 14) love of peace, 15) environmental awareness, 17) social awareness and 18) responsibility (Indriani, 2017: 13-17). These character characteristics are demonstrated in the classroom through school culture, extracurricular activities, and the learning process (Mulyasa, 2012: 268). It can be concluded that character education takes place in all of a school's subjects. In other words, character education should be a part of all educational subjects, including English (Burret & Rusnak cited in Herawati, 2016: 2).

The implementation of character education in the process of teaching and learning English in the classroom is not something that is easily integrated, this is because each student has a different character and background (Agni, *et al.*, 2020). In this case, a teacher has an important role in integrating moral values with his students in addition to providing intellectual knowledge. The teacher is the main example for his students at school, as the behavior and habits of the teacher are often seen by his students. A teacher must also promote moral principles in every learning activity that takes place in the classroom. That supported in Law Number 14 of 2015 concerning Teachers and Lectures Articles 1 state that "teachers are educators professionals with the main task of educating, teach, guide, direct, train, assess, and evaluate participants educated informal education, education primary,

and secondary school”. As a result, a teacher must plan an effort or strategy to ensure that learning objectives are achieved. In learning, strategy is the teacher's action of considering and seeking out all available resources to be employed to accomplish the desired outcomes. For example, in learning English, teachers can give assignments to read the latest news to develop students' reading interest (Tyra, 2012:5), write short stories to develop a sense of responsibility in students (Aunurrahman, *et al.*, (2016:146), and do assignments in groups to develop democratic attitudes (Agni, *et al.*, 2020: 132).

Research on English teachers in implementing character education in the teaching and learning process has been carried out previously. Some researchers who conduct research are (Rahmi & Erlinda, 2014), this research is about how the teacher's role in building student character through the teaching and learning process in the classroom. On the other hand, other researchers also researched how to character education in lesson plans prepared by English teachers (Ratih, 2017). Then, other research is about the implementation of teacher perceptions and teacher strategies about character education in English (Agni, *et al.*, 2020). In addition, research on character education has been conducted, but it does not focus on English courses, this study shows how character education strategy and implementation in high and vocational high schools (Retnawati, *et al.*, 2018).

Based on the previous research above, all of them focus on teachers' strategies in implementing character education in the process of teaching English. Then, in previous studies, the moral values embedded in the learning process were not supported in the lesson plan or RPP. The difference between this study and the previous one is that the researcher discusses not only how the character education process occurs in the classroom, but also how English teachers incorporate moral ideals in the classroom and their lesson plans or RPP.

METHODOLOGY

This research used a descriptive qualitative research design to analyze teachers' strategies in implementing character education to students. Descriptive research aims to describe the existing phenomena, both natural and human engineering which pay more attention to the characteristics, quality, and linkages between activities (Sukmadinata, 2011:73). The researcher is a planner, implementer of data collection, analysis, interpretation of data, and writer of research reports in qualitative descriptive research, which explains or provides an overview of the item under study as a direct source and research instrument itself.

This study was conducted at SMP Negeri 5 Kalis, Kapuas Hulu, West Kalimantan, Indonesia. The participant of this research was an English teacher and students who are selected using a purposive sampling technique. A purposive sampling technique is the chooses the subject based on certain criteria. According to Creswell & Clark (2011), purposive sampling involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with phenomenon interest.

The English teacher of SMP Negeri 5 Kalis was a collaborator in this research. The collaborators act as parties that help the researcher to collect data (Arikunto, *et al.*, 2009: 16). In this research, the task of the collaborator is to observe and share the results of observations. The form of data obtained by the researcher from the collaborator is lesson plan (RPP) and observation data with the form of teaching and learning process in the classroom. This collaboration aims to improve the objectivity and interpretation of data and reduce bias (Fraenkel, *et al.*, 2011 cited in Aunurrahman, *et al.*, 2020:6).

In this research, there are three kinds of tools that are used to collect the data from the participants namely documentation, observation, and interview. In the documentation, the researcher used a lesson plan (RPP) to analyze the teachers' strategies for implementing character education. In observation, the researcher used an observation sheet to observe the activities of research participants were implementing character education in the teaching and learning process in the classroom. Then, in this research, the researcher used the semi-structured interview as a technique of data collection. A semi-structured interview is a type of interview in which the interviewer only asks a few predetermined questions while the other questions are not planned (Rif'at, 2018).

To analyze the results of data collection from documentation and observations in the classroom, the researcher used the content analysis technique. Content analysis is a research technique to identify certain characteristics in the text systematically and objectively (Stone cited in Arafat, 2018:33). Then, the thematic analysis was analyzing the transcripts of the researchers' interview with an English teacher at SMP Negeri 5 Kalis. Thematic analysis is a way of analyzing data to identify patterns or to find themes through data collected by researchers (Braun & Clark cited in Heriyanto, 2018:318).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

First, the researcher presents the research findings from the documentation. The researcher has used a lesson plan based on a single sheet lesson plan. In the one-sheet lesson plans, there are three components, namely learning objectives, learning steps, and assessments. There are 4 lesson plans analyzed by the researcher. This is a lesson plan for students in class VIII. The following is a chart that explains the frequency of moral values in RPP English subject for students at eight grades of SMP Negeri 5 Kalis.

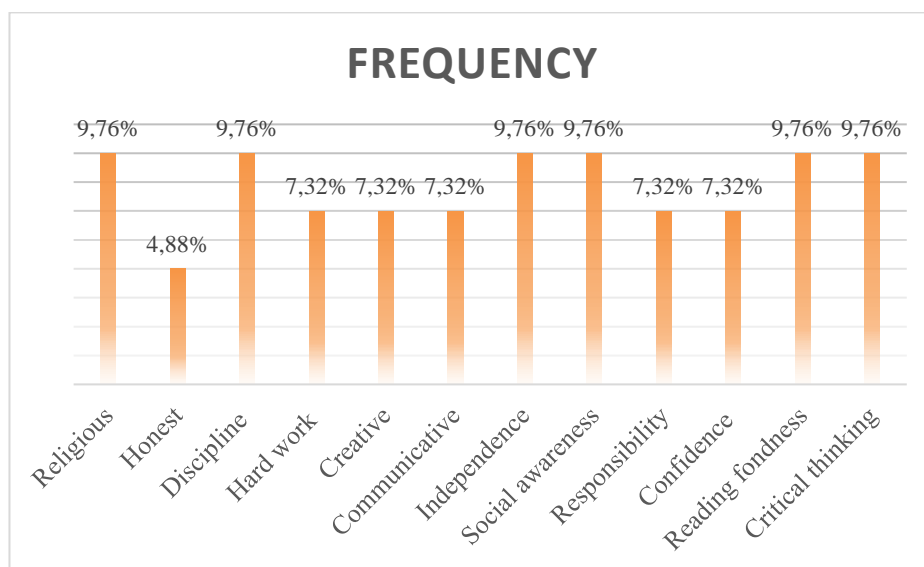


Chart 1. Percentage of Moral Values

Chart 1 shows the frequency of the 12 moral values present in the learning plan. Religious, discipline, independence, social awareness, reading fondness, and critical thinking are six moral values that frequently appear among the 12 moral values, accounting for 9.76 percent of the total. These six moral qualities were found in the four RPP examined by the researcher. Hard effort, creativity, communication, responsibility, and confidence are the other five moral values that have a percentage of 7.32 percent. Finally, honest has the lowest proportion (4.88%) and occurs only on RPP2 and RPP3.

The habit of praying before and after learning helps to develop religious moral principles. Checking the attendance of students at each meeting helps to build the moral value of discipline. The way students listen to the teacher or a friend who is speaking teaches them the value of social awareness. Meanwhile, the moral qualities of independence, hard work, honesty, and responsibility are instilled in students through practice questions or assignments, and the moral values of reading fondness and critical thinking are instilled in students through questioning and opportunities to question. Finally, those who are self-assured are allowed to display their work.

Second, observation in the classroom was conducted to determine how the implementation of character education during the teaching and learning process. The results of observation are some of the moral values of the implementation are slightly different from the lesson plans, based on the findings of the observation field notes. In the learning process, there are two moral values: love for the environment and appreciation or appreciation. Before beginning the main learning activities, participants affirm the importance of caring for the environment through a process of affirmation or motivation. Then, by awarding scores to students who

can correctly answer the questions, participants instill the value of appreciation or admiration.

The teachers' strategies in implementing character education in the learning process are with habituation, advice, assignments, punishments or rewards, orders, instructions, and linking character values with the material being studied. The habit that the participants instilled was reading prayers before and after learning. Before the main activity begins, the teacher gives advice and motivation about the values of life that must be applied. Then in the core activity, the teacher gives assignments to students wherein these activities students are trained to be independent, confident, creative, hard work, and creative. At the end of the activity, the teacher asked students to display the results of their work which trained their self-confidence. Then the teacher appreciates each student's work by giving a value as a strategy to implement the value of social awareness and achievement.

Last, the result of the interview. The interview questions are divided into five categories: strategy, implementation, moral values, advantages, and difficulties. The interview results will be presented in more detail as follows:

Strategies

The participants employ a variety of strategies to help students develop positive character traits, such as providing examples of well-dressed students, which is known as exemplary behavior (Cahyono, 2016). In addition, the participants instilled the value of environmental stewardship in kids by assigning them to clean classrooms and study outside. Participants also employ narrative, advising, and punishment strategies to help students develop positive character traits (Nurzakiyah, 2017).

Implementation

The participant builds students' character through assignments and literacy. Through assignments and literacy, students can develop an attitude of responsibility, discipline, independence, creativity, honesty, confidence, and interest in reading (Agni, *et al.*, 2020:132). It can be concluded that the process of implementing character education in classroom English learning can be done with various strategies or activities.

Character education

The participant most often instilled a disciplined, religious, caring, and confident attitude. In addition, participants also built a communicative, independent, and hard-working attitude in which students had to be confident to demonstrate their abilities.

The advantages

The application of character education conducted by the participant has a positive impact as students' academic ability is increasing. In addition, students have good behaviors that can be applied in their lives. Positive student attitudes and behavior motivate pupils to learn, resulting in improved academic performance (Agni, *et al.*, 2020).

The difficulties

The participant had some difficulty in implementing character education in the classroom. The first is a different student background and character. The students' background greatly affects his character as the student first grows up and gets the first education from his family. This difficulty can be faced by involving the parents of students in the educational process. As the Minister of Education said that parents also have an important role in the process of character education. In addition, the involvement of parents in the education process can improve academic achievement (Jhon. *et al.*, 2021). Then, the mismatch between learning material and character value is also a challenge for the participant. Therefore, a teacher must have a good understanding of innovative learning models that contribute to student character development (Apino & Retnawati, 2017).

Discussions

As a result of data analysis from documentation, observations, and interviews, various strategic kinds can be used in implementing character education in English learning such as habituation, role models, advice or tips, reward and punishment, and story-telling. These strategies can have a positive impact on the character of students, it also agrees with Thresia (2014), Zurqoni, *et al.*, (2018), Wiyani (2020), and Ubay (2019). Then, positive student attitudes and behavior motivate pupils to learn, resulting in improved academic performance (Agni, *et al.*, 2020).

Moreover, the approach that can be used is the application, and character-building can be done with learning methods such as discussion, cooperative learning, brainstorming, games, scientific approach, and learning based on a problem (Rahmi & Erlinda, 2014; Amin, 2016; & Sutikno, 2014). The method is one of the important things in the learning process and the application of moral values. The learning method can be interpreted as a method used to implement plans that have been prepared in the form of real and practical activities to achieve learning objectives.

Based on the result of research, there are 12 character values in the lesson plan and 14 in the implementation of the learning process in the classroom, out of the 18 characters values in the 2013 curriculum. All of the 12 characters values included in the lesson plan can be used in a classroom setting. Religious, Honesty, Discipline, Hard Work, Creativity, Communication, Independence, Social

Awareness, Responsibility, Confidence, Reading Interest, Critical Thinking are the 12 characters values. The other two, namely environmental appreciation and love, can be found in classroom learning activities. Then, the implementation of character education can also be done through school programs such as extracurricular activities, scouts, and flag ceremonies (Zurqoni *et al.*, 2018).

Although character education itself can have a positive impact on improving student character, researchers still find some obstacles in its implementation. The main problem found in the role and capacity of teachers where teachers have difficulty dealing with differences in character and background of students and connecting learning materials with life values. This is following the opinion of Agni *et al.* (2020) and Zurqoni *et al.* (2018) that teachers have difficulty in integrating character education in the teaching and learning process in class. The diversity of character and background makes the process of planting moral values more difficult. According to Lee (2009), this is due to the lack of sufficient cooperation between parents and teachers even though the success of character education itself depends on the family, school, and where students live (Mendikbud, 2011). Another problem that the researcher encountered was the lack of facilities in schools and school programs. This is because the school is still fairly new a few years of establishment and some school program activities cannot run well because of Covid-19.

Various efforts can be made to overcome obstacles in the implementation of character education, namely by efforts to carry out various training needed by teachers to support the implementation of the curriculum applied (Retnawati, 2017) and socialization of character education programs also need to be done to parents (Agni, *et al.*, 2020).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of documentation, observations, and interviews, it can be concluded that the English teacher has implemented character education. The implementation strategies of character education that teachers used are role models, habits, assignments, discussions, cooperation, punishments, or rewards, as well as linking life values with the material being studied. For the implementation of character education, starting from planning, namely making learning plans and implementing them in the classroom. Then, the benefits of implementing character education are to prepare individuals or the nation's successors with a character who can overcome problems and face challenges, and finally, teachers face difficulties in implementing character education, namely the character and background of different students affect their behavior in school.

Then, the 18 characters' values in the 2013 curriculum, there are only 12 moral values that can be applied in classroom learning activities. Meanwhile, other moral values can be developed through programs held in schools such as scouts, extracurriculars, and flag ceremonies.

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