

PERSPECTIVES ON TEACHING ENGLISH AND TRANSFORMING VALUES OF CHARACTER TO BROADEN STUDENTS HORIZON

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ABSTRACT

A great demand of mastering English in globalization era has made English education in Indonesia valuable and popular. Problems in classroom, quality of teachers, teaching strategies and media are a plethora of topics that have been concerns to be developed. On another front, there is an effort to shape students' character building which enables them to master social competence with the expected behavior and moral capacity. Students can be trained some certain good characters within the implementation of language teaching. By taking these two variables into account, success of learning can be achieved not only in language mastery, but also in students' character.

Keywords: character education, character teaching, English teaching

INTRODUCTION

As a nation and a state, Indonesia has its own decision and authority to create the national education system. This system is expected to become a powerful tool in producing students who reflect the country's principle (*Pancasila*); religious, humane, patriotic, democratic, and socially just. Therefore, the implementation of this idea is adjusted in the curriculum.

The government of Indonesia has officially issued a number of curricula, start from the independence year of Indonesia (1945), up to the present time. Those curricula are the 1947 curriculum, the 1952 curriculum, the 1968 curriculum, the 1975 curriculum, the 1984 curriculum, the 1994 curriculum, and the School-based curriculum (2006). Such curricula are changed time to time to meet the educational goals of each year (Cahyono & Widiati, 2011, p. 2).

Concerning with English education in the Indonesian context, it is taught as a foreign language, beginning from junior high school through the university. The competence being emphasized varies in respective year of curriculum. Cahyono and Widiati (2011, p. 13) explained that the recent one, the school-based curriculum, aims at developing students' potential to create graduates who are religious, faithful, knowledgeable, skillful, creative, innovative, autonomous, democratic, and responsible. In short, there is a demand that students are expected not only to master the language but also other competences, especially social competence.

In line with the explanation above, the government of Indonesia has declared character education concept in addition to the development of national education system. It is clearly stated in National System of Education Act Number 20/2003 chapter 3: "National education function to develop skill and shape character as well as a dignified nation's identity in order to educate the life of the nation,..." The importance of character education in the process of teaching and learning emerged because of some reasons. The first reason is to prevent Indonesian youth from the negative action such as pornography, corruption, drugs usage, bullying, violence, and others. The second one is to set students in a never ending process of education, a lifelong education in which they can take responsibility to their own learning. Indeed, whether teachers are able to teach character in the classroom setting or not, is still in question.

Consequently, English teachers in Indonesia are required not only to comprehend the theory or framework of language learning (including approach and method), but also capable to adjust character as moral values in accordance to the teaching and learning outcomes. It is important to teach the language and transform

the values of certain character become a single entity. As Kartadinata (2012) highlighted "...the best provision that given to the next generation is character education".

This paper is primarily written to give a perspective on how to teach English and set successful learning outcomes in harmony with the transformation of character values that broaden students' horizon. Therefore, this paper will discuss the fundamental theory of teaching English, the concept of character education in the Indonesian context, and implication for teaching. Relating these variables to one another, this paper aims to explore and investigate the ways in which English teaching and character transfer may in turn provide success in teaching and learning language.

The teaching of English lies on interrelation of theory and practice. As with teaching in general, language teaching can be conceptualized in various ways. Freeman (2000) outlined that the awareness of the nature of language, the nature of learning, the nature of culture, and students' need, is important as a guide of what to do in classroom.

In teaching and learning process, language has a prominent role, especially English, because it is as a means of communication. Emmit and Pollock (1997, p. 206) mentioned that "Language is central to learning. Learning is central to teaching." This means that language is used either as medium of instruction or the subject being learned and language learning is a focus of teaching.

Concept of Character Education in Indonesian Context

There are some definitions of character. First of all, character as traits that attributed to individual. Character as a trait of individual can be shaped. It means that individual might be changed. Although trait has internal factor that every people must be different, trait is strongly affected by external factor such as family and environment (Adisusilo, 2012, p. 76). Another opinion according to Lickona (2012, p. 82) character has three interrelated part; moral knowledge, moral feeling, and moral behavior. A good character consists of knowing good things, willing good things,

and doing good things. So character here is a value to conduct. Moreover, based on Indonesian dictionary, character is psychological trait, moral, or manner which differentiate people one another. Next opinion according to Malik (2012, p. 10) character education is “the composite of those psychological characteristics that impact the child’s capacity and tendency to be effective moral agent, to be socially and personally responsible, ethical, and self-managed”. To sum up, a good character education must involve the aspects of moral knowing and moral feeling, to achieve a moral action (Ministry of National Education, 2011). Character is related to moral which substituted with particular individual’s durable qualities.

Character education is not totally a new tradition in Indonesian education because the founding fathers of this country have tried to apply the spirit of character education as a foundation for national identity and integrity in accordance with the context and situation (Koesoema, 2007, p. 46). The concept of character can imply a variety of attributes including the existence or lack of virtues such as integrity, courage, fortitude, honesty, and loyalty, or good behaviors or habits. The former of Indonesian country, Soekarno as well as Mohamad Said from Taman Siswa, St. Takdir, and Soedjatmoko once sounded the importance of character building for the people of Indonesia. What they meant by character building is character education for students that is how to educate students in school, so they are not only smart but also well behaved (Buchori, 2007).

In the National System of Education Act Number 20/2003, some points need to be taken into account concerning with character education concept. Those points are as the following.

1. Definition of education as defined in National System of Education Act Number 20/2003:

“Education is a conscious and deliberate effort to create the atmosphere of learning and learning process so that learners are actively developing their potential to have **strong of religious spirit, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skill** that are needed by themselves, as well as by the society, the nation, and the country”.

“Pendidikan adalah usaha sadar dan terencana untuk mewujudkan suasana belajar dan proses pembelajaran agar peserta didik secara aktif mengem-

bangkan potensi dirinya untuk memiliki kekuatan spiritual keagamaan, pengendalian diri, kepribadian, kecerdasan, akhlak mulia, serta kerampilan yang diperlukan dirinya, masyarakat, bangsa dan negaranya."

2. In Chapter II Article 3 explained that:

"National education functions to **develop skill and shape character** as well as a dignified nation's identity in order to educate the life of the nation, aims at developing learners' potential so that they **become faithful and pious human to God the almighty one, having noble character, healthy, knowledgeable, skillful, creative, independent, and become democratic as well as responsible citizens"**.

"Pendidikan nasional berfungsi mengembangkan kemampuan dan membentuk watak serta peradaban bangsa, bertujuan untuk berkembangnya potensi peserta didik agar menjadi manusia yang beriman dan bertakwa kepada Tuhan Yang Maha Esa, berakhlak mulia, sehat, berilmu, cakap, kreatif, mandiri, dan menjadi warga Negara yang demokratis serta bertanggung jawab".

3. In Chapter X about curriculum, Article 36, Point (3) mentioned that:

"Curriculum is based on levels of education within the framework of Unitary Republic of Indonesia with regard to (a) **improvement of faith and god-fearing; (b) improvement of noble character; (c) improvement of potential, intelligence, and interest of learners;** (d) improvement of regional and local potential; (e) variability of regional and national development; (f) demands of workplace; (g) development of science, technology, and art; (h) religion; (i) dynamics of global development; and (j) national unity and national values.

"Curriculum disusun sesuai dengan jenjang pendidikan dalam rangka Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia dengan memperhatikan: (a) peningkatan iman dan takwa; (b) peningkatan akhlak mulia; (c) peningkatan potensi, kecerdasan, dan minat peserta didik; (d) keragaman potensi daerah dan lingkungan; (e) tuntutan pembangunan daerah dan nasional; (f) tuntutan dunia kerja; (g) perkembangan ilmu pengetahuan, teknologi, dan seni; (h) agama; (i) dinamika perkembangan global; dan (j) persatuan nasional dan nilai-nilai kebangsaan.

It is clear to conclude that, the three points above highlight that character education has been conceptualized in the National System of Education, for instance the objective of national education emphasizes the character "faithfull and pious to God the almighty one". Similarly, the curriculum also takes into account the improvement of faith and pious to God the almighty, the improvement of noble character, and an obligation to take religion course beginning from primary school up to higher education. It shows the consistency if the government of Indonesia to make the concept of character education in line with the education act.

In addition to the explanation above, The Ministry of Education and Culture Republic of Indonesia (2011) explained that “Character education is an effort to develop character of the nation”. True character cannot be achieved by listening to someone explains what it is. Rather, it is something each individual must find on his/her own. Character needs to be built up from relationships with family and school. Therefore, National Research and Development Board of Curriculum narrows character education in 18 terms which have to be implemented in the teaching and learning process. Look at the table below.

Table 1: Specific Terms of Character Education in the Indonesian Context

Terms of Trait	Notes
Religious	Attitude and behavior to be adherence to religion command, tolerance to other religions, and living in harmony with other religions
Honest	Attitude and behavior to make themselves to be an individual who can be trusted in word, action, and work
Tolerant	Attitude and behavior to respect religion, race, ethnic, opinion differences
Discipline	Attitude and behavior to behave orderly and obedient to various rules and regulations
Hard working	Attitude and behavior that showed a willingness to seriously solve the obstacle of learning and task
Creative	Think and do something to produce a process or a new product of what already exist
Independent	Attitude and behavior that are not easily depend on other people in doing task
Democratic	Way of thinking, behaving, and conducting that judge the right and obligation of himself the same as others
Curious	Attitude and behavior that always try to explore something deeper and wider of what being learned, seen, and listened
Nationalist	The way of thinking, behaving, and having conception that put the interest of the nation and the state over the interest of himself and his group

Patriotic	The way of thinking, behaving, and conducting that showed high loyalty, awareness, and appreciation to the language, physical environment, social, culture, economic, politic, and the nation
Appreciate the achievement	Attitude and behavior that encourage himself to produce something useful for the society as well as acknowledged and respected the achievement of other people
Communicative/ Friendly	Attitude and behavior that showed a pleasure to speak, socialize, and cooperate with others
Pacifist	Attitude, word, and action that make others feel happy and secure of his existence
Love reading	A habit to provide time to read any reading material that give good virtue to himself
Care for the environment	Attitude and behavior that always try to prevent damage to the environment and develop an effort of solving environmental damage
Social care	Attitude and behavior of having a willingness to help other people
Responsible	Attitude and behavior of having awareness of what he is doing and taking a risk of it

The eighteen terms of character above are the ideal trait to be implemented as character education. It must be appeared in every single process of learning; in preparing the lesson, implementation, and evaluation of learning. School as formal institution of education must give a positive contribution to the learners and the moral of this nation (Lickona, 2012, p. 7).

Islamic Perspective on Character Education

Religion plays a major role in shaping character of human. Because character education is associated with various terms, it is necessary to discuss the definition from the perspective of religion. In this paper, the discussion of character education based on Islamic perspective is discovered by exploring character according to Al-Qur'an.

In line with the explanation above, Al-Quran has a number of visions related to character education such as in *Surah Annur* (The Light: 30-31); *Al-Ahzab* (The Confederates: 33); *Al-Israa'* (The Journey by Night: 23); *At-Taubah* (The Repentance: 119); *Ali Imran* (The Family of Imran: 133-134), which explain about attitude, behavior, self-esteem, and honesty.

“Tell the believing men to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts). That is purer from them. Verily, Allah is All-Aware of what they do”. [*Surah Annur* (The Light): 30].

“And stay in your houses, and do not display yourselves like that of the times of ignorance, and perform As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat), and give Zakat and obey Allah and His messenger. Allah wishes to remove Ar-Rijs (evil deeds and sins) from you, O members of the family (of the Prophet peace be upon Him), and to purify you with a thorough purification”. [*Surah Al-Ahzab* (The Confederates): 33].

“And your Lord has decreed that your worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If none of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, not shout at them but address them in terms of honor. [*Surah Al-Israa'* (The Journey by Night): 23].

“O you who believe! Be afraid of Allah, and be with those who are true (in words and deeds). [*Surah At-Taubah* (The Repentance): 119].

“And march forth in the way (which leads to) forgiveness from your Lord, and for Paradise as wide as the heavens and the earth, prepared for Al-Muttaqun. Those who spend (in Allah’s cause) in prosperity and adversity, who repress anger, and who pardon men; verily, Allah loves Al-Muhsinin (the good doers). [*Surah Ali Imran* (The Family of Imran): 133-134].

The paragraph above explain that Al-Qur’an lead people who believe to live in a good conduct and attitude for themselves, for other people, for other creatures, and for environment. Character in Al-Qur’an is a basis of dignity. A good person with a good character will be a part of a good society as well (Hafidhuddin, 2012, p. 68).

The terms of character as explained in Table 1 is in harmony with Islamic perspective on how character being taught and learned. In addition, these terms are similar to the terms used to describe virtues listed by Lickona, Schaps, & Lewis, (2007), in their Character Education Partnership (CEP) document which defines character from psychological view. They list caring, honesty, fairness, responsibility,

and respect as the core virtues for developing good character. No doubt to conclude that the teaching of character in the Indonesian context has been in line with religious, social-cultural, and psychological points of view.

How does Character Emerge in English Classroom?

When teaching language, teachers are also expected to teach students about social context that shape character building of the students. How the teaching of language can promote and shape character building? Jacobs and Farrell (2003) suggest that learning is not an individual, private activity, but a social one that depends upon interaction with others. By this interaction, students gain interpersonal skill as well as learn to respect others. In language teaching, this means that students do not learn language for its own sake but in order to develop and apply their thinking skills in situations that go beyond the language classroom.

In addition, learners learn in different ways and have different strengths. Teaching needs to take these differences into account rather than try to force students into a single mold. So what does teacher need to do in order to be successful in teaching language and in shaping students' character? Firstly the teacher should understand that effective character education is not adding or setting program to school. Rather, it is a transformation of the culture and life of the school (Berkowitz & Bier, 2006). Good character consists of knowing the good, desiring the good and doing the good (Lickona, 1991, p. 51).

Moreover, Lickona (2012, pp. 111-136), explained teachers' role in integrating the teaching of English and transforming the values of character, as the following.

1. Teacher as a merciful person. The teacher respects the students, helps them to reach success in school, builds their self-confident, and makes them understand what is moral with good ethic
2. Teacher as a model. The teacher is an ethical person, showing respect to others and responsible both in class and outside the classroom.

3. Teacher as a mentor. The teacher gives instruction based on a certain character/moral and guides through explanation, class discussion, storytelling, personal motivation enforcement, and constructive feedback.

Meanwhile, in teaching language, the teacher can use a number of strategies or method to train students both the language and character. For example, the use of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) which carries the theoretical framework of Communicative Approach (Brown, 2012, p. 121), is appropriate to be applied. The aim of communicative language teaching is to enable students to communicate in the target language. Communication requires that students perform certain function within a social context such as inviting, promising, declining invitation etc. In short, it is important to understand when and how to say what to whom. Implementing CLT in classroom is not only to enhance the ability of mastering content subject but also to foster and maintain character which is transformed from culture and school. Students should understand the knowledge of forms, meanings, and functions. They must use this knowledge and take into consideration the social situation in order to convey their intended meaning (Brown, 2002, p. 131).

Another method that can be applied is Cooperative Learning Method. Cooperative Learning is a method that engages students in group or to work cooperatively to achieve the learning objective. They share information and help their friend's problem in group or pair (Brown, 2007, p. 53). This method can improve not only students' cognitive ability, but also students' social competence, tolerance, and self-esteem. Besides, it can train students' critical thinking, problem solving, and integrating the knowledge and skill (Adisusilo, 2012, p. 113). This method has a number of variations such as Jigsaw, One Stay Two Stray, Group Discussion, Think Pair Share, Three Steps Interview, etc. However, there is a greater flexibility for teacher to choose the appropriate technique that suit to learning objective.

To sum up, the teacher might select the use of various strategies in teaching and learning English. What should be considered is how to integrate the focus of leaning with the transformation of values of character. For example, if the language focus is transactional function such as inviting, introducing, expressing feeling, and

the culture judgment is in Western context, so teacher must think how to include certain trait such as honesty, friendliness, democracy, or curiosity in the process of learning. This integration is illustrated as follows.

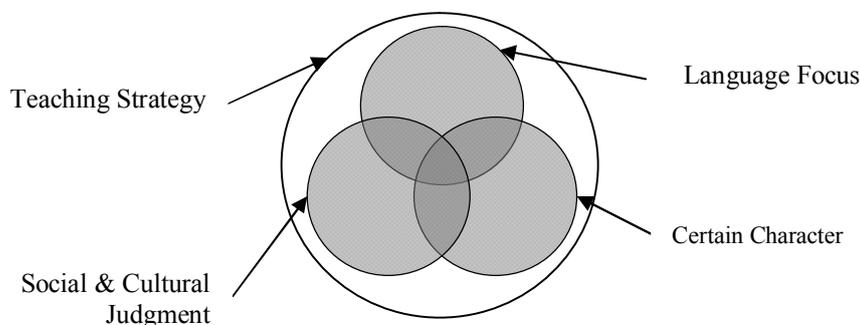


Figure 1: The Formulation of Character Education in Language Teaching

From Figure 1 above; the teaching can be illustrated as the following points. Firstly, the language focus determined in teaching writing for eleventh grade of senior high school students are as follows: (1) using grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, and writing rules accurately, (2) elaborating of the main idea, and (3) making draft, revising, and editing. For that focus, the material to be taught is "Advertisement and Invitation". The next step is determining the character or personal trait that students should acquire, for example "Religious, Creative, Care for Environment, and Communicative". After that, teacher should think about social and cultural judgment being made. In this part, language learners need to be aware, for example, of the culturally appropriate ways to address people, express gratitude, make requests, and agree or disagree with someone. They should know that behaviors and intonation patterns that are appropriate in their own speech community may be perceived differently by members of the target language speech community. They have to understand that, in order for communication to be successful, language use must be associated with other culturally appropriate behavior.

Final step, strategy of teaching as a much broader concept that is inherently tied to many of the linguistic concepts taught in foreign language classes, should be determined. For example, in this case "Write-Pair-Share" as part of "Cooperative Learning Method" is used. Teacher should make sure that the strategy chosen is ap-

appropriately matched with the material being taught. It is important to avoid mislead teaching and learning activities.

Using authentic sources from the English native speaker helps to engage students in authentic character experiences. Sources can include films, news broadcasts, and television shows; Web sites; and photographs, magazines, newspapers, restaurant menus, travel brochures, and other printed materials. Teachers can adapt the authentic materials to suit the age and language proficiency level of the students. For example, even beginning language students can watch and listen to video clips taken from a television show in the target language and focus on such cultural conventions as greetings. The teacher might supply students with a detailed translation or give them a chart, diagram, or outline to complete while they listen to a dialogue or watch a video. After the class has viewed the relevant segments, the teacher can engage the students in discussion of the cultural norms represented in the segments and what these norms might say about the values of the culture.

CONCLUSION

The teaching of language especially English can be integrated with the teaching of social competence. This social competence includes the teaching of certain traits which shape student's character for their success. Based on National Research and Development Board of Curriculum, Republic of Indonesia, there are 18 terms of traits in the concept of character education. They are religious, honest, tolerant, disciplined, hardworking, creative, independent, democratic, curious, nationalist, patriotic, appreciate the achievement, communicative/ friendly, pacifist, love reading, care for the environment, social care, and responsible.

Those characters are in line with the religion point of view particularly Islam. As the source of guide for Muslim, in Al-Qur'an, there are a number of Surah that explain about character such as in *Surah Annur* (The Light: 30-31); *Al-Ahzab* (The Confederates: 33); *Al-Israa'* (The Journey by Night: 23); *At-Taubah* (The Repent-

ance: 119); *Ali Imran* (The Family of Imran: 133-134), which explain about attitude, behavior, self-esteem, and honesty.

Finally, to integrate the teaching of English with the transformation of character, the teacher can use various approaches or methods for instance Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Cooperative Learning, and many others. Character building and language competence must be the focus of teaching. Therefore, it must be stated clearly in the goal or learning; what to achieve, in the process of learning, and in the evaluation. Once a teacher can make it happen in the teaching of English, the character itself will forever broaden students' horizon.

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