

Incorporating Character Values in English Class Through Mini-drama Performance

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the result of a small-scale research which was aimed to find out a model of incorporating character values in English classroom of elementary schools. The government is now campaigning character education that should be incorporated in all subjects through direct and indirect teaching. For subjects such as English, character values need not be taught directly in class, but they are infused during the process of teaching and learning. The question arose among the teachers is how to incorporate character values in the subjects of which content is not particularly set to teaching moral values. The proposed model in this study is by using mini drama performance. The research took place at 4 elementary schools (ES) in Semarang municipality, consisting of 3 public schools and 1 private school. The data were collected from observation and interview with the teachers. The field notes and the results of interview were analyzed descriptively to portray the existing model of teaching English in general, and teaching character values in particular.

Keywords: English teaching, elementary schools, character values, mini-drama performance

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini menampilkan hasil dari sebuah penelitian berskala kecil yang bertujuan untuk menemukan metode pendidikan karakter dalam mata pelajaran Bahasa Inggris di sekolah dasar melalui penampilan minidrama. Pemerintah saat ini sedang mengkampanyekan pendidikan karakter atau sikap yang dimasukkan ke dalam semua mata pelajaran, termasuk Bahasa Inggris. Pertanyaan yang muncul di kalangan para guru adalah bagaimana cara mengajarkan nilai-nilai karakter secara inklusif ke dalam semua mata pelajaran yang ada. Pada mata pelajaran Bahasa Inggris, salah satu teknik yang digunakan adalah melalui pementasan drama. Penelitian ini dilakukan di 4 sekolah dasar (SD) di kota Semarang, yang terdiri dari sekolah dasar negeri dan swasta. Data dikumpulkan melalui pengamatan dan wawancara dengan para guru untuk menggambarkan model pengajaran Bahasa Inggris secara umum, serta pengajaran nilai-nilai karakter pada khususnya pada saat pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris.

Kata kunci: pengajaran bahasa Inggris, nilai-nilai karakter, pementasan drama mini

INTRODUCTION

Character values education is now getting much attention in education context because the 2013 Indonesia curriculum brings about a different perspective in the evaluation. The learning outcomes are not only oriented to cognitive competence, but also to skills and attitudes. The 2013 curriculum offers integrative thematic concept applied to elementary, junior high, high school, and vocational school. The changes in the Indonesian educational system curriculum is an absolute necessity because of the fact that right now many students don't have character, tolerance for others, empathy for others (Kompas, 11/4/2012). The need for augmentation was in response to concern that students were becoming overwhelmed with the workload, and that instances of student violence were increasing as a consequence. Government officials asserted that students needed to learn how to become better citizens and that it could only be achieved by instilling character and a greater sense of morality. Gay (2005) has warned us about the necessity for teaching character values because of the effects on society when there is no morality guiding student's actions

Character values are not taught as separate subjects in the school curriculum, but they are to be incorporated or infused in all subjects including English. English in Indonesia is regarded as a foreign language. Even though English can be accessed easily in various media, the language is rarely used in daily social communication. This is to say that Indonesia's English learners have relatively less language input from surroundings and limited interlocutors for its learners to practice the language with. Even, the English teacher talks in the students' native language rather than in English. EFL instructors, therefore, play a crucial role in providing their students with a fun situation in learning so that pupils get interested in learning the foreign language in a non-threatening atmosphere.

EFL teacher should provide appropriate materials, methods, models or whatever which can facilitate the pupils to acquire the language, at the same time he/she has to incorporate the moral values to students. The calls for the incorporation of moral education into school curricula have attracted the attention of educators in English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Shaaban (2005) proposes a framework for the implementation of teaching moral values in EFL/EFL. The process includes tentative issues/themes, language skills, learning outcomes, methods of instruction and evaluation, materials and resources, and instructional activities. Another model of incorporating character values in English class is offered by Tamayo (2015). He found that cooperative learning activities could promote human values in English classroom.

Apart from the two models above, this research was conducted to seek the feasibility of using another technique, that is, *minidrama performance*. This technique is actually not new to teachers and the activities in this technique are not complicated to plan. However, this method is rarely done in English classrooms. By applying the technique, teachers can cultivate the students language skills and at the same time can nurture character values to students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Character is a term which refers to values of kindness which are applied in behavior. Lickona (2004) defines a person who has character as a natural trait of a person in responding a situation with moral standard, manifested in good attitudes; honesty, responsibility, respect to other people, and so forth. Matera 2001 as quoted by Gray (2010) defines character as understanding, caring about, and acting upon core ethical values such as respect, responsibility, honesty, fairness, and caring. If we want students to make good judgments, it can only come as a result of good character. That implies that implanting values of what is good or bad forms a strong character.

There should be no debate on whether or not character values should be taught to students besides academics. As what Lickona (1992), author of *Educating for Character*, states, "Moral education is not a new idea. It is, in fact, as old as education itself". This means that education which sometimes identical to academics, should not be separated from moral education. Further Lickona says that education must be directed to two great goals: to help young people become smart, and to help them become good. This is in line with what Martin Luther King Jr. said that intelligent is not enough; intelligent plus character is the goal of true education.

The education goal in any country in the world is to equip the graduates with intellectual as well as moral values. However, it does not mean that character education must stand by itself as a separate subject; it can be taught through the infusion of good characters in any subjects at schools. To the extreme point, good character cannot be taught actually. It can only be best nurtured through examples and models from the people surroundings. Thus, the principal, teachers, administrative staff and the others involved in education must become models of good citizen at schools. And the result of character education cannot be traced in a short term; it takes sustained process of assessment.

The intentional teaching of good character is particularly important in today's society since our youth face many opportunities and dangers unknown to earlier generations. They are bombarded with many more negative. This is in line with the awareness from the government to put serious attention on character building. Act of National Education System (UU Sisdiknas) year 2003 states that one of the goals of national education is to develop students' potency in order to have intelligence, personality, and good values. It is strengthened in the new curriculum 2013 that the learning outcomes cover not only cognitive aspects, but skills and attitudes. The new curriculum could be used to improve religious tolerance as education should not only make people smart but also to train Indonesians to be mentally tough, physically healthy, tolerant and willing to live in harmony with others with different religions, race, and tribes. We are educating people not only to make them smart but also to produce Indonesians who are mentally tough, physically healthy, tolerant and willing to live in harmony with others of different religion, race, and tribe. That's why the orientation of the education in national level needs changing. Curriculum 2013 is

aimed at equipping learners with knowledge, skill and attitudes. One of the ultimate goal of this new curriculum is to improve the moral and character of the students.

In Indonesia, English is a foreign language. It has become compulsory subject taught in junior and senior high schools all over the country. Beginning from 1994 revised curriculum, Ministry of Education then has allowed elementary schools to include English as a subject for students of grade four, five, and six. However, because of limited budget and the shortage of the teachers, only government primary schools in urban areas and private schools hold English lessons. The students of primary or elementary schools in rural areas do not learn English. However, the English teaching in primary level is usually directed to learning about grammar and vocabulary. Not much time is devoted to get much exposure in English. The learners have much less opportunities to be exposed to the language they want to learn than children who acquire their first language in a natural way. That is why Harmer (2007) suggests that “a rich classroom environment should not only expose students to language, but also give them opportunities to activate their language knowledge and to study language and the way it works”. In other words, both acquisition and learning should be provided to language learners because they both play an important role in the process of the second language learning and teaching.

There are some methods that can be used in teaching a foreign language. Traditional methods of foreign language teaching, such as frontal teacher centred instruction, are nowadays viewed as a relic. Today’s methodology admonishes to be engaging, to keep the students focused, but let them enjoy, and therefore like, their education at the same time. As Maley and Duff in Křivková (2011) claim: “Much has changed in language teaching, but it is still true that the conviction that Vocabulary + Essential Structures = Language lies as the base of nearly every foreign language syllabus”). Teaching English at elementary schools in Indonesia is typical to that claim. Class begins with the teachers’ greeting in mother tongue language, only sometimes in English, and the students give response in their mother tongue. Then, the teacher presents a grammatical pattern the students have to understand. All explanation is in bahasa Indonesia. When the teacher tries to use English, the students get reluctant to respond just because they do not understand the language. The class continues with exercises on language form, i.e, converting sentences from positive to negative, from active to passive, or the like. How the language is used is rarely exposed to students. By this condition, of course, it is hard to imagine how to incorporate character values to students. There must be methods feasible for teaching character values in English class.

Although drama is still seen as something rather alternative to the standard, it has been an essential part of foreign language teaching for centuries. Using drama in the language class provides students with the best opportunities for active and involved participation and as Hamilton (1993: 2) states: “The use of drama techniques fits naturally into the theoretical context of recent studies into the nature of language learning.”

In relation to the techniques of using drama, Scrivener (2005) mentions six most commonly used drama activities in English Languages Teaching classes, stating that

“by bringing the outside world into the classroom, we can provide a lot of useful practice and there may also be a freeing from the constraints of culture and expected behaviour, which can be personally and linguistically very liberating.” Scrivener describes the most traditional drama activities as follows:

1. “Role-play – students act small scenes using their ideas or from ideas and information on role cards.
2. Simulation – a large-scale role-play. The intention is to create a much more complete, complex ‘world’, say of a business company, television studio, etc.
3. Drama games – short games that usually involve movement and imagination.
4. Guided improvisation – you improvise a scene and the students join in one by one in character, until the whole scene (story) takes on a life on its own.
5. Acting play scripts – short written sketches or scenes are acted by the students.
6. Prepared improvised drama – students in small groups invent and rehearse a short scene or story that they perform for the others.” (Scrivener, 2005: 263)

Among those types it seems that type number 1, the role play, is feasible to do in the classroom considering that it does not need much time to preparation, and it is not costly. What the teacher has to do is preparing the teaching scenario considering values to be nurtured while mini drama is being performed by students. Besides, a rubric of character assessment should be made to measure the learning outcomes.

METHOD

This study was based on a research which applied the steps in R and D (Research and Development), adopted from Borg, Gall and Gall (2003). To simplify the process, the approach comprises of three stages; exploration study, drafting model, and implementing the model. However, this study is qualitative in nature, without any numeric computation of the data because all the data are those of qualitative. This is in line with the objectives of this research i.e. to investigate the teachers’ practice of incorporating character values in their daily teaching and to facilitate teachers with methods of teaching character values using minidrama performance.

In the exploration study, the informative data were collected through questionnaires and interview with the teachers in elementary schools in Semarang municipality. 4 English teachers in elementary schools in Semarang became the

subjects of the study. 3 out of them are teachers in public schools, and 1 teacher teaches in a private school. Data were collected through documentation, observation and interview with the volunteer teachers. The data were analyzed using descriptive analysis and involves triangulation technique. The result was employed as the ground work to design the model of teaching character values in English language teaching-learning through mini-drama performance.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The qualitative data obtained from questionnaires, interview, and field observation are described as follows:

The Practice of English Language Teaching at Schools

English is a subject of local content for elementary school (hence shortened to ES) level, which means that it is given depending on the availability of the teacher as well as the school budget to pay for the teacher. It is not given until the grade 4 of ES, taught 2 hours in a week in some state ESs in Semarang, but some private schools provide 3 – 4 hours in a week for English lesson. Unfortunately, there is no fixed curriculum for English subject in ES. The only guidance for teaching English is the materials listed in some English books for basic level. Unfortunately, not all pupils could purchase the book so it is the teacher's job to deliver the materials in his own way. Writing the material lessons on the chalk board is one way to take by teachers. By such a doing of course, it is naïve to set the goal of teaching English to ideal learning outcomes. Classes of such schools are filled with explanation about vocabulary and simple grammar rules. It looks like teaching mathematics which applies certain formulas.

Dealing with the teachers' competence it was found that all teachers are graduates of teacher training colleges majoring English. 3 teachers have teaching experience of more than 10 years; 5 teachers have teaching experience of 5 -9 years; and 2 teachers have less than 5 years teaching experience. They did not find any difficulties in mastering the teaching materials. However, they had problems with classroom management. They faced passive class with low motivation. Students did not fully pay attention to the teachers. In this case, teachers tend to search references from books and browse from internet in order to cope with the problem. English teachers attempt to find ways to teach well, so that students enjoy the English learning.

Related to character education, teachers claimed that they are aware of the responsibility to teach moral values to pupils. However, they did not know how to infuse character values in the real teaching.

Teacher 1 : “ *Ya memang tugas guru itu mendidik; tapi kan saya guru bahasa Inggris, jadi saya pentingkan yang materi bahasa Inggris saja*”.

Translated :

Teacher 1 : “ It is true that my duty is educating; but I am an English teacher, so I prioritize the english materials”.

She is aware that teaching values is also her responsibility, but she thinks she has to make students be good at English while character values is an extra benefit.

Teacher 2 : “Yang penting saya ngajar bahasa Inggris, syukur kalo dengan itu anak juga belajar karakter. Tetapi itu saya anggap keuntungan bonus.”

Translated :

Teacher 2 : “ *teaching english is more important ; I will be thankful if they also learn character values. But I consider it as bonus benefit*”.

They think their main job is teaching english, while teaching character values is optional. They call it as a bonus beside teaching. They do not know whether or not they have integrated character values through songs, storytelling, game and role play. This is in line with what Milad Islami (2016) found in her study about cultivating character values in EFL class in a school in Samarinda. He found that teachers did not know how to teach character values. It means that teachers had limited awareness about the internalization of character values even though, subconsciously, they have already applied it into teaching and learning activities. When the teacher was asked about how she internalized the character values into her teaching, she confessed:

Teacher 3 : “*Jujur saja saya belum memahami apa itu pendidikan berkarakter. Untuk sosialisasinya kurang sepertinya, terutama dalam Bahasa Inggris.*”

Translated:

Teacher 3 : “Honestly, I do not understand about what character education is. There is so limited information about it especially for English subject.”

When asked about drama performance, 6 teachers (60 percent of respondents) said that they did not know what it is and how to execute mini-drama yet, to be integrated in English learning with character values. Four teachers who admitted having employed this technique said they encountered barriers, such as difficulty to provide scripts and create a scenario. However, they confessed that this method is effective and fun.

Teacher 4 : “*Saya pernah coba pake role playing, anak –anak suka; tetapi saya yang repot menyiapkan naskah ceritanya dan properti nya. Padahal anak-anak sebenarnya senang sekali dengan permainan itu.*”

Translated :

Teacher 4 : “Once I tried using role playing and the pupils were happy; but it troubled me to prepare the story and also the properties needed; Indeed, the pupils really enjoyed the play”.

According to Miss Anita, an English teacher at a private school, the use of the method is effective to enhance students’ skills like pronunciation, vocabulary, intonation, expressions, and grammar. One most important thing is that learning English becomes fun. It is admitted that by this technique, moral values, cooperation and tolerance and other values can be easily nurtured.

Basically they need methods in order to teach creatively, so that students feel fun in the learning process in line with active, innovative, creative, effective and fun learning (commonly shortened to *PAIKEM* in Indonesian language). Unfortunately, they do not get support from the principals and the school authority. This happened in three public schools in which the research was done. That condition was different in private schools. It seems that because private schools are self-funded by parents so facilities are available in the schools. Air-conditioned rooms, LCD, audio and video players are available. Learning English in such schools is better carried out because students have relatively good motivation for learning English.

Teachers find it difficult to incorporate character values in teaching English. Based on the interview with the teachers, it reveals that they need a workshop or training. That’s why, a 3-day workshop was held to train the teachers. The workshop was done to equip teachers with the skill to apply minidrama in teaching character values.

Character Values Incorporated in Minidrama

To facilitate the teachers with ready for use materials, we prepared four simple minidrama stories with titles : the Golden Cucumber, A Farmer and the golden Eggs, the Smartest Turtle, and King Midas. The stories are chosen because they contain some moral values which are possibly cultivated to students. Besides, the stories are easy to follow without subtle complication so that the students can act the characters with only one or two times of reading.

The benefit of using drama in English class is that it integrates language skills in a natural way, careful listening and spontaneous verbal expression (Duff and Maley,2001). As the students of grade 5 and 6 are the beginners of English language learners, the language of the stories are simplified and adapted to the students language level. By doing so, the learners do not have constraints in using the language in their acting. This is in line with what Athimoolam (2004) suggested that the play must be enjoyable to students. More importantly, as the main objective of the study is to seek the feasibility of using minidrama to cultivate the character values, the stories must foster some seemingly moral values to be possessed by students.

Based on the teachers' evaluation, some universal values can be adopted from the 4 stories as seen in the following table.

Table 1:
Character Values Found in Minidrama Stories

Story	Character Values
The Golden Cucumber	honesty, tolerannce, hardworking respect , responsibility, discipline , fairness
A Farmer and the Golden Eggs	responsible, respect ,tolerance , prudence , fairness , compassion cooperative
The Smartest Turtle	hardworking, friendly, fairness, compassion,
King Midas	responsible, democratic, hardworking, open, peacemaker, humble,

From the above table it can be infered that some moral values can be learned from the stories. At the end after each story is performed, the teacher can ask the students what moral values they could learn from the minidrama. It is not merely about the character, but also about the way each student proceeds with the acting of the minidrama. How they collaborate with friends, how they feel each other when performing the characters. Indeed, performing drama can promote empathy with the ideas, attitudes and feelings of others (Munther, 2013). Also, it can foster the child's creativity, discovery and problemsolving through exploring actively the hole story. Playing drama can also help the child to experience open, healthy relationships with all the members of the class and not just with a selected or exclusive few. This teaches students to have sense of belonging to the group or class. Unity and diversity can be nurtured from this.

CONCLUSION

English teachers in elementary schools, in particular, have responsibilities to educate students not only in academic, but also in character. It is at this age that the students should gain insights on what is good and what is not good for life. That is called moral values which belong to people's character. This study revealed that English teachers of elementary schools in Semarang still maintain high dedication and enthusiasm to educate children in terms of character values. However, they need continuous support from the school communities and the government in that they lack training and mentoring in incorporating character values in their daily teaching.

They also need a forum among English teachers to share information and experience in order to improve learning quality in the classroom.

Some simple and popular stories can be made into simple minidrama scripts that can be used as drama scenarios to be performed by the students. Teacher's creativity is needed in providing the materials which are easy to play in the classroom. in the classroom. The conclusion suggests that teachers can cultivate character values to students through minidrama performance, indirectly as hidden curriculum content.

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