TEACHING MORAL VALUES THROUGH EYL LITERATURE: HOW?

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Abstract

This article aims to explain how teaching moral values to young learners through literature. Nowadays, teaching moral values is an obligation for every teacher in Indonesia. One of the ways to promote the moral values to young learners is through literature. As one of the literacy skills, reading skill must be prioritized as early as possible. English teacher as the agent of change can teach the moral values at the same time with teaching English, especially in teaching reading. Applying appropriate strategies and using relevant EYL literatures are assumed as the most effective methods to teach English and core moral values in the classroom. This paper will highlight theoretically the concept of moral value, the concept of good character, and the various strategies and activities to promote the core moral values through EYL literature.

Keywords: *character education, literature, moral values, teaching, TEYL*

INTRODUCTION

Curriculum 2013 requires teacher to teach a lesson and establish good characters at the same time. The curriculum 2013 is created as manifestation of the values of *Pancasila* and *UUD 1945*, section 31, paragraph 3. It orders that the government establish and conduct a national education system, which increases the faith and devoutness to God Almighty and good characters in the context of the intellectual life of the nation regulated by law. Consequently, all schools must hold character education. As an English teacher, at least there are two obligations at school: teaching English and establish good characters. Those are in line with Thomas Lickona's perspective. He (2008) argues that throughout history, around the world, education has two major goals: to help children become smart and to help them become good.

The challenges become harder when the national goals meet the reality. According to *Kementrian Perekonomian dan Kesejahteraan Rakyat (Kemenkokesra,* 2010), the main national problem is the disorientation of values of *Pancasila* as the philosophy and ideology of the nation. It is because of lack of an integrated policy instrument in realizing the values of Pancasila. Furthermore, it can effect to national disintegration. The national problems must also be resolved through education.

Teacher is an agent of change. Some researchers argue that the main goal of education is to change people (Lickona & Davinson, 2005; Kabir, 2008; Lickona, 1991). When teacher interacts with young learners in or outside of classroom, it brings some values to them that may influence or even change their characters. Lickona (2008) points out that "the teacher

and school were characterized as a place where children were shaped raccording to certain values and needs of the immediate society" (p.9). That is in line with the Islamic perspective. According to Kabir (2008, p.1), "education is a form of ibadah (worship) where Muslims share a common set of values based on the Qur'an and Sunnah (the two fundamental and reliable sources for many fields of knowledge)".

Reading is the key of learning. Reading is so important for human. Reading is not a natural process so reading have to be taught, especially reading in English as a foreign language. That is because children success in school and throughout life depends in large part on the ability to read (The Expert Panel, 2003). Therefore, as one of the literacy skills, reading skill must be prioritized as early as possible. Grabe (2009) defines process of reading as a rapid, efficient, comprehending, interactive, strategic, flexible, purposeful, evaluative, learning, and linguistic process. Likely, English teacher can see those processes as a good opportunity to develop basic knowledge of English and moral values of young learners. Furthermore, in the classroom the teacher must use many teaching strategies and use relevant media or material to encourage young learners to learn English and moral values.

Literature can be a media to promote moral values to young learners. Some researchers argue that literature, such as short stories, picture books, biographies, etc., can be used to promote the moral values and develop basic knowledge for young learners (Auciello, 2006; Bohlin, 2005; Prestwich, 2004; Smith, 2002). Prestwich (2004) claims that children's literature is a great resource of reading material because it can be used to teach a variety of topics. Auciello (2006) argues that children's literature help students begin to discuss and think about character education. Moreover, Krashen (2009) argues that almost any reading will produce vocabulary growth. That means that when the students read any English for young learner (EYL) literatures, it will improve their English vocabulary as the vital aspect of learning English. Consequently, English teachers must have many strategies in using EYL relevant literatures not only to promote moral values but also to be a media of learning English in the classroom.

In this study, the researcher highlighted theoretically the concept of moral value, the concept of good character, and the various strategies and activities to promote the core moral values through EYL literature.

METHODOLOGY

The method used in this study was literature study. There were several steps in counducting this study. Firstly, the researcher collected the primary and secondary resources. Primary resource means the sources were from research papers focused on the implementation of character education in EYL. In addition, secondary resource means the sources were from articles and books related to this study. Secondly, the researcher classified

the data which are related to character education. Thirdly, the researcher analyzed the data and identify the concept of character education and its implementation. Lastly, the conclusion was drawn in the last part of the study.

DISCUSSIONS

Defining Moral Value and Good Character

What is moral value?

The teachers should understand what moral value is before they teach moral value to their students. The term of moral value is not easy to be described. According to *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (KBBI), moral relates to the concept of urbane, values that generally accepted, and right or wrong thinking (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, 2008). Then, Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (CALD) defines moral as values relating to the standards of good or bad behavior, fairness, honesty, etc. which each person believes in, rather than to laws (Cambridge Dictionary, 2008). Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (OALD) defines moral as values that concerned with principles of right and wrong behavior, based on your own sense of what is right and fair, not on legal rights or duties, following the standards of behavior considered acceptable and right by most people (Hornby, 2010).

According to Lickona (2008), values are divided into two kinds: moral and non-moral. Responsibility, fairness, honesty are the examples of moral values. He (2008) further states that moral values carry obligation. Everyone feels obligated to help each other, to take care of parents. Although they do not always do that, they feel obligated to do so. Meanwhile, non-moral values do not carry obligation (Lickona, 2008). As an example, someone might value to learn English, but clearly, he is not obligated to do so. Moreover, moral values are divided into two categories, universal and non-universal (Lickona, 2008). The examples of universal moral values are respect, responsibility, liberty, equality, and all values adopted from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Meanwhile, non-universal moral values are related to the obligation of religion, such as love God, pray, fasting, etc.

Moreover, at school setting, Lickona (2008) suggests two core or foundational moral values, i.e. respect and responsibility to man and nature. He (2008) adds that besides respect and responsibility, the school also should teach honesty, fairness, tolerance, prudence, self-discipline, helpfulness, compassion, cooperation, courage, and a host of democratic values. He further states that those specific values are forms of respect and responsibility or aids to acting respectfully and responsibly. However, English teacher in Indonesia should add one more core moral value adopted from *Pancasila*, i.e. respect and responsibility to God.

Ginanjar (2006) has different perspective of core or foundational moral values. He (2006) explains that there are seven-core-values, i.e. honest, responsibility, discipline,

cooperation, fair, visionary, caring. He (2006) names the values as seven spiritual core values or Emotional Spiritual Quotient (ESQ) values. He believes that the seven spiritual core values or ESQ values are from the 99 Allah's attributes (Asmaul Husna). He also believes that intelligence quotient (IQ) and emotional quotient (EQ) are not enough to support success in life. There is another factor, i.e. spiritual quotient (SQ). Based on that perception, he conducts a new theory namely Emotional Spiritual Quotient (ESQ).

Rich (2008) suggests 12 moral values. The moral values are confidence, motivation, effort, responsibility, initiative, perseverance, caring, teamwork, common sense, problem solving, focus, respect. She names those moral values as MegaSkills. she believes that the MegaSkills are the values, the abilities, the inner engines of learning that determine success in school and beyond. She also believes that those are important and can be taught and learned.

The Concept of Good Character

Lickona (2008) gives clear concept of good character. He (2008) explains that good characters are consisted of three components: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. He (2008) further explains that moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action can influence among others and mutually reinforce.

Lickona and Davidson (2008) say that there are eight strengths of character. The eight strengths of character are lifelong learner and critical thinker, diligent and capable performer, socially and emotionally skilled person, ethical thinker, respectful and responsible moral agent, self-disciplined person who pursues a healthy lifestyle, contributing community member and democratic citizen, spiritual person engaged in crafting a life of noble purpose. The eight strengths of character offer a vision of human flourishing over a lifetime.

The Various Strategies and Activities

Teacher should be creative in teaching, especially in teaching moral values. The teacher can apply many strategies to aim the goal of education, i.e. to help student become smart and good. In this case, the aims of English teacher are to help young learners learn English well and to help them become a good person. Lickona (2008) suggest some strategies in order to teach respect and responsibility in the classroom. Lickona (2008) further states that teacher has to be caregiver, model, and mentor, creates a moral community in the classroom with moral discipline and democratic environment, teaches children values through curriculum, controversial issues and helps them how to solve conflict, conducts cooperative learning, and encourages moral reflection.

There are many ways how to promote moral values to young learners. One of the ways is through literature. Using relevant children literatures in the classroom can support

implementation of Lickona's strategies above. Relevant children literatures are needed to aid teaching moral values. Smith (2002) argues that in developing students' characters through literature the strategies are reading and discussing events in books, then engaging young learners in activities that require a personal decision.

The teacher must be inspired in teaching English and moral values. The teacher has to create various activities in teaching. To give illustration of using literature in teaching moral values, Smith (2002), in his book "Developing Character through Literature: A Teacher's Resource Book", shows the examples of activities of teaching moral value, particularly responsibility, as follow

1. Read stories together and discuss ways that characters display responsible behavior
2. Ask the students to picture their goals, e.g. where they want to continue their study
3. Ask them to write the school requirements
4. Make the students to list the skills and knowledge that they can gain.
5. Praise them for behaving responsible.

Those examples are supported by Adriyanti (2021) who explained that character education can be taught in teaching English for young learners in the process of pre-activity, main activity, and post-activity. For example, the teacher taught the students the character value by doing playing games and singing a songs to teach them the responsibility, honesty and many other forms of character value.

CONCLUSION

Finally, the teachers should observe, detect, and analyze appropriate moral values for their students. Likely, the needs of the students can be different from one to another school. The teachers are suggested to discuss to headmaster and parents before planning, setting and teaching the core moral values to the students. It is hoped that after deciding the goals of value, the teacher, school, and parents can have some programs to make the students not only know the moral values, but also have moral feeling and act the moral values in daily life. One of the programs probably is literature class where the students can learn English and develop their characters. Furthermore, it is also hoped that the moral values that they know from literature class become their good character for their success in school, life, and hereafter.

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