

Character Values and Their Internalization in Teaching and Learning English at Madrasah

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Abstract

In addition to communicate intellectual- based concepts such as ideas, belief and thought, language is used to communicate norms, values and emotions. As the result, it is important to internalize the character values into the teaching and learning activity of English. The study describes the analysis of the internalization of character values. The research design was qualitative without any experimental settings involved. The results showed that there were at least six character values performed by the students in learning English, they were independence, hardworking ethos, curiosity, democratic citizenship, communicative manner, and reading interest. In addition, the character values were internalized by the English teacher into the process of teaching and learning even though she did not realize it.

Keywords: character values, internalization, and character education

A. Introduction

The existence of a nation is more likely determined by its characters. The stronger its characters, the more civilized the nation will be. As the consequence, becoming a nation with strong and good characters are all people's expectation. Since the conditions of national character seem to be decreasing, the scholars urge the character education to be taught and integrated formally in the teaching and learning process at schools (Asmani, 2012). They believed that through character education a nation will find the best way to solve the problems. The best and systemic way to bring it into reality is through education (Kemdiknas, 2010).

As stated in the regulation of Ministry of National Education number 20/2003 about National Education System, the function of Indonesia education is developing the national characters and dignifying national civilization. Related to that, one main programs of Ministry of Education is to develop character education for the sake of increasing national education quality (Kemdiknas, 2010).

Character education in Indonesia's educational system is not likely a brand new thing. There are two subjects that contribute to develop students' moral and values, they are religion and civics education. In Islamic School like MAN 1 Samarinda there is also a subject that concerns about character, it is *Aqidah Akhlaq* (faith and moral). It is one of religion group subjects besides *Qur'an, Hadith, Arabic, and Tarikh* (Islamic History). It is not only discussed about the Islamic belief but also about values, morals, manners, and characters. In Islamic perspective, faith and characters are inseparable. One's strong belief may affect one's manners and vice versa.

Unfortunately, those subjects may not significantly contribute in building students' good character because they only emphasize to the knowledge of the values not about how to apply them in the daily life (Kemdiknas, 2010). As the consequence, the students only know all about the values but they do not see the real example of how to implement them in their daily life. Because the result of character education through religion and civics education may have not yet satisfying, the government believed that it should involve all of the subjects. The implementation of it should also be modified in such a way that focus on the students' cognitive, affective and psychomotor development that the character values are not only integrated in all core materials or topics of the lessons but also should facilitate the students to implement them into the learning activity.

It seems that the main focus of our education so far is to increase the intelligence of the brain only or cognitive aspects. The ground thinking paradigm is that the success in a student's life is determined solely by one factor, namely intelligence (IQ). From an early age children have been directed to achieve high intelligence. Almost all pre-school children have been taught to read and numeracy, thus fostering emotional aspects and mental attitude of the children gets less attention. The emphasis of the cognitive aspect is also apparent from the use of educational methods in school. According to Tafsir (2001) educational methods that are often used in schools limited means to increase knowledge (transfer of knowledge). On the other side, education that supports the affective domains in exemplary shape and habituation rarely applied.

In the context of teaching English as a foreign language, there are several studies that discuss the implementation of character education in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. Tsui (2008) stated that the purpose of incorporating

character education into the EFL classroom is to provide a content-based environment for students to learn the language as well as the ethics. As a lingua franca, English is learned by people as second or foreign language in the most parts of the world. Unfortunately, the EFL learners are not able to access authentic language input as their learning resources because they only get it when dealing the classroom activities. The EFL teachers play the important role in providing the learners with a conducive learning situation to overall language development. To provide a content-based environment is not an easy responsibility for the EFL teachers. They should set the activities in teaching and learning in line with the communicative approach.

In the level of EFL curriculum design, Shaaban (2005) proposed a comprehensive framework of implementing moral education into the ESL/EFL curriculum. There are seven parts of it, they are: message, language skills, methods, outcomes, activities, resources, and assessment. The framework will effectively promote second and foreign language learners' linguistics and cognitive development and, at the same time, encourage the growth of their character.

There are many values that can be developed and taught to the learners. Because of that, it is necessary to classify them to be distributed into all subjects. As the consequence, every lesson has its own main characters as the priority to be taught to the students. It focuses on the integration of the prime values that need to develop in the different subjects. It does not mean that one subject has the limitation in implementing those characters based on the regulation that is released by the government. The characters of each lesson are chosen as the main values based on the closeness of the characteristics of each subjects (Kemdiknas, 2010).

As one of the school subjects, English also has its own character values that should be developed in its learning activity. These character values are formulated to strengthen the success of language learning. Because when study a language, the learners do not only learn how to master the language skills but also learn how to use it politely and properly. People tend to learn and use language merely to express their ideas, believe, and thought or as intellectual based. Language is more than those purposes, it also used to express the norms, values, and even emotions. To strengthen the implementation of character education, there are eighteen character values that should be developed by the school, they are: (1) Religious, (2) honesty, (3) tolerance, (4) Discipline, (5) Hardworking ethos, (6) Creativity, (7) Independence, (8) Democratic citizenship, (9) Curiosity, (10) The spirit of nationality, (11) Love the country, (12) Rewarding Achievement, (13) Friendly / Communicative, (14) Love of Peace, (15) Reading Interest, (16) Care for the Environment, (17) Social Awareness, & (18) Responsibility (Curriculum and Books Center, 2011)

To internalize those character values into the teaching and learning activity the first step to do is to analyse the standard of competency and basic competency of the lesson. By doing so, the teachers will be able to decide what character values that can be integrated into the activity of the lesson. Then, the character values that they want to develop and integrate to the lesson can be stated in the syllabus and lesson plan. The next step is applying what have been planned in the syllabus and lesson plan into the classroom activity. In this step, some problems may arise, such as teachers are only good at planning of the teaching programs but not at the implementation. It might happen because they consider that it is only a formality in order to fulfil their

administration that is obligated by the school. As the result, what have been planned in the syllabus and lesson plan are often different to the application in the classroom.

Based on the facts above, it was assumed that the character education has already been implemented in teaching and learning activity of English classes at MAN 1 Samarinda even though both teachers and students did not realize it. Take it into account, a research regarding to the internalization of character values in teaching and learning English was conducted at MAN 1 Samarinda.

B. Research Methodology

Shank (2002) defines qualitative research as a form of systematic empirical inquiry into meaning. By systematic it means “planned, ordered and public”, following rules agreed upon by members of the qualitative research community. By empirical, it means that this type of inquiry is grounded in the world of experience. Inquiry into meaning says researchers try to understand how others make sense of their experience. (Denzin, 2000) claim that qualitative research involves an interpretive and naturalistic approach. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Since the focus of this study was on the analysis of the implementation of character education without any experimental or manipulated settings involved, therefore, the design of this study was qualitative design.

The subjects of this study were four students and one English teacher of Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 1 Samarinda. Since the aim of the study is to identify central themes which are character values and their internalization, the research subject can cut across the variety of cases or people (Hollway, Wendy, & Jefferson, 2000; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). To determine the students who became the research subjects, the researcher asked some students and an English teacher who know well them in term of their both English achievements and behaviour. All the research subjects were from the third year students that were assumed to have experience in the development of character education in learning English since the first year.

The data that collected in this research were check list of observation, field notes, interview guide for the teachers and students, and teachers' lesson plan. The observation was functioned as the main source of data; meanwhile the interview and documents were used as supporting source of data.

1. The observation check list was made based on the adaptation from character values and indicators purposed by Kemdiknas (2010). The data were taken based on the process of teaching and learning activity.
2. The field notes in this study was used to know the activities during the teaching learning process, such as how the teachers carry out the implementation of character values and the students' responses.
3. Interview was used to reveal more information from the teachers and students based on what had found in the process of observation. Unstructured interview was conducted to make the rapport between the interviewer and informants in natural situation.
4. The teachers' lesson plans would be useful to know about the character values that would be carried out during the process of teaching and learning English.

For data collection technique, the observation and interview were used. Data from observation would be functioned as primary data and data from interview was functioned as supporting data. Since this study would like to figure out the application of character education in the process of teaching and learning activity, observation was considered the effective way to support this step. The observation was conducted to the each class of the research subjects to get more obvious point of view. The observation checklist was used in the classroom observation that adapted from Kemdiknas (2010). For the sake of gathering more information during the observation process, the field notes were also taken. To get information from the teachers and students about the researcher's findings from the observation, the interview was chosen as the cross-checking data.

In data reduction, the data from observation, field notes, interview and documents were selected, focused, simplified, made an abstract, and transformed. At the second step, the data were displayed by using the list of character values and transcription of the interview and give explanation about them. In the last step, conclusion drawing and verification, the conclusion and verified through the result on data display were made.

In this study data triangulation was used using more than one source to gather data. Observation was conducted to gather the obvious phenomenon of character education implementation especially about what character values that appeared and how they were internalized in the process of teaching and learning English. Interview with the teachers and some informants of the students was used to strengthen and confirm the result of observation. Teacher's lesson plan was used to figure out the target of character values that want to develop by the teacher and how she delivered them into the class activities.

C. Findings and Discussion

From the observation and field notes about the character values and how the teacher internalized them in teaching and learning English activities were found that there were six character values appeared. In detail, it can be explained below:

1. Independence

To internalize this value, the teacher asked the students to do some assignments individually. The students were asked to do some exercises based on the listening material that was heard from the tape recorder. On another meeting, after giving explanation and example about Review text, the teacher asked the students to make their own review text about an art work. Both activities were done individually by the students which promote the character value of independence.

2. Hardworking ethos

On the first and the second classroom observation, the teacher made evaluation by giving the students tasks individually. Therefore, the students could responsible to do the tasks given and the teacher could figure out the students' achievement related to the teaching and learning material. Since the students were asked to do the exercises individually, it did not only stimulate the character value of independence but also hardworking ethos because the students need to do it by their own efforts and as accurate as their best.

3. Reading interest
There was a discussion activity about some topics of reading text. Based on the interview with the teacher, it revealed that before presenting it in front of their friends the students need to respond the meaning of reading material appropriately and find other sources of reading material. Therefore, the activity encouraged the students' reading interest about some topics of reading text that could be unfamiliar for them.
4. Curiosity
During discussion, the students had a great opportunity to ask and answer about the difficult words or some questions related to the text being discussed by the presenter. The students would get additional score if they wanted to be active such as asking or answering the questions to and from the presenters of discussion. In addition, each group presented different genre and topic of the text. It made the students eager to know more about the text.
5. Democratic attitude
To internalize democratic attitude into the teaching learning activity, the teacher made class discussion. Each group consisted of 2 to 3 members who presented different topic of reading text. By working in group, students learned how to express their opinions with others and share the ideas but still respected to those who have different ones.
6. Communicative manner
One learning activity that supports to develop communicative manner is discussion. In group or class discussion, students can give opinions in group work, give and listen to the opinions in class discussions. Based on the classroom observation, it was found that the students tried to use English properly. Even though the discussion did not use fully English but what the students performed was an indication that it belonged to a part of communicative manner application.

Those character values did not appear together at once, they were performed by the students in three times classroom observation differently. At the first observation, there were only two character values appeared namely; independence and hardworking. At the second one, there was one additional character value beside independence and hardworking, it was curiosity. The third observation offered more character values; they were hardworking, reading interest, democratic attitude, and communicative manner. In addition, the class activities were prepared by the teacher really brought significant contribution in internalizing those character values. By setting the teaching and learning activities appropriately, it would support the character building of the students.

On the other side, based on the interview with the teacher and some informants from the students, it was revealed that among those characters there were only two of them; independence and hardworking that were performed by all the research subjects. When the teacher was asked about how she internalized the character values into her teaching, she confessed:

Teacher: *"Jujur saja saya belum memahami apa itu pendidikan berkarakter. Untuk sosialisainya kurang seperti ini, terutama dalam Bahasa Inggris."*

Translated:

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

In fact, the teacher had implemented character education through the internalization of the character values into her class. It means that she had limited awareness about the internalization of character values even though subconsciously she had already applied it into her teaching and learning activities.

Furthermore, the teacher’s lesson plans were clearly stated about the list of character values and the class activities that support the implementation of character education into the teaching and learning English. In the lesson plans, the teacher mentioned eight character values based on the list of character values that should be developed for English learners at high school level released by Ministry of National Education. In the implementation step, the teacher only developed six of them into her class activities. It could happen because the teacher had not analyzed the appropriate character values which were supposed to be appropriate with the topic that would be delivered.

From the six of character values, there were two of them that seemed to be owned by all research subjects. The two character values were independence and hardworking ethos. Independence and hardworking ethos had been transformed into a habituation of these students. It means that those character values were performed consistently by the students not only when dealing with individual task but also when working in group. It was appropriate with the indicators that used in the observation check list about independence and hardworking ethos. In completing the task given by the teacher, the students always did it responsibly with their effort. Because English is a foreign language, they need to translate and get the meaning of source language to the target language and they did it by themselves. All the tasks and assignments set by the teacher would be accomplished by the students as accurate as their best.

The last four character values were reading interest, curiosity, democratic attitude, and communicative manner. These character values were observed significantly when the students did discussion about some reading text. They started to ask and to get more information about the learning material. When the discussion season, the students appeared to listen, ask and express opinions and accept the differences of opinion in learning activities. They also shared the idea to the group members or class in the process of learning using the language properly. These indicators proved that curiosity, democratic attitude, and communicative manner were still in the level of appear and did not become the students habituation in learning English. They grew because of the teaching and learning activity set by the teacher.

In addition, there were two good characters that performed by S3. The researcher did not find them in the classroom activity but beyond learning time when he still in the school area. Based on researcher observation, S 3 is a pious student who does not only do *Zubur* and *Asar* prayers but also additional prayer called *Dhuha* at the first of break time. Besides, he always greets the teachers when he meets them.

Teacher’s role in the implementation of character education is significantly needed. From his/her setting, the character values can be internalized into the activity of teaching and learning. In this study, the teacher convinced the researcher that she did not understand well about character education and how to apply it into classroom

activity. She confessed that the character values in her syllabus and lesson plans were attached just to fulfil the obligation that is ruled by the school. In fact, what she performed in teaching and learning activity reflected the internalization of character values in learning English. It showed that the teacher had internalized the character education in her teaching and learning process but she did not aware about it.

Referring to the research findings, the result of this study proved that the character values implemented in the process of English teaching-learning in MAN 1 Samarinda were appropriate to the list of character values for English subject released by Kemdiknas (2010). It also supported the three steps of establishing the character education in school, they were planning, implementing and evaluating (Kemdiknas, 2010). Even though without full self-awareness, planning and implementing steps were done by English teacher. Unfortunately, the English teacher had not conducted the evaluating step yet to observe the progress of character education of the students. It was understandable because she confessed that she did not know anything about character education and never got brief explanation about it from school officials or colleagues.

Character building is a pivotal issue not only about learning language but it also about the face of nation which is facing so many problems lately, particularly about moral problems. It is the duty of the English teacher teaches the students not only about English but also about positive character, morality. The teachers suggested character education as the answer for them to address current social problems (Qoyyimah, 2015).

Integrating positive local culture should be elaborated into the teaching and learning process. Sukarno (2012) argued that the contents of teaching English as a foreign language will be more meaningful if they are related to students' socio-economic cultural backgrounds. In teaching English as a foreign language, the cultures of its native speakers can be used as meaningful input texts to explore and elaborate local cultures consisting of moral values and local wisdoms meaningful for character building.

The integration of character building in language classess can be done by adding some content related to the character building in text book. Amalisa (2014) claimed that the curriculum plays a significant role in building the national character by inserting the intended cultural contents in the textbooks. It is the writers who then interpret what is aimed in the curriculum through the representations of the content in the textbooks the writer.

In addition, the internalization of six character values in teaching and learning English was appropriate (Shaaban, 2005). He believed that nurturing of some universal values, such as honesty, integrity, respect, and responsibility be called for in the early stages of moral education and that independence, reflective moral agents, individuals capable of making informed decisions and justifying the principles that guide such decision should be aimed at the later stages of the development.

E. Conclusion

The character education had been subconsciously implemented in MAN 1 Samarinda especially in teaching and learning English. There were three steps in developing character education that could be internalized in the process of teaching and

learning namely planning, applying and evaluating. In this study the teacher did the step of how to develop character education through planning, and applying but not for evaluating. The character values were internalized by the English teacher into the process of teaching and learning even though she did not realize it.

There were six of character values that appeared in teaching and learning English possessed by the students. The character values were; independence, hardworking ethos, reading interest, curiosity, democratic attitude, and communicative manner. The character values of independence and hardworking ethos became habituation to all the research subjects. They implemented them not only when dealing with individual task but also in group work. Meanwhile, reading interest, curiosity, democratic attitude, and communicative manner started to appear during the process of teaching and learning English especially when they dealt with discussion among the students. In the other side, religiousness and social awareness were applied by one of the research subjects consistently. These character values were observed by the researcher mostly beyond the learning time at the school.

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