

## The Challenges Faced by EFL Teachers in Integrating Character Education in English Subject

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**Abstract:** The government regulation states that the goal of national education is to develop educated people with life skills and good character. Developing character in this globalization era is very challenging. However, despite the obvious good will of character educators, there is little training available, particularly on how to integrate the character itself in any school subject. This paper reviews the challenges faced by the teacher in integrating the character education in English learning process. In Indonesia, the integration of character education should be based on 2013 curriculum which consists of eighteen character values. Based on the reviews done by language educators and researchers about character education, there seems to be some challenges faced by English teachers, particularly in Indonesia, among others are (1) the difficulty of matching the character education values with the materials available, (2) the diverse characteristics of learners, and (3) the strategies on integrating various characters into English lessons.

**Keywords:** *character education, challenges, English teaching and learning process.*

**Abstrak:** Peraturan pemerintah menyatakan bahwa tujuan pendidikan nasional adalah untuk membina orang-orang yang berpendidikan dan berkarakter baik dengan memiliki berbagai keterampilan hidup. Membina karakter di era globalisasi ini merupakan tantangan tersendiri. Namun, terlepas dari niat baik yang jelas dari pendidik karakter, hanya sedikit pelatihan yang tersedia, terutama tentang bagaimana mengintegrasikan karakter itu sendiri dalam mata pelajaran. Artikel ini mengulas tantangan yang dihadapi oleh guru dalam mengintegrasikan pendidikan karakter dalam proses belajar bahasa Inggris. Di Indonesia, integrasi pendidikan karakter harus didasarkan pada kurikulum 2013 yang terdiri dari delapan belas nilai karakter. Berdasarkan peninjauan para pendidik dan peneliti bahasa terhadap pendidikan karakter, tampaknya terdapat beberapa tantangan yang dihadapi oleh guru bahasa Inggris, khususnya di Indonesia, di antaranya (1) kesulitan menyesuaikan nilai-nilai pendidikan karakter dengan materi yang tersedia, (2) keragaman karakteristik peserta didik, dan (3) strategi pengintegrasian berbagai karakter ke dalam mata pelajaran bahasa Inggris.

**Kata-kata Kunci:** *pendidikan karakter, tantangan yang dihadapi guru, proses belajar mengajar Bahasa Inggris*

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The progress of a country is determined by the quality of human resources. The quality of human resources is not only seen from mastery of science and technology but also their character or behavior. To fulfill human resources who have competence and character, a good education system is needed. Lickona (1999) argued that character education is the deliberate effort to influence the behavior of students. As a deliberate effort, the approach is based on the concept of character education and the specific context. UNESCO (2010) noted that the values and attitudes we live by affect how we relate to other people and to all our activities in the environment, and so are a major influence on our prospects for achieving a sustainable future. Stiff-Williams (2010) stated that character education must be integrated with field studies and continuous through all classes and taught by all teachers. The Ministry of Education of Indonesia claimed that all subjects in the 2013 curriculum were to be fully integrated with character education.

The current character education wave has caused some dilemmas over what should be taught and how it should be taught. Since public schools educate all students, there was a controversy about what behavior all people consider to be moral (Beane, 1985). Character building in education is a program that has been socialized by the government since 2010 to overcome these problems. All schools in Indonesia are required to implement this program. In line with the government's regulation, there are 18 character values to be developed (Kemendiknas, 2010a). They are religiosity (*religius*), honesty (*jujur*), tolerance (*toleransi*), discipline (*disiplin*), hard work (*kerjakeras*), creativity (*kreatif*), independence (*mandiri*), democracy (*demokratis*), curiosity (*ingintah*), nationalism (*nasionalis*), patriotism (*cintatanah air*), achievement appreciation (*menghargai prestasi*), communicative (*komunikatif*), peace loving (*cintadamai*), fondness of reading (*gemarmembaca*), environmental care (*peduli lingkungan*), social care (*peduli sosial*), and responsibility (*bertanggungjawab*).

Schwartz (2008) said that getting a good score is not the major purpose of education, but promoting the Character Education of the student is a significant matter. A study done by Faiziyah and Fachrurrazy (2013) showed that the values that were mentioned in their lesson plans did not cover the six character

values for English subject. Another study done by Rosalina (2011) showed that the teachers in Gugus 4, Kecamatan Batujajar, Kabupaten Bandung Barat have already designed lesson plans with character values included. However, in the implementation of character building in the classroom, the teachers did not develop activities that accommodate the implementation of character building.

The integration of character education is essential for the development of Indonesia, mainly in the field of education in Indonesia, which is not only creating smart people but also possessing good character. Therefore, it needs a holistic education by integrating character education with teaching learning of English. Collins and Henjum (1999) prompted that the procedure for character instruction must be long haul and continuous. To make it clearer, Sugirin (2011) mentioned that the implementation of character education should be integrated into relevant content subject instruction. Thus, he introduced two different modes in implementing character education in EFL learning namely explicit mode and implicit mode. According to Kemendiknas (2010) in the English language curriculum at the junior high school level there is no specific explanation of the distribution of character building while in the high school English curriculum there is a distribution of character values based on the class. It could be one of the challenges for the teachers to decide which characters are suitable to be integrated in the teaching and learning material. This paper will highlight three main topics; they are character education, challenges faced by EFL teachers, and English teaching and learning process.

### Character Education in 2013 Curriculum

Kemendiknas (2010b) described that character education aims is to improve the quality of integration and outcomes of education in forming students' character or moral as a whole, integrated, and balanced. Through the integration of character building, the students are expected to be individuals who live in line with Indonesian ideology, *Pancasila*. There are some characteristics or values in the 2013 curriculum which are related to character education in which can build students' personality. The Curriculum Center Ministry of Education (Kemendiknas, 2010) also stated that there are 18 values of Character Educa-

tion that should be integrate in teaching and learning process. The values can be seen in Table 1.

Lickona (1999) explained that there are three important components in building character education, namely moral knowing,

**Table 1. Values of Character Education**

No.	Character Values	Explanation
1.	Religiosity ( <i>Reljjius</i> )	Attitudes and behavior that obey in doing the teachings of their religion, tolerant toward the integration of the practice of other religions, and live in harmony with other faiths.
2.	Honest ( <i>Jujur</i> )	Behavior based on an attempt to make himself as a person who always trustworthy in word, action, and jobs.
3.	Tolerance ( <i>Toleransi</i> )	Attitudes and actions that respects differences of religion, race, ethnicity, opinions, attitudes, and actions of others who are different from themselves.
4.	Discipline ( <i>Disiplin</i> )	Actions show orderly behavior and obey with various rules and regulations.
5.	Hard work ( <i>Kerja Keras</i> )	Behaviors indicate a really effort to overcome various barriers in learning and assignments, as well as completing the task as well as possible.
6.	Creativity ( <i>Kreatif</i> )	Think and do something to generate new ways or the result of something that has been owned.
7.	Independence ( <i>Mandiri</i> )	Attitudes and behavior that is not easy to depend on others to complete tasks.
8.	Democracy ( <i>Demokratis</i> )	Ways of thinking, being attitude and acting which assesses the same rights and obligations of himself and others.
9.	Curiosity ( <i>Ingin Tahu</i> )	Attitudes and actions which seek to know deeper and spread of something learned, seen, and heard.
10.	Nationalism ( <i>Nasionalis</i> )	Ways of thinking, act, and having knowledge that puts the importance of the nation and country above self-importance and group.
11.	Patriotism ( <i>Cinta Tanah Air</i> )	Ways of thinking, being attitude, and acting that show loyalty, caring, and high appreciation toward language, physical environment, social, cultural, economic, and political nation.
12.	Achievement Appreciation ( <i>Menghargai Prestasi</i> )	Attitudes and actions that encourage him to produce something useful for society, and recognize and respect other people's success
13.	Communicative ( <i>Komunikatif</i> )	Actions show a sense of fun to talk, hang out, and work together with others.
14.	Peace Loving ( <i>Cinta Damai</i> )	Attitudes, words, and actions that cause others to feel happy and safe on the presence of himself.

15.	Fondness of Reading ( <i>Gemar Membaca</i> )	Habits provide time to read a variety of literature that gives virtue for him
16.	Environmental Care ( <i>Peduli Lingkungan</i> )	Attitudes and actions which seek to prevent damage to the surrounding natural environment, and develop efforts to repair the environmental damage that has occurred.
17.	Social Care ( <i>Peduli Sosial</i> )	Attitudes and actions have always wanted to help other people and communities in need.
18.	Responsible ( <i>Bertanggungjawab</i> )	Attitudes and behavior of people to do his duties, he should do, to himself, community, environment (natural, social and cultural), the country and god almighty one.

(Source: Kemendiknas, 2010, pp. 9-10)

moral feeling and moral action. These three components can be used as implementation references in the process and stages of character education. Furthermore, the mission or target that must be fulfilled in character education includes several aspects. The first is cognitive, which covers filling the brain, teaching one from not knowing to knowing, in the later stages it can cultivate the mind, so that he can function intellectually. The next aspect is affective, which deals with feelings, emotions, formation of attitudes in one's personal self with the formation of attitudes, sympathy, antipathy, love, hatred, and so forth. This attitude can all be classified as emotional intelligence. The last one is psychomotor which is related to actions, actions, behavior, and so on. In other word, the three components make students knowing something, having an attitude, and behaving according to what they know and react. Therefore, character education makes students know what is good and bad. The problem that arises is how a person has an attitude towards good and bad, where someone reaches the level of loving kindness and hates evil. At the next level act, behave according to good values, so that they become noble characters and characters.

With the character education reform, the educational authority required that teachers implement such curricular policy in all classes, including English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes. In this way, EFL teachers were required to nominate particular values and incorporate instruction on these values into their language learning activities. In other words, teachers were asked to insert values in their existing lesson plans and to align their pedagogic design with those nominated values in the activities they prepared. State

junior-secondary schools under the Ministry of Education and Culture teach the same core subjects: Religion, Citizenship, Indonesian Language, English, Maths, Natural Science, Social Science, Arts Education and Sport Education (UNESCO, 2011). In these state schools, the religious subject is taught to adherents of the five officially recognized religions: Islam, Protestant and Catholic Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism. In addition, other subjects can be taught to accommodate the local needs of the school and local community as intra- or extracurricular activities. In contrast to madrasahs that recruit only Muslim children, the secular state schools cater for all students regardless of their religion. The madrasahs operate a differently balanced curriculum. Most obviously, the hijab (veils for Muslim females) is compulsory for Muslim female students at the madrasahs but not at the state schools.

### Challenges Faced by EFL Teachers in Integrating the Characters

Collins and Henjum (1999) prompted that the procedure for character instruction must be long haul and continuous. Additionally, they underlined that it is fundamental to associate character training with each part of school life so it procures significance for understudies. A techniques system for character training ought to be entwined into a few school components, including: (a) the whole school educational modules, (b) the school mission, (c) discipline approaches, (d) after-school exercises, and (e) educator proficient advancement exercises. Sugirin (2011) introduced two different modes in implementing character education in EFL learning namely explicit mode and implicit mode. In explicit mode, EFL teachers should have

a plan of what character values expected to be inserted in teaching and learning activity (Sugirin, 2011).

The EFL teacher chooses which part of the topic suits the inclusion of character values and the correct timing for this value to be brought into classroom discussion. The character value can be presented as a brief lecture or as a moral value in teaching and learning activities and it is expected to be discussed in the classroom with the students (Sugirin, 2011). The purpose of this lecturing is to raise students' awareness of the character value concerned with the topic chosen. Another mode in implementing character education is through Implicit Mode. In implicit mode, the EFL teacher can use any possible means to insert character education in the instruction, i.e. serving it as a hidden syllabus, as well as in other academic communications with the student (Sugirin, 2011). It focuses on enabling the students to acquire the character values unconsciously in teaching and learning activities. Having these two modes to be implemented in the classroom can help EFL teachers apply character education in teaching and learning activities.

According to Collins and Henjum (1999) there are some challenges faced in the process of integrating character education, the first one is the difficulty of matching the character education values toward the materials available which means not all materials contain character values. Therefore, teachers, in this case, must be creative to connect character values in the materials available. Second, the diverse characteristics of learners. It is a common thing in a group of learners that they have different character one another, including the level of their competence. In this situation, the teachers must be able to manage the class well without ignoring some certain students. As a result, the competence as a teacher must be really comprehended and be able to be practiced by the teacher, especially in pedagogical competence. Character education can also be described that building good character need variety approaches and wide ten (Lickona, 1996). It focuses on meeting a wide range of students' needs including academic, moral, physical, psychological and social needs. The call for character education has been amplified by what Lickona refers to "as troubling youth trends", "the decline of family" and "the desire for a recovery of shared objectively important ethical values"

(Lickona, 1993, p. 8-9). There are other social problems that have made people in the United States and elsewhere aware of the importance of character education. These problems include high-profile corporate scandals (Smith, 2006) and a "pervasive orientation to individualism" (Turiel, 2002, p. 7) that might lead to the devaluation of others and a disregard for courtesy (Ryan, Bohlin, & Thayer, 1996). In Indonesia, the call for character education aimed to eliminate internal conflicts and corruption in order to foster harmony and prosperity in the whole society (Nuh, 2011). The goal of character education is thus not limited to meeting the academic needs of students but also focuses on the students' moral development. Indonesian character education therefore can be regarded as realizing the government's aim to nurture and maintain a national core of shared values. Through the values offered by the official curriculum, education is used as a means to promote good behavior and attitudes, regard for diversity and differences, and dispositions to face an increasingly competitive world. The official curriculum requires teachers to teach values in a purposeful way to prepare youth for a competitive world as well as reenergize their national identity.

### **English Teaching and Learning Process**

It cannot be denied that English in senior high school is helpful in the formation of students' character because this subject is strongly associated with students' daily activities. Moreover, students' skills can be also developed through this. Good character is not formed automatically, because it can be developed ultimately through a continued process of teaching, learning, and practice in everyday life. Character formation begins with a caring relationship: first at home, and then at school. To sustain it, schools are needed to enforce character education to students, so that their morals and ethics can be maintained well. Morality deals in large part with relationships with the way people treat each other. In the small society of the classroom, students have two kinds of relationships; their relationship with the teacher and their relationship with their peers. Both relationships have great potential for positive and negative impact on a young person's character development. Character values can be inserted in the teaching and learning process. Overall, the character teaching plans in

the learning process are twelve values, namely, polite, appreciative, creative, communicative, logical thinking, active, independent, hardworking, innovative, confident, honest and cooperative. The following table is character teaching mapping in every skill that can be embedded by teachers.

The approach of teaching is really important to be taken into account when integrating character education. It should be able to support the effectiveness of developing good characters. One of the approaches, Contextual Teaching and Learning (CLT) can be chosen to help teachers relating learning

**Table 2. Character Teaching Mapping in Every Skill**

Skill	Pre-activity	Whilst-activity	Post-activity
Listening	Polite Appreciative Creative Communicative	Logical Thinking Active Independent Hard Work	Appreciative
Reading	Appreciative Polite Logical Thinking	Appreciative Polite Logical Thinking Active Hard Working, Creative Innovative Confident	Appreciative
Writing	Appreciative Discipline	Logical Thinking Creative Hard Working Active Teamwork	Honest
Speaking	Logical Thinking Creative Appreciative	Communicative Honest Appreciative Hard Work Confidence	Creative Appreciative

materials to a real life, motivating the students to make connections between the knowledge they learned and their own lives. According to *Direktorat Pembinaan Sekolah Menengah Pertama* (2010) contextual learning applies some of the learning principles. These principles are briefly described below.

#### 1. *Constructivism*

Constructivism is a learning theory which states that people compile or build their understanding from the new experiences based on their background knowledge and beliefs.

#### 2. *Inquiry*

Inquiry is a transition process from the observation to the comprehension which is begun with the observation from the questions that appeared.

#### 3. *Questioning*

Questioning is the use of questions to guide the way of thinking of the students better than merely to give them information to their understanding.

#### 4. *Learning Community*

Learning community is a group of students

who get involved in learning activities so that a deeper learning process occurs.

#### 5. *Modeling*

Modeling is a display process of an example, to make others think, work, and learn.

#### 6. *Reflection*

Reflection is the way of thinking of what the students have learned, and it aims at helping students to describe the meaning of their qualities.

#### 7. *Authentic Assessment*

Authentic assessment is a term that is created to explain various evaluation methods that let students demonstrate their own ability to solve problem.

## CONCLUSION

Character education is naturally entwined in education, regardless of the possibility that the accentuation shifts from school to class. Teachers and groups frequently perceive the estimation of character education. Be that as it may, when group and school pioneers team up and make character education and staff preparing a need, huge advantages can hap-

pen that can affect generation. The result of character education has dependably been empowering, decidedly, and ceaselessly setting up the pioneers of tomorrow. Teacher plays diverse roles in English Language Teaching (ELT). Some of the roles where a teacher performs when dealing the students are as follows-learner, facilitator, assessor, manager, and evaluator. By performing various roles, he becomes an ideal guide in shaping their future. As the government regulation states that the goal of national education is to develop educated people with life skill and good character building. Developing character in this globalization era is very challenging. Despite the obvious good will of character educators, there is little training available, particularly on how to integrate the character itself. In Indonesia, the integration of character education should be based on 2013 curriculum which consists of eighteen character values. Based on the review of language educators' and researchers' toward the character education, it is considered that some challenges faced by English teachers, particularly in Indonesia including (1) the difficulty of matching the character education values toward the materials available, (2) the diverse characteristics of learners, and (3) the strategies on integrate the characters. Some solution that could be offered to face those challenges such as preparing the lesson plan with the character included, sharing the information with others EFL teachers to get some feedbacks on how to integrate the character, searching the internet talk offer some information about the character education themselves that may help EFL teachers in integrating the character education.

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