

Character Building in Junior High School English Language Textbooks: A Content Analysis

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Abstract

This study aimed to analyze whether the reading and texts and activities in the textbooks reflect the eighteen character building values. The research design of this study is descriptive-qualitative content analysis. Four steps in collecting data consisted of 1) writing down the topics, reading texts and activities of the units in the textbooks for grade seven and eight; (2) selecting the topics, reading texts and activities in the textbooks; (3) analyzing the topics, reading texts and activities in the textbooks by using the table consist of some indicators ; (4) drawing conclusion based on the result of the findings and discussion. This study yielded three findings. First, each unit in the textbooks, actually, has already reflects character building values implicitly. Second, it is found that not all units in the two textbooks provide reading texts so that the writer must modify the existed texts to reflect character building values. Then, the two English textbooks do not cover all of the eighteen values of character building values that reflected from the topics of unit and reading texts. Consequently, the two textbooks published by National Education Department need to be revised.

Introduction

Indonesia needs great number of human resources with good quality as the main support in nation building. Therefore, education has an important role in developing the qualified human resources. Many social problems, however, happen in Indonesia, for example, cases of massive corruption, collusion, violence, dishonesty, irresponsibility, low discipline, sex and drug abuses, cyber crime, children bullying, human trafficking, illegal logging and so on. This country progresses very slowly in achieving its goals to become a prosperous nation despite the abundant natural resources, and as the fifth biggest populated country in the world.

Some solutions and alternatives are proposed such as making regulation and strengthening law enforcement. Since the curriculum becomes the heart of education, it is better to give more attention to culture education and national character in it. It is mentioned in National Education System No 20, Chapter 3, that the function of the national education is to develop ability and build character in order to create an intelligible national life.

Concerning the function of national education which is to develop ability, it means that education must give impact toward Indonesian people characters. Contextually, we can see that the ability that must be developed is multitasking abilities, which leads to human beings known as religious people who obey God's regulation and as world leaders. So, the ability that must be

developed in Indonesian students is the ability to follow God's rules, to be his or her self, to live in harmony with others and to make the world as life's wealthy. Meanwhile, the second function of national education in building character is character oriented in which education has the function to more facilitating rather than shaping character.

Since Indonesia national education is still far from government expectation and it is still not able to compete on the global era, hopefully, education will not only transfer knowledge but also culture. Therefore, it is urgent that education reformation be done to make enculturation, which means to have nation and character building to reach nation reconstruction through civility. Formerly, the government initiates to apply character-based education integrated in some special subject namely Religion, History and Civic.

Character refers to someone's personal qualities. A person with a good character is one who exhibits personal qualities which fit those considered desirable values accepted by society. The qualities may include trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, honesty, self discipline, perseverance, and citizenship. Education is prepared to help a person to achieve those qualities. Character education is, therefore, the deliberate effort to develop virtues that are good for individuals and good for the society. It is the development of knowledge, skills and abilities that enable learners to make informed and responsible choice.

Character education has the purpose to increase the quality of education that is building the students' characters and moral value systematically, integrated and proportionally that is suitable with the graduate standard competence. The character education will be implemented in Indonesia. The foundation of law in character education is based on: *Undang- Undang Dasar 1945*, *Undang-Undang* Number 20 in the year 2003 about *Sistem Pendidikan Nasional (Sisdiknas)*, *Peraturan Pemerintah* No 19 in the year 2005 about *Standar Nasional Pendidikan*, *Permendiknas* No 39 in the year 2008 about Student, *Permendiknas* No 22 in the year 2006 about Content Standard, *Permendiknas* No 23 in the year 2006 about Graduate Competence Standard, *Rencana Pemerintah Jangka Menengah Nasional 2010-2014*, *Renstra Kemendiknas 2010-2014*, and Strategic Plan of Directorate of Junior High School Development 2010-2014.

Character education is a system of labeling character values to school citizen that include the component of knowledge, awareness, and action to conduct the values. According to Elkind and Freddy Sweet (2004), they state that "Character education is the deliberate effort to help people understand, care about, and act upon core ethical values. When, we think about the kind of character we want for our children, it is clear that we want them to be able to judge what is right, care deeply about what is right, and then do what they believe to be right, even in the face of pressure from without and temptation from within."

Character building is the way to strengthen one's character by molding oneself into productive person, a person who has good qualities which fit the society. In the case of Indonesian

context today, character building needs to be directed more specifically to respond certain issues and cases related to people's moral degradation.

Since there is a regulation that every subject in every school in Indonesia have to add character building in this year, include English. Therefore, Indonesian government will implement the main values in junior high school subjects that will be internalized by junior high school students. There are 18 values of character building in national character and cultural education or PBKB (2010), namely; 1. Religious; 2. Honest, 3. Tolerant, 4. Disciplined, 5. Hard-working, 6. Creative, 7. Independent, 8. Democratic, 9. Curious, 10. Nationalistic, 11. Patriotic, 12. Sportive and Respectful, 13. Inclusive / communicative, 14. Peace-loving, 15. Studious, 16. Caring and compassionate, 17. Empathetic, and 18. Responsible.

English has become a language that is widely used by people throughout the world. Crystal (1997) shows that "English has now achieved a global status." Similarly, according to Cahyono and Widiati (2004:5), "there are three factors that have contributed to this: English is geography and cultural history, its continuous promotion through aid programs, and its role as the language of science and technology." The government of Indonesia, therefore, has established that English is to be mastered by the students.

Regarding English as the compulsory subject, based on the decree of Education and Culture Ministry no 096/1967 about the function and the purpose of English teaching process for secondary level of education (junior and high school) in the Department of Education and Culture, it is stated that the function of English are as follows: 1) to accelerate the process of national building; 2) to cooperate with other countries; and 3) to pursue a policy from Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Then, the purpose of English taught in secondary level of education is to equip students with "working knowledge of English" (Huda, 1999).

In Indonesia, English becomes one of compulsory subjects has to be taught in junior high schools up to senior high school as the first foreign language. It is widely taught in Indonesia because it plays an important role in education field since there are many literatures are written in English and many people use English as a means of communication in some forums. Besides, it becomes standard evaluation in continuing study in the next level, especially if the student wants to study abroad.

Under the present system of education, the teaching of English in junior and senior secondary schools in Indonesia seems to constitute one stage of instruction (Cahyono and Widiati, 2006). According to the 2003 English Curriculum, the objectives of English instruction at two levels of secondary school (junior and senior high) are stated in Depdiknas, 2003:7:

- a) "Developing communicative competence in spoken and written English language which comprises listening, speaking, reading and writing."

- b) “Raising awareness regarding the nature and importance of English as a foreign language and as a major means of learning”.
- c) “Developing understanding of the interrelation of language and culture, as well as cross- cultural understanding.”

If we talk about a theme or topic, it deals with genre and text, especially reading text. Therefore, the researcher focuses on the reading skill. As we know, reading skill has important role in mastering English besides listening, speaking and writing. Then, most of the materials found and presented in the textbook is in the form of reading texts. So, students should develop reading ability to get sufficient knowledge in reading the passages or reading text in the textbook.

Similarly, Cahyono & Widiati (2006:47-48) indicates that English instruction in the school system in Indonesia aims to “provide sufficiently well-developed reading skill among Indonesians to read science-related text written in English.” As clearly stated in the English curriculum, other language skills are not neglected. However, reading ability has always been the primary objective of English instruction.

We cannot deny the fact that English is getting more and more important in Indonesia recently. In science and technology, for example, English has important role in enhancing it. To be honest we cannot improve the quality of our science and technology without mastering English. This is because many books on science technology in Indonesia libraries are written in English. Education field is another example of how important English is. In their effort to improve the quality of education to face free trade era and globalization era, Indonesian government launched the school with a basis as international standardized schools to achieve international admission.

In the teaching and learning process, character building values have already taught and developed in Religion and Civic as the instructional effect and the nurturer effect. Meanwhile, the other subjects namely Science, Language and Social should develop character building values or virtues in the classroom activities as the nurturer effects.

As a subject at school, English is also expected to teach character building to the students. Concerning with this, some schools have required their English teachers to put character building in their lesson plans. Virtues which are targeted by activities during the teaching and learning process should be mentioned as the nurturer effect. When the activity is discussion for example, the virtues targeted among others are to respect others’ opinion, collaboration and cooperation. Reading activity may target virtues as diligence, critical thinking, activeness, and accuracy.

A *RSBI* school is one of the programs which is established by the regulation of the government. It stands for *Rintisan Sekolah Bertaraf Internasional* or International Standardized School. It is a national school with international standard or *Sekolah Bertaraf Internasional* (SBI) prepared its students based on National Standard Education with International level so that it is

hoped that its graduates have abilities in the international competition. *RSBI* is a program in education which tries to get the progress of education.

One of the components that can support the success of the English teaching and learning process is the materials. Material plays an influential role in teaching and learning programs. The materials determine the content of the lessons, the skills taught and the kinds of language practice that students are participated in. Similarly, Kitao (1997:p.1) stated that “materials should teach students to learn that they should be the resources for ideas, and activities for instruction or learning and that they should give teachers rationales for what they do.”

A textbook is a book containing teaching learning materials designed in accordance with curriculum. Since textbook is specially written for pedagogical purposes, it is classified as created materials. As stated by Richards (2001:267), “a textbook as a created material that is specially developed instructional resources as the opposite of authentic materials.”Then, textbook provides the materials. There are three functions of the use of textbook: it helps the teacher to teach, it gives the structure in the syllabus, and it helps students to learn without the presentation of the teacher.

Teachers in Indonesia rely heavily on textbooks for teaching materials. Concerning to that reason, teachers need a textbook to help them implement the curriculum. Hutchinson and Torres (1994:317) state that textbooks have vital and positive part to play in day-to-day English teaching which makes their importance becomes greater. Teacher should consider the instructional materials in the textbook, however, because the instructional materials in a textbook are crucial for both teacher and students. So, appropriate instructional materials should be selected based on the instructional objectives and taken from relevant sources.

It is important for the teacher to consider good EFL textbooks for him or her teaching. Grant (1991:118) states that “a perfect textbook does not exist but the best book is available for teachers and students. The best book should satisfy three conditions: it should suit the needs and interest and abilities of students, suit the teacher and meet the need of official public teaching syllabus or examination.”

Since the textbook has been evaluated by Standard of National Education (BSNP), the writer tries to figure out another aspect that is the themes or the topics found in the textbook related to character building as the form of reference. The researcher is really interested in analyzing the content of reading texts in the textbooks, because the writers of the textbook have intention to write for educational purposes. In fact, the writers and the publishers of the textbooks for International standardized junior high schools provide and develop the materials based on the guidance of The Ministry of National Education Department that contain some basic values in the format in SKL (standard of competence graduate). So, although the textbooks are not labeled or it is not highlighted “character building”, but actually the materials made by the writers of the textbooks has been contained character building values substance implicitly. Then, in this study the researcher

tries to identify whether the themes or the topics, reading texts, and activities in the textbooks include or reflect some values of character building.

Method

Since the present study concerns the analysis of content, it is designed as descriptive qualitative content analysis. Gay, Borg and Gall (1983) define content analysis as “a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication.” So, content analysis is a kind of study that needs documents or written data, i.e., printed forms or books as sources of data.

According to Best (1981:106-107), “the analysis is concerned with the explanation of the status of some phenomenon at a particular time or its development over period of time. One, of the purposes of content or documentary analysis is to evaluate bias, prejudice, propaganda in a textbook presentation.” Thus, when we use documentary sources, one must bear in mind is that data are appearing in print are not necessarily trustworthy, so that the validity of its content needs to be questioned.

The design of the study is qualitative in nature. It is qualitative because it aims at determining, examining and describing the strength of materials in the textbooks used in international standardized junior high schools. Although there are studies in the form of quantitative analysis on the presentation of materials in textbooks, the present researcher wants to explain that the textbooks from Depdiknas are still available to be used for teaching English relates to the current character building issue, so the teachers can use these textbooks despite the fact that there is no label based on character building. Therefore, it was considered appropriate to use qualitative design.

In this study, the object of the data analysis was the materials in the textbook. It means the document is already available. The researcher tries to find out whether the character building is reflected in the reading texts, activities, and topics of the textbook. Then, the writer will give recommended topics, reading texts and activities that reflect character building, and insert some values in the character building proposed by the government in the textbook’s materials.

The main sources of data in this study were: *Bahasa Inggris for Junior High School Year Seven International Standard School* and *Bahasa Inggris for Junior High School Year Eight International Standard School*. These books were published by the Department of National Education and used as compulsory textbooks for International Standardized School. The first textbook consists of sixteen units and the second one consists of eight units.

In this case, the present researcher took the units of the two textbooks that contain topics, reading texts and activities. Then, each unit of the textbooks was analyzed to identify the aspect of character building values reflected from the topics, reading texts and activities. She also used the result of the interview and the classroom observation as additional data.

The main instrument of this study was the present researcher herself. She used a table with description row to describe each value of character building based on National Education Department and 18 columns under values of character building in national character and cultural education (PBKB) as an instrument, namely; 1. Religious; 2. Honest, 3. Tolerant, 4. Disciplined, 5. Hard working, 6. Creative, 7. Independent, 8. Democratic, 9. Curious, 10 Nationalistic, 11. Patriotic, 12. Sportive and Respectful, 13. Inclusive / Communicative, 14. Peace Loving, 15. Studious, 16. Caring and Compassionate, 17. Empathetic, and 18. Responsible. All of the descriptions of the character building values based on Ministry of Education and Culture or *Kemendikbud* help the researcher in collecting the data. Those features can be seen in Chapter II in Table 2.1

Then, the present researcher created indicators that consist of key words, inference, writer's tone, and theme to identify the character building values in the reading texts in each unit of the two textbooks. Those indicators help her in identifying the character building values in reading texts that reflect in the textbook. Next, the present researcher elaborated the indicators as follows: First, she used key words to identify specific words found in the reading text that reflect character building values.

Second, she used inference because when we read we make inferences quite frequently. This happens because the meaning of a sentence or a paragraph is not always stated directly. Inference in reading is an intelligent guess about what the author does not say by using the style, hints and clues the author does give. Style is the writer's use of certain specific devices of language such as connotation, imagery, figurative language such as metaphor, simile, or personification, and symbols. For example, in the text we may find a national flag symbolizing a certain country or a dove symbolizing peace.

Then, contextual clues or clues from the context is the other words in the sentence or from nearby sentences that help one to understand new words. There are several different contextual clues which help clarify the meaning of words in any piece of writing or texts that consists of restatement, illustration and examples, comparison and contrast, synonym, antonym, situation and explanation.

Afterwards, she identified character building values from the reading's author's tone. Finally, she used themes that are stated explicitly or implicitly. In summary, those indicators namely key words, inference, writer's tone, and theme used by the writer in identifying the aspects of the eighteen character building values in reading texts found in each unit of the two textbooks. Those indicators are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1: The Indicators Used in Identifying Character Building in Reading Texts

Character building values	Dictionary Definition (literal meaning)	Indicators / identifications in reading texts			
		Key words	Inference (style & contextual clues)	Writer's tone	Theme
Religious	Connected with a particular religion	- pray - obey religion principles	- situation & explanation	Matter-of-fact/ moralizing tone	Explicitly/ implicitly
Honest	Telling the truth / not lying.	- never breaking law/cheating	- situation & explanation	Matter of fact / Moralizing tone	Explicitly/ implicitly
Tolerant	Having/showing the willingness.	- allow - forgive someone's fault.	- situation & explanation	Matter of fact / moralizing tone	Explicitly/ implicitly
Hard-working	To do sth involves physical/mental activity seriously.	- diligent - show great effort to do sth	- situation & explanation	Matter of fact/moralizing tone	Explicitly/ implicitly
Creative	Involving the skillful & imaginative use of sth to produce.	- active - create sth	- situation & explanation	Matter-of-fact/ moralizing tone	Explicitly/ implicitly
Independent	Not dependent on others.	- do sth without one's help	- situation & explanation	Matter of fact / Moralizing tone	Explicitly/ implicitly
Democratic	Based on the principles of fair & equal treatment.	- give opportunity to others who have different ideas with him/her	- situation & explanation	Matter-of-fact/ moralizing tone	Explicitly/ implicitly

Curious	Eager to know and learn	- try to find out sth / investigate/ learn sth they don't know	- situation & explanation	Matter-of-fact/ moralizing tone	Explicitly/ implicitly
Nationalistic	Strongly favoring pride in one's own country.	- show the spirit to sacrifice for the nation.	- situation & explanation	Matter-of-fact/ moralizing tone	Explicitly/ implicitly
Patriotic	Having a strong feeling for one's nation	- describe how beautiful area in his /her country	- situation & explanation	Matter-of-fact/ moralizing tone	Explicitly/ implicitly
Sportive and Respectful	Showing / feeling respect.	- Greet elder people & do sth to make older people happy	- situation & explanation	Matter-of-fact/ moralizing tone	Explicitly/ implicitly
Disciplined	Self-control aimed at producing obedience to rules.	- Diligent - on time / in regular time - obey the rule/ regulation	- situation & explanation	Matter-of-fact/ moralizing tone	Explicitly/ implicitly
Inclusive / Communicative	Including sth/ ready & willing to talk and give.	- ability to work together & build /make relationship	- situation & explanation	Matter-of-fact/ moralizing tone	Explicitly/ implicitly
Peace-loving	Having a strong feeling for peace	- create lovely place/ atmosphere	- situation & explanation	Matter-of-fact/ moralizing tone	Explicitly/ implicitly
Studious	Having a strong feeling for reading	- always read - learn sth by reading	- situation & explanation	Matter-of-fact/ moralizing tone	Explicitly/ implicitly

Empathetic	Ability to imagine & share another one's feeling.	- helpful and pity on sth easily.	- situation & explanation	Matter-of-fact/ moralizing tone	Explicitly/ implicitly
Caring and Compassionate	Showing affection & pity for the suffering of others	- concern - pay attention to sb's need	- situation & explanation	Critical / sad / ironic tone	Explicitly/ implicitly
Responsible	Capable of being trusted.	- can be trusted by someone else	- situation & explanation	Matter-of-fact/ moralizing tone.	Explicitly/ implicitly

Meanwhile, the present researcher makes another instrument to identify character building in textbook's activities. She uses some components in the form of three columns in Table 3.2 below such as activities, purpose of the activities and attitude that makes the action successful by using values stated in the character building. It can be seen in Table 2.

TABLE 2: The Components Used in Identifying Character Building in Activities

Activities in the Textbook	Purpose of the Activity	Attitude that makes the action successful (character
Reading aloud	Pronunciation	Accurate, precise, careful,
Perform a dialogue with a partner or discuss something	Practice certain function to master its use	Cooperative and communicative, respectful
Create a dialogue	Practice certain function to master its use	Creative, independent,

In this case, the researcher chooses to use explanations and elaborations after analyzing and categorizing the data. It happens because the writer uses current issues that is character building values as the basis of the study. So, the researcher needs to describe each value explicitly to be understood by the readers. Then, the conclusion is drawn from the result of the findings and based on discussion.

Results

Principally, it is important to develop character because the character building is not in the form of a particular subject, but it is taught in every subject integrally or as embedded virtues for each subject. In micro context, characters are developed holistically or use the whole school reform. A school as the leading sector attempts to take the advantage of all parts of learning environment to initiate, improve, strengthen, and perfect the process of character education continually at schools. In this case there are four activities in developing characters, namely: teaching learning in the class, daily activities in the form of school culture, as well as activities at home and society.

Next, the development of character values in the teaching learning process in the class is conducted by using embedded approach. So, practically, character education in school is not only becoming responsibility of special subjects are as in Religion and Civic subjects but also the other subjects such as Science, Language, and Social should highlight character building activities as nurturer effects.

Therefore, teacher and stakeholder should insert the character building values stated by the government in the existed curriculum (KTSP), syllabus, and lesson plan, especially for junior high school levels. Then, textbook also must meet the need of official public teaching syllabus. In conclusion, the writer needs to conduct the content analysis to the textbooks in term of topics, activities and the reading texts that reflect character building.

Some topics of units that do not match with the topic of reading text that reflect character building values, such as: unit one, two, three, four, six and seven. Therefore, the author gives some recommended topics for those units in the English textbook for the seventh graders. Whereas, the rest of topic of the units presented in the textbook are suitable enough or appropriate, namely unit five, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen. Some units that do not have topics of reading texts, such as: unit one, unit two, unit four, and unit seven. Therefore, she gives some reasons and recommends topics of reading texts in the English textbook for the seventh graders by creating a new topic and rearranging the existed or original topics.

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