

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter elaborates the burning issues and rationales behind the choice of the topic of the thesis. It also discusses the research questions, the objectives of the research, scope of the study, and research significances. The last two sub-chapters discuss definitions of some terms used in the study and how the thesis is presented.

1.1 Background of the study

Character education becomes a fundamental issue in our education today. This issue certainly does not come without any reasons. One of which is the urgency of inculcating both good competencies and strong characters to the young generation to support the emergence of a 21st-century globally competitive society. As stated by Delors (1996), education in the 21st century should lean on four learning pillars: learning in order to know, how to do, how to live together, and how to be. Hence, education should be seen as the heart of an individual and community development which aims at enabling a person to develop his potential and talents and realizing to be responsible for his own lives. Moreover, as stated in *Konsep dan Pedoman Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter* (Concept and Guideline of Character Education Reinforcement) proposed by Ministry of Education and Culture or Kemendikbud (2017a), in order to be able to compete in 21st century era, Indonesia students are required to have multiple competencies such as critical thinking, creative thinking, and communication skills involving the proficiency of international language and collaborative learning with character building as the basis. Those aforementioned competencies should also be supported by a school which is able to acquaint and to teach core values to assist young generation to fit in society. In other words, the school should be the place responsible for developing students' good behavior as well as building students' morality to adapt in the global society (Qoyyimah, 2015).

In addition, the fact that students in this era are really engaged in advancement of technology and information but are unfortunately also engaged in more unethical behaviors such as violence, cheating, stealing, lying, problems with interpersonal relationships, and other unethical behaviors is another reason why

character building becomes an important issue. The easiness provided by technology is easily assumed to lead to a moral degradation if it is not fortified by good education which inculcates values and character to the students.

It might be too reckless to conclude that media particularly the internet might be the only one causing students' moral degradation. However, this accusation seems inevitable given that many cases are found in our society related to the internet. *Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia* (KPAI) or Commission for Protection of Children Indonesia recorded that there were 1111 cases of pornography involving students, 66 children who became the victims of online sexual harassment, 28 students who committed online sexual harassment, 49 students becoming the victims of social media pornography, and there were 6147 students who committed crimes from 2011 to 2015 (KPAI, 2015). Moreover, International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) also released surprising data. In 2015, there were 84 Indonesian students becoming victims of violence, 75% of students ever committed violence, and 50% of students were reported to be victims of bullying (Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia or Kemen-PPPA, 2015). During the same year, National Narcotics Agency (BNN) recorded that among all drug users, 27.32% of them were students. Surprisingly, ninety five elementary school students in Bekasi and six students from Jakarta were proven to be drugs users (BNN, 2015). Those mentioned facts are also followed by some other cases related to students' lack of disciplinary, integrity and respect at school community.

To address the challenges, the government designed a curriculum which set character building as the main goal. The government's efforts started with the introduction of 2010 trialed character education curriculum which offered eighteen values to be inculcated. The stipulated values were religiosity, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hardworking, creative, independence, democratic, curiosity, patriotism, nationalism, appreciative, being friendly, peacemaker, love to read, environment awareness, social awareness, and responsibility (Ministry of National Education or Kemendiknas, 2011). However, the inclusion of those values in the curriculum seems unable to meet the complexity of a competitive global society in the 21st-

century since it still focused only on academic intelligence which is unfortunately not able to develop higher order thinking. Moreover, the program required more comprehensive guidelines on how to be clearly carried out (Kemendikbud, 2017a).

The priority of building character is then reinforced in the latest curriculum, 2013 curriculum, requiring character education to be integrated into all parts of school activities. The reinforcement of character education involves teachers in the process of teaching, school leader, and school staffs supported mainly by parents and people in society to foster the core values to become a habit. Regarding the process of teaching and learning managed by teachers, the government through Ministry of Education and Culture argue that all subjects taught at school should be incorporated with core character values proposed in the curriculum from the teaching planning to evaluation (Kemendikbud, 2017a). Following 2013 curriculum, Ministry of Culture and Education launched a revised program called *Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter* (Character Education Reinforcement) for primary and secondary school appointing 542 piloting schools: 250 elementary schools and 292 junior high schools from all provinces in Indonesia (Kemendikbud, 2017a). The program focusing on five core values such as religiosity, nationalism, independence, teamwork, and integrity suggests all schools to integrate those values in three bases namely class-based character education reinforcement, school's culture-based character education reinforcement, and society-based character education reinforcement.

With respect to class-based character education reinforcement, English teachers as the ones who are also demanded to incorporate character building in the process of teaching should be aware and understand how to guide the students to assemble their character since they are directly involved in almost all students' activities at schools. In other words, it should be borne in mind that they indisputably should have the capability of doing more than just teaching English to the students. They should be able to build students' character not only through teaching instructions but also through a good modelling since students can see, learn, and probably imitate what teachers do.

However, the demand for being a good model for the students and for having the ability to integrate character education in the classroom is not followed by a clear direction on how to do it. Accordingly, many English teachers find it difficult to apply it in practice (Sanderse, 2012). With some values which are explicitly nominated to be stipulated to the students as stated in the curriculum such as *honesty, discipline, responsibility, care (tolerance, communal work), politeness, and confidence* (Education and Culture Ministerial Regulation No. 58 year 2014 about basic framework and curriculum structure of Junior High School), the dilemma teachers are facing is whether they should adjust their teaching materials and activities with those values, meaning that they have to find teaching materials and design activities which accommodate those values, or they could only adjust those values in their teaching materials and activities which means that the teachers only take certain values they think to fit into their teaching process.

More than that, incorporating values in the process of learning English as the foreign language (EFL) in the classroom seems more complicated than in other subjects because the students encounter the difference of culture between English as the language they are learning and their own culture. Consequently, there is a significant impact on dimensions of moral in language teaching process (Akbari & Tajik, 2012). In other words, learning English is not merely learning about how to use English both spoken and written form with correct grammatical forms, but it should also emphasize on how to use it correctly and appropriately given other aspects such as target language's culture, situation, and context. Besides, English teachers should be able to introduce good values and habits from target language cultures from which the students could learn such as their discipline, awareness of the importance of cleanliness in their life, the way the queue, and other good habits. On the other hand, however, English teachers should also be able to teach the students to respect and love their own culture. In other words, Indonesian English teachers are demanded to have the ability to help learners facilitate the culture differences between national values originated from *Pancasila* as Indonesia ideology and the values from English in which the students are learning (Qoyyimah, 2016).

In addition, the issues of bringing character values in language classrooms either in ESL or EFL setting have already been mentioned by some scholars more than a decade ago. Among the scholars, Brown (1997) is probably the first scholar who paid attention to the issue of stipulating character values into English classroom. In his article entitled *the place of moral and political issues in language pedagogy*, he questions whether language learners must be encountered with ethical, moral, and religious issues in the classroom and how English teachers could facilitate those issues in the classroom. After Brown, Shaaban (2005) in more detailed explanation provides teachers with the rationales, principles, and methods for incorporating moral education in the English classroom, followed by other scholars from other countries such as Abu Rass (2014) in Israel, Adeyemi, Moumakwa, and Adeyemi (2009) in Botswana, Feng (2017) in Hong Kong, Tsui (2008) in Taiwan, Wang (2008) in China, and Zakaria and Liang (2013) in Malaysia context. However, most of those studies only focus on providing teachers with theoretical foundations such as how fundamental it is to incorporate character values into a language classroom, how to facilitate the process of integration, and how the character values are conceptualized in teaching resources such as English textbooks without trying to dig more how the theories are realized in real practice.

In Indonesian context, research on the character education integration with teaching and learning process in EFL classroom particularly in 2013 curriculum is limited despite government's priority. Some of the research related to character education integration with teaching and learning process in EFL classroom were conducted by Anugrahwati and Agustien (2015); Islami (2016); and Qoyyimah (2016). However, with the limitation of instruments used in the aforementioned studies, they seem unable to comprehensively discover how teachers integrate target values in the teaching process as well as to discover their perception on the character education integration in classroom instructions. Some other studies such as Izfadlillah (2014); Noprianto (2017) focused only on teacher's lesson plan while Mambu (2015) concerned only with the character education assessment in the university context. Meanwhile, Hapsari (2013) emphasized on character values internalization in English textbooks, Albantani and Madkur (2016) highlighted

probable problems regarding character values incorporation in English classroom, and Welsh (2014) focused on the need to inculcate respect for difference in the teaching process. Since integrating character building in EFL classroom is a contextual process (Kemendikbud, 2017), the process of integration should be examined from how teachers plan the teaching process followed by how they implement what they have planned, and ended by how they assess students' behaviors during the teaching process.

Therefore, this current study is conducted to discover how Indonesian English teachers incorporate character values in English teaching process in the classroom and how these teachers perceived this program. Since the focus of character education reinforcement is on primary schools and junior high schools (Kemendikbud, 2017a), I would like to see its implementation from teachers of Junior high schools who have already implemented 2013 curriculum. Using three instruments to triangulate the results, the present study is expected to gain deep and comprehensive information which could give significant contributions to Indonesian education theoretically, practically, and authoritatively as well.

1.2 Research questions

Under the aforementioned circumstances, two research questions are addressed, as follows:

- a. How do Indonesian Junior High School teachers perceive character education incorporation in EFL classroom?
- b. How do Indonesian Junior High School teachers incorporate character education in EFL classroom?

1.3 Objectives of the research

Following up the research questions above, this study is intended to explore how Indonesian Junior High School teachers perceive character education incorporation in EFL classroom, and how they incorporate character education in their EFL classrooms.

1.4 Scope of the study

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The focuses of the study are first to investigate how EFL teachers perceive the incorporation of character values into their classrooms. Their perceptions are limited on how they view their students in term of their characters, what factors contributing to their students' character development, their viewpoints regarding the demand to integrate character values in their teaching process as well as the challenges they might encounter in the process of integration of character values. Secondly, this study also investigates the process of integration of character values in EFL classroom setting by Indonesian English teachers. The explored process starts from the way they plan the process of teaching which includes designing and looking for the teaching materials, how they deliver them in the teaching process and how they evaluate their students' character development.

1.5 Research significances

The present study is expected to give some meaningful contributions to Indonesian education theoretically, practically and authoritatively. From theoretical perspectives, the study would enrich current literature related to the integration of character education in EFL classroom of 2013 curriculum. Moreover, for English teachers, the findings could be beneficial as a reference and reflection as well on how to carry out the incorporation of character education in the process of teaching and learning English in the classroom. Meanwhile, for the stakeholders, this research results are also expected to be used as the useful information to follow up the implementation of 2013 curriculum which incorporates character building through Character Education Reinforcement program and to see whether the proposed program is well understood by English teachers and whether it runs as expected so that the stakeholders could conduct next steps in improving it.

1.6 Definition of terms

- Perception is the process of interpreting information, objects, events, and people involving human's senses based on his personal or others' experiences, assumptions, beliefs, and expectations
- Character is a person's set of psychological characteristics involving the integration of moral values and social norms which guide him/her to know,

to think, to demonstrate, and to act in certain ways in daily life which are believed to be either morally right or wrong.

- Character education is a deliberate effort to build students' awareness of moral values and social norms as a guide to live their life which involves all parties in educational institution community.
- 2013 curriculum is Indonesia's latest curriculum which is designed to build students' characters and to prepare the students to face global challenges in the 21st century era requiring them to be more active, creative, and innovative through the process of teaching and learning prioritizing on learning experiences through the process of observing, questioning, collecting information, associating, and communicating.

1.7 Thesis organization

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter presents the rationales behind the topic selection involving the objectives of the study as well as the significances which would be expected to emerge after doing the research. Meanwhile, chapter two unpacks theories supporting the study. It comprises the notion of perception, theories related to character education, 2013 curriculum, character education in 2013 curriculum, and character education in EFL classroom. This study also discusses the research methodology consisting research design, research settings, data collecting technique, research procedure, data analysis technique, and research timeline which are elaborated in chapter three. While chapter four presents the data collection and discussion of results of the study, the last chapter, chapter five, discusses conclusions, recommendations, and the limitations of the study.

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