

TEACHING GOOD CHARACTER IN A NARRATIVE TEXT THROUGH STORYTELLING

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Abstract

This research paper entitled “*Teaching Good Character in a Narrative Text through Storytelling*” was aimed at discovering the teaching of good character of respect in a narrative text through storytelling and the students’ responses to the teaching of good character of respect in a narrative text through storytelling. The good character was respect and the story used in this research entitled “*Gilbert the Goat Learns Respect*” was produced by MyYoungChild.org in 2012. The eighth grade students became the participant of this research and to collect and identify the data, qualitative method was applied equipped with descriptive analysis with observation, questionnaire and document analysis as the instrument of the research. The result of the study showed that the teaching of good character of respect in a narrative text is taught through storytelling relatively faithful to the framework of Ellis and Brewster (1991) that have three steps namely pre-storytelling step, during storytelling step and after storytelling step. Some activities in each step also help the students in learning good character of respect. From this teaching, the students were able to make a reflection from the story and showed their behavior of being respectful through the reflection. For the responses, almost all of the students showed positive responses to the help of storytelling in teaching good character of respect in a narrative text through storytelling. This model of teaching is handy for teacher to teach good character of respect in a narrative through storytelling in more well-prepared method.

Keywords: *good character; respect; narrative text; storytelling*

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesian education system, the implementation of character education has become a big issue since the demand of Kemdikbud (Kementrian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia). Effendy—the minister of education and culture (on Kemdikbud’s website, www.kemdikbud.go.id, 2017) mentions that one of Kemdikbud’s program called “Reinforcement of Character Education” (*Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter—PPK*) is the main axis for the improvement of national education system, related to some government’s priority programs. In relation to this, Kemdikbud asserts that the learning process which is based on character reinforcement and integrated inside the school and outside the school through *PPK* will be able to present the competitive young generations that also have the quality of good characters.

Parallel to Kemdikbud’s program, Herlina (2012) states that in the rule of National Education Ministry Numbers 22, 23 and 24, students are expected to not only generate high intellectual but also good character, so that teacher should not only reckon with the materials when they are teaching, but also with the students’ character. Hence, teaching good character to the students becomes one of the attempts in implementing and integrating character education (the *PPK* program) in Indonesian schools by teachers. Herlina also states that teacher needs to pay attention to the students’ character by teaching them the knowledge of good characters that integrated in the teaching-learning materials.

In relation to teaching good character through storytelling, the use of storytelling in teaching language, especially in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL), has been applied by schools as a pedagogical tool (Rahim

& Rahiem, 2012). Apart from being used as a teaching language tool, especially in teaching vocabulary and structure, storytelling also has the ability in nurturing the students' emotional intelligence and storytelling is able to help the students in obtaining the perception of human behavior (Samantaray, 2014). This is also in line with Rahim and Rahiem (2012) who state that storytelling has the ability to be functioned as a medium of moral education to the students. Therefore, storytelling is considered as the right tool to teach good character to the students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Storytelling in Language Teaching

Storytelling is described as one of teaching technique that has tested by the time (Chambers, 1970). Rossiter (2002) states that storytelling is a communication form which preludes human's history provided in the written form and intended for teaching lessons and legating history from one generation to another generation. Rossiter also considers that storytelling is similar with the point of view of a narrative inquiry both in written form and oral form. This is in line with Heo (2004) who states that narrative inquiry embroils the stories' telling and retelling as we retrieve the significance of the stories from our own experiences that later is being told. Relating it to narrative text, Heo argues that narrative is a tool to create significance that connects new and old information learned by the individuals that they think, interpret and choose decisions according to narrative structures and elements. Denning (2005) adds that storytelling and narrative are the same things as both of them simply has a series of related events; it does not matter whether they have a plot, a turning point or a resolution or not.

As an EFL teacher, it is necessary to know the benefits of using storytelling as a teaching tool. In line with this, Ellis and Brewster (1991) state several arguments of the benefits of using storytelling as a tool in teaching English in the classroom. First, using storybooks can enrich the students' experience in learning. Stories are fun and they can motivate, help and develop the students to have positive attitudes towards foreign language, so that the students can generate an eagerness to learn.

Second, students can drill their imagination and link their imagination and fantasy with their own real world by using stories. The students are able to make their own self involve to the story when they identify the characters in the story and attempt to construe the narrative and the illustrations of the story. By having this imaginative experience, the students are helped in developing their own creative powers.

Next, by listening stories in the classroom, the students will add their social experience. While in reading and writing usually involve only individual activities, in the storytelling activity, the students are instigated by storytelling to share response of laughter, sadness, excitement and anticipation that is not only pleasing but also able to develop the students' confidence and encourage their social and emotional development.

Then, since students as children enjoy listening to stories over and over again, it allows language items to be obtained and strengthened. Since stories usually have the content of natural repetition of vocabulary and structure, it helps the students to remember every detail of the story in order to learn predicting the story step by step. The use of repetition also boost the students to participate in the narrative form since following meaning and predicting language are important skills in learning language.

After that, listening to the stories also help the students in developing their listening and concentrating skills. In addition, stories build the chances to develop the students' learning. Last, listening to stories gives the teacher chance to identify or improve new vocabulary and sentence structure by revealing the students to variation of language, impressive and common contexts that is able to enrich the students' thinking and step by step start to create their own speech.

The Elements and the Characteristics of Storytelling

McDrury and Alterio (2003) propose three elements contained in storytelling. There are setting, listeners and the story of storytelling itself. The first element is setting. They profess that the setting of storytelling can be both formal and informal. They further

explain that for informal setting, the storytelling activity can be done for example during the lunch break, in the hall way like usual conversations and any other similar things that indicates the unplanned storytelling.

The second element proposed by McDrury and Alterio is the listeners. According to them, the number of the listeners will influence the level and form of the dialogue occurred during the storytelling activity. The last element is the story itself. McDrury and Alterio (2003) state that reflective learning by using storytelling will likely to occur if the teacher as the storyteller has prepared and planed everything for the story and the teacher had integrated specific content of the story with the learning lessons.

In relation to this, Samantaray (2014) proposes some characteristics of storytelling; it is said that storytelling provokes curiosity; evokes student's imagination and interest in language skill; builds vocabulary, comprehension, story sequencing; improves listening and oral communication skills; is an interactive and co-operative process; as an art it is an enjoyable tool for practicing language learning skills and verbal expressions; binds listeners together; helps the listener to remember; uses all kinds of language conventions to make the story vivid and; makes listeners forget their misery.

The Techniques of Storytelling

In using storytelling as a teaching tool, it is important for the teacher to know the techniques of storytelling itself in order to make the story nice to be heard by the students as the listener. There are several techniques in using storytelling as a teaching tool according to Ellis and Brewster (1991) which are:

- a. If the students are unaccustomed to storytelling, teacher can start the storytelling activity with short meeting first in order not to require too much from the students and lengthen the students' concentration span;
- b. If it is possible, make the students as the listener sit on the floor around the teacher as the storyteller, so that the students will able to see the teacher, the illustrations and hear the teacher's voice and story clearly;
- c. Read the story slowly and clearly. The teacher should provide time to the students, so that the students can associate with what they hear from the teacher with that they see in the pictures to think, ask questions and make comments. Yet, the teacher still should diverge the pace when the story speeds up;
- d. Create some comments regarding the illustrations that the teacher has provided and point the comments out to make the students' attention focus;
- e. Use gesture, mime, facial gestures to help the teacher in conveying the meaning of the vocabulary in the story that may be not understood by the students.
- f. Encourage the students to take part in the storytelling activity by repeating the key vocabulary in the story. Teacher can engage the students to do this by pausing the story and looking at the students with a questioning expression and by putting the hand to the ear to signify that the teacher are waiting for the students to take part in the storytelling activity. Then, the teacher repeats what the students have said to make sure whether the students have predicted the story correct or not.
- g. Diverge the pace, tone and volume of the teacher's voice.
- h. Dissimulate the teacher's voice for each different characters as much as the teacher able to motion that different characters are speaking and help the teacher in conveying the meaning of the story to the students.
- i. Involve the students by asking some questions regarding the story.
- j. If it is possible, create sound effects to make the story livelier.
- k. Repeat, expand and formulate the story. These will increase the chances for the students to exposure the language and also to work out the meaning and have it confirmed.

By using the techniques above, the storytelling can run smoothly, especially in

teaching good characters in a narrative text to the students. As the elaboration of the techniques that elaborated above, Ellis and Brewster (1991) also propose the steps in storytelling teaching namely pre-storytelling step, during storytelling step and after storytelling step.

Ellis and Brewster (1991) state that in the pre-storytelling step, teacher is hoped to be able to get the students' attention, make the students focusing their mind on the content of the story, introduce new vocabularies and give the students a chance to get their predictive skills. Dolakova (2008) also highlights some activities that will help the teacher make the most of the story namely oral practices games, brainstorming; singing activities; drawing, painting and craft activities; and moving games, manipulation.

In the next step, which is during storytelling step, Ellis and Brewster (1991) profess that teacher has to be able to use gestures, mime, use variation of voice, use different kind of facial expression, do some repetition and interact with the students to create the impression more pleasant and effective for the students and to help delivering the value and to maintain the students' attention.

In the after storytelling step as the last step, Ellis and Brewster recommend the teacher to do some follow up activities including reviewing the story and other activity that aimed to check students' understanding regarding the story told. Reviewing the story is in line with the view of Wright (2004) and Cameron (2001) who state that before giving follow-up activity to check students' understanding, teacher can review the story, so that the students can remember the story they have heard.

Selecting the Story

Selecting the story need the competence to rate the stories used and to sorting out stories that appropriate with the students' necessity (Dujmovic, 2006). In addition, Dujmovic proposes that teacher can only tell the students stories that they feel pleased with to make it successful and of course should have significance for the teacher.

According to Ellis and Brewster (1991), the language level including vocabulary, structures and functions should be suitable with the students; it should not be too easy or

too difficult. To support this, Cameron (2001) points out that the story need to have a clear plot, with an initial formulation of problem, a series of linked events, and a resolution of the problem.

The story also needs to interest the students, relevant to the students' necessity, amusing and memorable. The illustration in the story has to be related to the text in order to assist the students in comprehending the story and of course suitable with the students' age. This is in line with Cameron who states that the part of picture with the story need to be reviewed.

The story also should provide natural repetition to motivate the students in participating to the text and help them learn predicting. The story has to encourage students related to their daily life and build positive attitude to the students. Parallel to that, Cameron professes that the stories used should have values and attitudes in order to help students feel positive things.

Good Character in This Study: Respect

A definition of respect accommodates how you feel about someone and how you treat someone (LoveWell Press, on Talking with Trees, 2013). LoveWell Press (2013) elaborates that having respect toward someone means that you consider some good things regarding who someone is or how that someone acts. It is also said that revealing respect toward someone means that you do something that reveal you care about their feelings and well-being (LoveWell Press). LoveWell Press also mentions some actions that include into respect such as not calling people mean names, treating people with courtesy and caring enough about yourself that you don't do things you know can hurt you.

Activities in Teaching Good Character of Respect

Teaching good character becomes one of attempts in implementing character education and The Character Education Partnership (CEP, 2003, as cited in Vezzuto, 2004) proposes eleven principles of character education claimed effective. Vezuto furthermore argues that students will practice social and emotional competencies through studying, discussing and understanding core values (e.g. respect, responsibility and

integrity), also observing behavioral models and resolving problems including these values.

Vezzuto adds that the students are necessary to recognize and consider the character traits, ethical values and moral knowledge (good character emphasized in this study: respect); sense and appreciate these positive character traits; do and devise to apply these good character traits and core ethical values; have the chance to realize their scheme and behave their social emotional skills; and examine their own behavior in order to make it explicit (Vezzuto).

Vezzuto proposes six promising practices for classroom-based character development in order to teach good characters in the classroom in Institute for Character Education namely classroom (and school) climate, perspective taking and role play, peer discussion, cooperative learning or positive interdependence, service learning and reflective thinking. Further, Vezzuto divides peer discussion into eight kinds of activities which are class meetings, morning meetings, circle of power and respect, problem solving discussions, moral dilemma discussions, literature-based discussion, teacher as discussion leader and tips on conducting class discussion.

An Overview of Narrative Text

Narrative text is a text that elaborates problematical events which is producing a conjuncture and ends with a resolution (Gerot and Wignell, 1994). This in line with Herlina (2012) who proposes that narrative text is one of text types connected with logical and chronological series that is also connected with the events induced or experienced by factors. In relation to this, Anderson and Anderson (2003) state that there are some keys to understand narrative well namely sense of plot, theme, characters, events and how all the key components related to each other.

Related to this, Sejnost and Thiese (2011) profess that narrative text contains any kind of writing both in fiction and nonfiction form which is connected with sequences of events. In addition to this, Sejnost and Thiese highlight that narrative in fiction and nonfiction form recite narration which uses imaginative language and expresses emotion to express the imaginative language and

emotion itself where narrative usually uses imagery, metaphors and symbols.

METHOD

This study used a qualitative investigation research design. It is a design that has substance of explanations about the central phenomenon investigated in the study, the respondents in the study, and the research site. It also delivers appearing pattern and research words drawn from qualitative inquiry (Creswell, 2009). Relating to the definition, this study concerned on the how good character of respect in a narrative text through storytelling taught that includes the way teacher teaches good character of respect in a narrative text through storytelling, selects the story and character in the storytelling process and how the teacher explore the way to tell the story and the students' responses to the teaching of good character of respect in a narrative text through storytelling

This study is aimed to describe how good character of respect in a narrative text through storytelling taught and find out the students' responses to the teaching of good character of respect in a narrative text through storytelling and a qualitative approach was considered to be used at this study. In obtaining a deep understanding, this study used a descriptive qualitative method. Descriptive qualitative method aims at investigating detail rendering people, places, or events in a setting in qualitative approach (Creswell, 2009). In addition to this, Wu and Volker (2009) point out that descriptive qualitative method is used to provide a description and explanation of beliefs, meanings in context-specific setting and behaviors. Cresswell (2009) also professes that qualitative approach makes the researcher looks for creating the significance of a phenomenon from the participants' views, which means recognizing a culture sharing group and studying how it expand shared patterns of behavior over time. One aspect in collecting data through this approach is with observing the behavior of participants by captivating their activities.

Since this study used descriptive qualitative method to describe how the researcher teach the good character of respect in a narrative text through storytelling to the

students, the researcher also acted as a participant observer because the researcher took the role of being the teacher in the classroom.

Becoming a participant observer might raise the subjectivity of the study's result. To avoid bias, Rajendran (2001) suggests the use of external observer to reduce the element of bias. The researcher invited an external observer to observe the researcher's way in teaching good character of respect in a narrative text through storytelling by using a guideline in an observation sheet that was provided by the researcher.

Moreover, closes-ended questionnaire in Likert's scale form was used in this study to gather the information needed that embraces for different categories. Indonesian language was used in this questionnaire in order to make the students as the respondents easier in filling the questionnaire.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Process of Teaching Good Character of Respect in a Narrative Text through Storytelling

The activities done in the pre-storytelling step involved getting the students' attention, focusing the students' mind on the content of the story, introducing new vocabularies and getting predictive skills.

The first activity in the pre-storytelling step was getting the students' attention. In order to get the students' attention, the students were shown the letters of R-E-S-P-E-C-T on the whiteboard; the students were also shown the cover of the storybook regarding respect entitled "*Gilbert the Goat Learns Respect*" since the story would tell the students about respect, as the main aim in this teaching. Besides to get the students' attention, these activities were done to make the students have the overview that they were going to learn about respect.

After the students showed their attention to the topic of the teaching on that day that was about respect, the second activity in the pre-storytelling step was focusing the students' mind on the content of the story. In order to make the students focusing their mind on the content of the story, the students were asked to work in group, discussed the meaning of respect and gave more examples and elaboration of respect. This is in line with

Ioannou-Georgiou and Verdugo (2009) who proposes that making the students discuss the content of the story helps the students arranging the atmosphere and making the context of the story to help them comprehend the content of the story easier since they are able to apply their knowledge and experiences from the activities.

In the third activity, the students were introduced to some new vocabularies related to the story by being shown some pictures and by playing games. Ioannou-Georgiou and Verdugo (2009) elaborate that teacher can introduce the students new vocabularies related to the story that will be used in the storytelling activity which can encourage the students' curiosity and interest. In line with this matter, Cameron (2001) points out that introducing new vocabularies in the pre-storytelling step is directed to provide the words required to comprehend the story.

The students were shown the pictures two times; first, the students were shown the pictures of noun and second, the students were shown the pictures of verb. The pictures of noun were school, classroom, blocks, paintings, snack, napkin, plate and sink. Meanwhile, there are ten pictures of verb namely washed hands, pushed up, got excited, knocked down, be quite, shouted out, bumped against, ate, talked and thought. Dolakova (2008) mentions that students can work with pictures related to the story as one of the preliminary activities to introduce them new vocabulary. In addition, Machado (1980) states that in general, pictures can be used to introduce the students some new words, ideas, facts and experiences. This is in line with Suyanto (2008) who says that picture is one of suitable media to be applied to familiarize concrete words to the students since pictures create the abstract concept become more concrete. The following excerpt showed how the students were shown the pictures.

Giving the students a chance to get predictive skill became the last activity done in the pre-storytelling step. In this activity, each group in the classroom was given some pictures. The pictures were taken from the storybook in order to make the students familiar with the story. From the pictures given, the students were required to predict the story that the teacher was going to tell. The students in group observed the pictures together and then arranged them in order to

make a prediction of the story. The students also realized that they could find yesterday vocabularies in the pictures, so it made them easier in predicting the story. The students then wrote their prediction on a piece of paper after they had discussed it together with their group, then the students shared their prediction to the whole class. This activity is in line with Dolakova (2008) who refers that predicting the story is important to be done in the pre-storytelling step to help the teacher make the most of the story, where students can work with pictures to describe what happened there, match or re-order the pictures and guess the setting to help them know the story later.

The second step which is during storytelling step, were conveyed into two main activities which were telling the story itself and interacting with the students during the storytelling time. When the story entitled "Gilbert the Goat Learns Respect" was being told to the students, there were some things needed to be applied namely gestures, mimes, variation of voice, different facial expressions and the use of repetition. To support this, Ioannou-Georgiou and Verdugo (2009) mention that the during storytelling step particularly implicates activities aimed to encourage the students, preserve the students' attention and support the students' comprehending the story.

Providing some kind of products is necessary to be given after the lesson on the story has been done in order to let the students realize that their great effort has been leading to a particular thing (Ellis and Brewster, 1991). In addition, Ellis and Brewster state that the follow up activities are beneficial to unite the learning of study and the use of language in order to relate the learning happened in the classroom with the real world. In line with this, the activities given by the teacher to the students in the after storytelling step were teacher and students reviewed the storytelling given; teacher and students did a follow-up activity regarding the story of respect; and teacher made sure that students understand what respect is.

Students' Response to the Teaching of Good Character of Respect in a Narrative Text through Storytelling

There were eight statements (close-ended questions) as students' guide to help them express their response and perspective toward the teaching of good character of respect in a narrative text through storytelling. The statements (close-ended questions) were divided into three categories which are students' responses to the application of storytelling in understanding a narrative text; students' response to the help of storytelling in learning good character of respect in a narrative text; and students' response to the material of good character of respect.

The very high percentage of students who agree that the storytelling activity done by the teacher helped them in understanding the content of the narrative text is in line with Herlina (2012) who states that narrative text is considered as a complicated text for junior high school students since narrative text is long and having sequence, so that sometimes the students lose the idea of the text part and not understand the context of the whole text, whereas narrative text can be containing good characters in its moral value that can be learned by the students. In addition to this, Shapiro (1998) proposes that students have the high intensity of curiosity as they like to hear or read at the same things so characteristics told in stories can attract students and it will be mainly successful in affecting the students' way of thinking and behavior.

Concerning on the role of storytelling in helping students understand a narrative text that shown by statements number two and three, all the students in the class agree that storytelling help them understanding a narrative text.

In regard to the implementation of storytelling in helping students learning good character of respect in a narrative text that shown by statements number five, six and seven, it shown that storytelling is able to help the students learning good character of respect in a narrative text.

The last statement of the questionnaire asked the students to give their response regarding the material given which is about good character of respect. This statement was created in a negative form and only one student really agrees that learning good character of respect is not important for students. Meanwhile, there were 5 of 34 (15%) students disagree and 28 of 34 (82%) really

disagree that learning good character of respect is not important for the students. Almost all the students in the class agree that learning good character of respect is important for students.

This is supported by Skaggs and Bodenhorn (2006) who profess that the main aim of character education is to indicate the traits of good characters to the students. Parallel to that, Herlina (2012) states that in the rule of National Education Ministry Numbers 22, 23 and 24, students are expected to not only generate high intellectual, but also good character.

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