VALUES EDUCATION THROUGH THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

SUGIONO
Universitas Nurul Jadid, Paiton, Probolinggo
ss.sugiono@gmail.com

Abstract

This study focuses on teaching values through the English language learning. It explores the related literature reviewing the possibility of integrating values into the English language learning activities. Value-oriented education is an alternative to pursue both academic and social competence of students. It is constructed in response to the problematic issues of youngsters' deviant behaviours and attitudes. It also challenges the trend of today's education, which puts the greater emphasis on mere academic achievement, employment opportunity and economic growth. Consequently students in schools turn to prioritise only academic competence for an employment chance. Few wish to achieve success both academically and socially, whereas they have a life outside their schools and homes; the life in society. The study views that integrating values into the English language learning is not an easy task. It requires teachers' innovation and creativity to pursue the goals that are more than just the content of curriculum. The challenge is that English language teachers need to construct their own lesson plans as core values are sometimes unclearly stated in the curriculum. In classrooms, the teachers recommend not to impose their own values or those of a particular culture in the society on their students.

Keywords: Values, Education, Values Education, English Language Learning

INTRODUCTION

As values education is commonly linked to the religious instruction, a different perception could accordingly arise from reading the title. One particular group of readers might think that the religious subject is no longer effective in values education so that they need to be excluded from the schooling system. As Greenawalt (2005, p. 79) states, "We have no guarantee that teaching about religion will lead students to be more religious". Meanwhile, others consider that both religious and non-religious (English language) teachers could collaboratively work to solve problems of values, in which today they turn to be more complex.

Despite taking account of the collaborative work between these two teachers, the article merely focuses on values education through non-religious subject, 'the English language', which incorporates listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. It argues that, even though values are closer to the religious instruction, they can also be integrated into the non-religious one, the English language in particular. Hence, the fundamental questions emerged are: How are values taught through the English language learning practice? Does teaching particular values enable positive changes in society? The article is organised into two parts: the first talks about education, values, and values education, while the second deals with the perspectives of integrating values into the English language learning and how it challenges the English teachers.

Education, Values, and Values Education

Education

For decades experts have competed for defining 'education'. They provide different interpretations of education within different contexts and needs. As Peters (1980, p. 67) states, "education is an essentially contested concept. It marks out features of life that are deemed desirable, but there is no one standard usage that can be taken as a model of correctness".

In some sense, education is associated with learning, schooling, or training. However, students that have been to school might not be properly educated due to their learning that is not educative. Meanwhile, training is connected with knowledge and skills production formulated to bring about specific purpose. In other words, training is in contrast to education, which is concerned with beliefs and attitudes of a person, not only in terms of his capacity as a skilled man, but also that of being the 'whole man' through various forms of his cognitive development. "And cognitive aspect of experience is fundamental in learning" (Peters 1980, p. 69).

In many respects, education is defined as an effort or a process of developing a person's awareness, transforming and regulating a person's attitudes, emotions, wants, and actions through the person's attending to noticing, observing, investigating, and understanding some features of a particular situation (Peters 1980 p. 69; Azra 2001 pp. 3-4). Education is more than learning. The latter deals with transferring knowledge and skills, not transforming values and personality. Thus, learning orients itself to generate 'specialists', who pay much attention to technical features.

Values

'Value' is derived from the Latin word 'valere', which means 'to be strong and vigorous'. Hence, to be of value means to have a certain virtue in the form of power to do something. People wish to possess something as they view that it has great or high value to them. Values influence every part of people's existence, and can become criteria to determine what kind of persons they are and how they should behave.

Rokeach (1973, p. 5 as cited in Palmer) defines values as "an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence". In other words, values are an essential part of life, especially for making decisions and behaviours. Since, in life, people are to face choices, dilemma, and conflicts, values can be standards of evaluating what is to be preferred and not preferred, what is appropriate and inappropriate, what is good and bad, what should be done and not done.

Research suggests that different cultures have different values. This view has made the discussion of values more complex. "It is that the currently fashionable focus on diversity – that is, on the things that divide people – often obscures the many values people have in common" (Ruggiero 2001, p. 49). Differences as such potentially arouse misinterpretations of the nature of values. A value in a certain culture is considered absent when in fact, it is subordinated to another (higher) value. For example, in Hinduism, slaughtering cattle even for feeding starving people is prohibited. This practice slightly discounts people's life, but the explanation is that their religion (another higher value) does not allow them to slaughter cattle for any purpose.

The values of a particular culture can be honoured in other cultures. For instance, such values as humility, modesty, control of passions or desires, truthfulness, patience, and fulfilling promises are popular in Christianity, but these values are frequently uttered in Islam's Holy Book, the Quran:

The Bible	The Quran
• Thou shalt not use God's name in vain.	• Make not God's name an excuse to your oaths.
• Thou shalt honor thy mother and father.	• Be kind to your parents if one or both of them attain old age I thy life, say not a word of contempt nor repel them but address them in terms of honor.
• Thou shalt not kill.	• If anyone has killed one person, it is as if he had killed the whole mankind.

(Ruggiero 2001, p. 50)

In this stance, behaviours of one culture can be different from another despite their extraordinary similarity. The major difference is in terms of the style and method. If it is a mistake to deny the differences in human values, then surely it is an even greater mistake to deny the similarities (Ruggiero 2001, p. 51).

In other words, drawing on Ruggiero (2001), physiologically, psychologically, and intellectually, people are basically the same. They perceive data via their five senses, react with the same range of emotions, shape attitudes and intentions in the same way, form ideas in the same manner, but they even make the same mistakes such as over-generalising and jumping to conclusions.

Values Education

Values education comes to be an alternative to pursue not only academic competence, but also social competence of students. It is constructed to respond to the problems of behaviours such as drug and alcohol abuse, sexuality, teen pregnancy and the like. It challenges the trend of today's education, especially in secondary and tertiary levels, which merely fulfills the needs of labour market and brings about competition and individual achievement. Students in schools prefer to achieve academic competence for an employment opportunity only. Few wish to achieve success academically and socially, whereas they have a life outside their school, workplace, and home, that is the life in the wider society (Bempechat 2000, pp 1-2).

In Indonesia, any education practice includes both transfer of knowledge and transfer of values. The latter is covered in religious instructions and civics. In this regard, "education is an inherently ethical enterprise; school life is a moral mosaic" (Preston 2001, p. 214). Thus, a value-free education is peculiar in Indonesia. "A value-free education is about as possible as a protein-free diet" (Shinn 1980, p. 111), and the highest value in the life of Indonesian society is religion. People in Indonesia honour the state ideology known as Pancasila, which means 'five principles'. Pancasila was constructed by scholars that had strong commitment to religious ideals, and hence it always suits values of religion.

Among countries around the world, the main goal of holding the framework of values education is remarkably the same, that is to say, to produce future generations that are not only competent in academic achievement, but have good characters, behaviours and attitudes as well. The difference lies in the provision of core values, which provides a foundation for all teaching, learning and care programs to achieve the goal. In American education, the core values serve as those of free democratic society, which includes Patriotism, Loyalty, Faithfulness, Courage, the Ability to make the crucial moral distinctions between right and wrong, the Maturity to understand that all property and achievement in this world come from the Beneficent and Loving God (Schafersman 1998).

Australia provides nine core values for schools, which cover Care and Compassion, Doing your best, Fair go, Freedom, Honesty and Trustworthiness, Integrity, Respect, Responsibility, Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion. Toomey (2006, p. 5) believes that "by making these values an explicit and central aspect of work, improved teaching and learning will naturally follow". Meanwhile, the core values of education in Indonesia is reflected in Pancasila – Belief in the Only One God, Just and Civilized Humanitarianism, Indonesian Unity, Peoples Led by Wisdom upon Representatives, Social Justice for the Entire Indonesians – and in the national slogan 'Unity in Diversity'.

Apart from core values constructed by formal schools, students also bring their own values to schools. Therefore, as Halstead and Taylor (2001, p. 1) states,

"The role of school is two-fold: to build on and supplement the values children have already begun to develop by offering further exposure to a range of values that are current in society (such as equal opportunities and respect for diversity); and to help children to reflect on, make sense of and apply their own developing values".

Preston (2001) adds that values education will be appreciated by students for its relevance to their life circumstances. The schools that are serious about values education take account of teaching and learning practices within the notion of affirmative changes in society. "It is of great importance for society since schools act as a bridge between micro-moral world of the home and the macro-impersonal ethical systems of society" (Preston 2001, p. 215).

In order for schools to play their appropriate role to achieve expected outcomes of the value-oriented educational system, Preston (2001, p.215) recommends: (1) a value audit to examine practices, documents, and policies; (2) the development of statements of core or agreed values as a foundation for values education; (3) reviewing and updating the professional values of the staff, for instance, by asking what the ethical responsibilities of teachers are and where they begin and end; (4) professional development in the teaching of values; (5) teaching values in all subjects across the whole curriculum, particularly when it is linked to a future perspective and environmental education; (6) developing a separate place for values in the curriculum; (7) community service programs; (8) integrating values education and social justice strategies; (9) involvement of parents and the home in the value-oriented curriculum.

Teaching Values through Non-religious Subject Matter: the English Language Learning
English Language and Values
The reason for excluding religious subject matter in this regard is that religious subject has contained values set in the curriculum. All religions around the world promote values which organise the interrelationships between Man and God and Man and Man. As Shinn (1980, pp. 116-117) suggests, "values derive from a religious commitment. It is hard to imagine any serious religious commitment that does not shape the values of its adherents". Hence, values teaching through religion are a must and inevitable and teaching religion without integrating values is impossible.

Integrating values through the English language learning, however, is not an easy task. Like science, for decades English language has been viewed as not having moral and ethical quality. It limits itself to the description of linguistics, skills, grammatical structures, and emphasises cognitive and psychomotoric domains yet resists the affective one (Chain 1970, p.1 as cited in Pritchard & Buckland). Klopfer (1976, p.1 as cited in Pritchard & Buckland)

argues that "the aims predominantly associated with school science are cognitive ones such as knowledge and understanding of laws, and skills in designing and carrying out experimental investigations".

Therefore, specific recommendations have been made to enable all subjects to be legitimate vehicles for moral and values teaching. King and Reiss (1993, p. 5 as cited in Halstead & Taylor) stipulates that "all national curriculum subjects – including English language and other sciences – need to have contributions to developing the values of cultural diversity". In other words, the English language learning can be the potential space for developing a framework of social values and personal attitudes towards community, culture, and environment (Poole 1995, ch. 4 as cited in Halstead & Taylor; Pritchard & Buckland 1986). Siraj-Blatchford (1994 as cited in Halstead & Taylor) notes the possibility of language learning and science to be a means of developing multicultural and anti-racist values. In such contexts, teaching strategies go beyond the cognitive domain and provide space for enhancing the affective one.

Inferring from Tones (1981 as cited in Pritchard & Buckland), the following eight strategies could be implemented in the affective-focused English language learning, namely: cognitive: (1) provision of facts and information, (2) promotion of understanding, (3) development of beliefs, (4) development of decision-making competence; affective: (5) exploration and clarification of values, (6) development of approved values, (7) changing of undesirable values and attitudes; action: (8) developing skills and routines. Tones (1981) adds that teachers should not impose their own values and those of a particular class or culture in the community on students. In response to this, a particular approach that teachers need to use is that of value clarification.

Challenge to English Language Teachers

Teaching values through the English language learning unavoidably provides a challenge for the English teachers. They are demanded to be innovative and creative, for values in the English language curriculum are not explicitly stated. The teachers need to explore the curriculum and develop their own lesson plans that integrate particular values. Integrating values into teaching and learning practice encompasses the achievements that are more than the curricular content. In this stance, English language teachers need to constantly explore new strategies and ideas to introduce values to their students.

To improve schools and English language teachers' professional practices, the Research Resource Kit for the Values Education Good Practice Schools Project (VEGPS) of Australia can be an invaluable reference. It promotes action research as a practical strategy.

In this project, the object of the action research will be the approaches the participating schools undertake to improve what they are doing with values education, acting on the plan, monitoring outcomes, evaluating the effectiveness and subsequently revising their plans as they re-engage in the cyclic research process (Research Resource Kit for VEGPS – Stage 2, 2 September 2006).

The term 'cyclic research process' is given an emphasis, for, according to the Kit, such a process not only provides a useful way of thinking of and describing an action research process, but also captures the idea that action research moves developmentally. This means that strategies are developed, implemented, observed in action, and reflected upon. It is this reflection that later leads to plans for further action.

Yet, research activities as such among the English language teachers in Indonesia are relatively less satisfactory. Most of them do not have sufficient competence to conduct education research. Some might learn research theories, but they have lack of motivation to conduct a research, whereas the education world without research is like schools with no teaching and learning activities. Similarly, the absence of research in teaching and learning encounters difficulty monitoring the progress. Thus, the government needs to motivate school teachers to undertake education research through the provision of more research trainings and funding.

CONCLUSION

Values are closely linked to the religious subject. Yet, they can also be integrated into the non-religious one, the English language learning. Integrating values into the English language learning is not an easy task as it requires teachers' creativity to pursue the achievements that are more than the content of curriculum. English language teachers need to construct their own value-oriented lesson plans in that sometimes core values are not explicitly stated in the curriculum. In the classrooms, the teachers ought not to impose their own values or those of a particular class or culture in the society on their students. In this regard, they need to do that of value clarification.

Values education potentially generates citizens that are competent not only in academic achievement, but also have good characters, behaviours, and attitudes. Following the principles of values education, the English language teachers need to consider social changes in their teaching. To achieve this, they need to be be aware of the notion that schools can bridge the values of the home and the macro ethical values of society.

REFERENCES

Azra, Azyumardi 2001, Pendidikan Islam: Tradisi dan modernisasi menuju milenium baru (Islamic Education: Tradition and modernization to new millennium), Kalimah, Jakarta.

Bempechat, J 2000, Getting our kids back on track: Educating children for the future, Jossey-Bass Inc., San Francisco.

Greenawalt, K 2005, Does God belong in public schools?, Princeton University Press, New Jersey.

Halstead, JM & Taylor, MJ 2000, 'Learning and teaching about values: A review of recent research', Cambridge Journal of Education, Vol. 30, no. 2, pp. 1-34.

National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools, 2005, Department of Education, Science and Training, Australian Government, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

Palmer, M 1997, 'Nature of Children's Values and Values Education', Education Thesis, Flinders University, South Australia.

Peters, RS 1980, 'Democratic Values and Educational Aims' in (Eds) D. Sloan, Education and Values, Teachers College Press, New York.

Preston, N 1996, Understanding Ethics, Federation Press, NSW.

Pritchard, AJ & Buckland, DJ 1986, 'Leisure, Values, and Biology Teaching', Science and Technology Education, Document series no. 22, pp. 1-16, Division of Science Technical and Environmental Education, UNESCO.

Ruggiero, VR 2001, Thinking critically about ethical issues, McGraw-Hill, New York.

Schafersman, SD 1998, 'Teaching morals and values in the public schools: A humanist perspective', Steven D. Schafersman, <schafesd@humanism.net.>

Shinn, RL 1980, 'Education in Values: Acculturation and Exploration' in (Eds) D. Sloan, Education and Values, Teachers College Press, New York.

St Mary Redcliffe and Temple School Profile, 2005, St Mary Redcliffe and Temple School, Bristol, England.

Tool Kit for the Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 2, 2006, Curriculum Corporation, Department of Education, Science and Training, Australian Government.

Toomey, R 2006, 'Values as the Centrepiece of the School's Work: A discussion Paper on Learnings from VEGPSP Stage 1', paper prepared for the First Briefing Session of the Values Education Good Practice Schools Project – Stage 2, n.d. October.