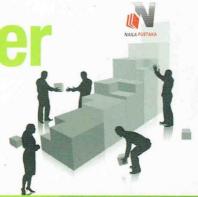# Character Building

In English Language Teaching

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LEARNERS CHARACTER BUILDING IN GETTING SUCCESS ON ENGLISH LEARNING

Huriyah Saleh

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Abstract: Teaching English is not only transfer of knowledge, but also transfer of beliefs, morals, values, and character building. Teaching English in Indonesia has started from elementary school level until university. Various curriculum and methods have been developed to enhance learners ability in mastering English. Nevertheless the result is not felt the maximum in making learners can communicate well through language.

There are some aspects can be considered to build learners character in getting success on English learning are as follows: Introducing the important of English learning, Introducing the goal of English learning, Growing learners motivation and self confidence in English learning, Avoiding learners anxiety and building good image in English learning, Becoming English learning as enjoyable learning, Creating a positive classroom climate, providing speech community and developing English practice. English learning refers to habit formation process, giving students opportunities to learn about important social (moral) ethical issues, creating an atmosphere of respect for each other opinions, beliefs, and ethnic/culture diversity, and maintaining a threshold of morality and ethnic in the classroom climate.

If these aspects can be applied by teacher in the classroom, learners are not only mastering language, but also they will have self confidence, responsibility, empathy, strong and total personality, honest, autonomous, tolerance and work together.

I.   Introduction

Teaching English is not only transfer of knowledge, but also transfer of beliefs, values, morals and character building.

Teaching English in Indonesia has started from elementary school level until University. Various curriculum and methods have been developed to enhance students ability in mastering English. Nevertheless the result is not felt the maximum in making students can communicate well through language.

II. Discussion

1. The Nature of Character Education

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 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 (Elkind & Sweet in Gunawan, 2012:23).

The objective of character education is to form strong, competitive, good behavior, good moral, tolerance, patriotic, and dynamic nation who has oriented to the knowledge and technology and become human who believes and fears to God almighty based on five principles.

2. Language Acquisition and Language Learning

Acquisition and learning are two concepts which have different meaning. The term of language acquisition refers to the capability development in one language naturally in communicative situation, while language learning determines process of knowledge accumulation about vocabularies and language rules consciously (Subyakto-Nababan, 1992:72). Activities which have correlation with language learning in general are used

in Language teaching at school and produce knowledge about language that learnt. While activities which have correlation with language acquisition is someone's knowledge about language in long time through interaction with society in the environment.

Acquisition is the process by which children unconsciously acquire their native language. While learning is as conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being to talk about them (Stephen D. Krashen and Terrell, 1983:175).

Learning has the same characteristics with acquisition of native language learner, while learning is formal knowledge. In acquisition learner is like to pick foreign language up and know that language, while in learning, learner learns foreign language and know that language. Acquisition process is subconscious process, while learning process is conscious process. In acquisition, knowledge is implicit, while in learning, knowledge is explicit. In acquisition, teaching formally doesn't help child capability, while in learning formally can help the increase of child capability.

3. **Theory of Language Learning**

The nature of language learning is influenced by two theories, namely Behaviorism and Cognitivism theory. Firstly, the theory of stimulus response from behaviorism based on the theory of B.F.Skinner (1957). He stated that language is manifestation of human behavior that has been habit. Language learning is new habits formation process. Behaviorism theory considered that learning is a process of habit formation of reinforcement with stimulus response system. Secondly, Cognitivism theory based on

cognitive psychology and transformational grammar by Chomsky (Gleason, 1998:386). He stated that language learning process is rule formation process, because human has "innate capacity", namely the ability to understand and to create new utterances. The theory considered that language acquisition is from he/she was born. In this theory, Chomsky had concluded that children were born with some kind of special language processing ability and had proposed the existence of a language acquisition device (LAD). The ability to distinguish speech sounds from other sounds; the ability to organize language into a system of structures; the knowledge of what was possible and what was not possible in any linguistic system; and the ability to construct the simplest possible system based on the linguistic data to which one was exposed (Hadley, 1993:98).

4. Some Aspects can be Considered to Build Learners Character in Getting Success on English learning

1) Introducing the Importance of English Learning

English is introduced for Indonesian students earlier, starting from elementary school. English has been pervasively studied in Indonesia since 1960[s] and it is officially regarded as the first foreign language to be studied in schools and University (Ratminingsih, 2012). English is also learned as a part of academic requirements at school system, or in preparation for travel or study in an English speaking country. English has played an important subject and a compulsory subject. This is showed that English is taught from elementary school until University.

English is a tool to communicate orally and in writing. Communicating is to understand and express information, thoughts, feelings, and develop science, technology and culture.

Nowadays, English becomes an important language as it is used globally or internationally. The role of English is for global communication tool due to the globalization era. English is used widely and easily for it is called international language. English is the language of pop culture, of tourism, of markets, of the internet and trade (Nehemiah, 2009). Over half of various forms of personal communication written in letters, short message service, and e-mail are also written in English. Due the importance of English learning and the widely use of English in the world society and a tool for communication and interaction are not doubted.

In 2,000 there were approximately 1,500 million speakers of English world wide, consisting of around 329 million first language (L.1) speakers, (mostly in inner cycle countries), 430 million second language (L.2) speakers, (outer circle countries) and about 75 million speakers of English as a foreign language in the countries of expanding circle (Crystal, 2003). It is more over proven that English speakers are increasing every year.

2) Introducing the Goal of English Learning

According to the competency based curriculum which was issued by the Indonesian ministry of National Education reflects that the goal of English learning in Indonesia is to develop communicative competence and to enable the students be able to communicate in English orally and in writing. (BSNP, 2006). Communicating here

means to understand and to express information, thoughts, feelings, and develop science, technology, and culture. Ability to communicate is the ability to understand or to produce spoken text or written text to be realized in the four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. The four language skills are used to respond or to create a discourse in public life, therefore, the method of English subjects are used at schools to be directed to the development of four skills of language for graduates be able to communicate and interact in English at certain level of literacy. In the end, the communication activity will create a human figure, who is able to communicate effectively, have high self confidence, critical thinking and be able to solve the problems and take an active role either independently or in groups.

3) **Growing Learners Motivation and Self Confidence in English Learning**

Learners motivation and self confidence should be built by teacher before learning English. Motivation is derived from Greek, "Movere", Its meaning is to drive (Fred Luthans, 1995). While Streers and Porter state that motivation has relation with "what energizes human behavior" (1991). Motivation is something that drives someone to do activities. Relation to this, motivation according to Lim Kiat Boey (1975) can be divided into two kinds. Firstly, is instrumental motivation, this is when the student learns the second language for instrumental purposes. For example, it may be required for post graduate work, for his career or for travel abroad. There is no desire on his part to go beyond the language as a tool to fulfill rather limited purposes. The secondly, is integrative motivation. In this case, the student learns

the second language with the desire to identify himself with the native speakers and to enrich his life by contact with another culture. It was found that students with integrative motivation have greater success at learning the second language than those with merely instrumental motivation. Based on the explanation above, it can be understood that motivation is very important for learner to get success in English learning.

Relation to this, according to Krashen and Terrell (in Hadley, 1993) state that a foreign language learner who has certain motivation, i.e he/she wants to be like a foreigner and has self confidence in learning English, she/he will get more success than who has low motivation and self confidence.

4) Avoiding the Sense of Learners Anxiety and Building Learners Good Image in English Learning

The sense of learners anxiety should be avoided before English learning, because the sense of anxiety makes a learner is lazy and anxious to learn English. Anxiety in general can be associated with "threats to self efficacy and appraisals of situations as threatening (Pappamihiel, 202:331).

Language anxiety refers to the feeling of tension and apprehension experienced by learners in the foreign language classroom. More particularly, that language anxiety is a distinctive complex of self perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process (Marwan, 2008:119). In language learning process, teacher encourages learners to speak English or to ask questions in English. Teacher is to provide the kinds

of warm, embracing climate that encourages students to speak, however halting or broken their attempts may be (Brown, 2007).

Relation to this, Pappamihiel (2002) divides the anxiety into two types, namely state anxiety and trait anxiety. State anxiety is a type of anxiety which occurs because learners are exposed to particular conditions or situations. For example, there are learners who may feel anxious if they are requested to speak in front of the class or if they do not understand many of the teachers' words during the class. Mean while, trait anxiety is a person's tendency to feel anxious regardless of the situations to which they are exposed. Based on above explanation, that can be summarized that anxiety is a part of some body's character that makes someone's condition feel anxious. When learners are "put on the defensive" in English learning, the affective filter is high, and comprehensible input can not "get in". On the contrary, when the learners have good image on English learning and "put on the relaxing" the affective filter is opened and positive, the comprehensible input can "get in" (Hadley, 1993:51). It means that learners who have good image, opened and positive attitude on English learning. They will be able to communicate with other people with their trust and will be easy, and more successful in English learning. In this case, teacher should make conducive class. If the class is conducive, learners feel happy and easy to be motivated to learn. Teacher also should make English learning as enjoyable learning.

In the English learning, teacher should allow the learners to learn with playing, asking, discussing, doing the meaningful something and motivating them to become learning activity to be enjoyable learning. Learners want

to learn if learners see learning as an enjoyable experience (Hutchinson and Walters, 1994). If the learners are asked to answer the questions, discussion, or observation, learners brain will work better, so the process of English learning will be better too (Silberman, 1996) and will be able to increase learners evaluation score significantly.

5) Creating A Positive Classroom Climate

The roles that teacher plays and styles that teacher develops will merge to give the teacher same tools for creating a classroom climate that is positive, stimulating and energizing. A positive classroom climate can be done by teacher are as follows: establishing rapport, balancing praise and criticism, and the lost is generating energy (Brown, 2007). Rapport is the relationship between teacher and students. The relationship built on trust and respect that leads to the students, feeling capable, competent, and creative. The relationship can be done by showing interest in each student as a person, by giving feedback on each person's progress, by openly soliciting students ideas and feelings, by valuing and respecting what students think and say, by laughing with them and not at them, by working with them as a team, not against them, and by developing a genuine sense of vicarious joy when they learn something or otherwise succeed. The relationship that made by teacher as above explanation, the learners feel respected. In this case, the learners will be easy to be motivated to learn English.

6) Providing Speech Community and Developing English Practice

In building learners character in getting success on English learning, it needed to create speech community.

Speech community is widely used by sociolinguist refers to a community based on language (Hudson, 1996). In the term of sociolinguistics, speech community is called linguistic community (Wardhaugh, 1998).

Linguistic community is a social group which may be either monolingual or multilingual held together by frequency of social interaction patterns and set off from the surrounding areas by weakness in the lines of communication linguistic. Communities may consist of small groups bound together by face to face contract or may cover large regions, depending on the level of abstraction we wish to achieve (Wardhaugh, 1998). In this definition, then communities are defined partially through their relationships with other communities. Internally, a community must have a certain social cohesiveness, while externally, its members must find themselves cut off from other communities in certain ways.

Relation to this, Bloomfield (in Wardhaugh, 1998:119) states that speech community is as a group of people who interact by means of speech. Speech community is meant as all of people who use a given language (or dialect) (Lions in Hudson, 1996:25). Based on above explanation, it can be understood that speech community is a community which the members should use a given language or the same dialect. In this case, teacher should encourage learners to practice English. For example, in the process of teaching and learning English in the class, every learner should use English for asking questions or for interaction with teacher or with other learners. Learners may not be permitted to use Indonesian. Learners have to use English for interaction in the class. In this case, Brown (2007) states that several classroom activities could be conducted, such as imitation (drilling),

intensive speaking, responsive speech, transactional dialogue (exchanging specific information), interpersonal dialogue (maintaining social relationship) and extensive dialogue (oral reports, summaries, short speeches).

7) Teaching and Learning English Refers to Habit Formation Process

Learning English through doing good habits is very important to be given to the learners, because, with doing good habits at the first time, learners will reject it. But, if teacher always asks for them to do good habits, little by little, learners want to do it. Because of doing good habits has been their new habits, in the end, learners can do it without pressuring from the teacher. For example, when learners are requested to speak English, at the first time, they will reject. But if teacher always asks for them and gives opportunity for them to speak English. In the end, learners will do it easily. Because learners always learn about it. As behaviorism theory stated that learning is new habit formation process. Learners can speak English if learners always speak English and English speaking activity becomes their new habits. Learners are able to do something, because of being their habits.

8) Giving Students Opportunities to Learn About Important Social/Moral/Ethical Issues

Teachers should be responsible for giving students opportunities to learn about important social/moral/ ethical issues and to analyze all sides of an issues (Brown, 2007:515). A language class is an ideal locus for offering information on topics of significance to students. The objectives of a curriculum are not limited to linguistic

factors alone, but also include developing the art of critical thinking. Complex issues (say, religious fundamentalism or homosexuality, for example), can become the focus of intrinsically motivating content based language learning.

9) Creating an Atmosphere of Respect for Each other's Opinions, beliefs, and Ethnic /Cultural Diversity

Teachers are responsible for creating an atmosphere of respect for each other's opinions, beliefs, and ethnic/cultural diversity (Brown, 2007:515). The teacher should be able to create the classroom becomes a model of the world as a context for tolerance and for the appreciation of diversity. Discourse structures such as "I see your point, but ......" are explicitly taught and used in classroom discussions and debates. Students learn how to disagree without imposing their own belief or opinions on others. In all this, it is important that the teacher's personal opinions or beliefs remain sensitively covert, lest a student feel coerced into thinking something because the teacher thinks that way.

10) Maintaining A Threshold of Morality and Ethics in the Classroom Climate

Teachers are responsible for maintaining a threshold of morality and ethics in the classroom climate (Brown, 2007:515). Occasionally a teacher needs to exercise some discipline when students show disrespect or hatred based on gender. Teachers should ensure that "universal" moral principles (love, equality, tolerance, freedom) are manifested in the classroom for example: In Egypt, a culture where equal opportunities and rights of women are abridged, a teacher used an activity in a class with

both men and women in it that culminated in the students collaboratively writing up a "bill of rights" for women in Egypt (Mona Grant Nashed in Brown, 2007:517).

III. Conclusion

The nature of language learning is influenced by two theories, the first is behaviorism theory states that learning is new habit formation process. The second, is cognitive theory states that learning is rule formation process.

English has been studied in Indonesia since 1960's and become a compulsory subject. It is showed that English is taught from elementary school level until University. Nevertheles the result is not felt the maximum in making learners can communicate well through language.

To build learners character in getting success on English learning, there are some aspects can be considered by teacher to be applied in the class are as follows: Teachers are responsible for introducing the important of English learning; introducing the goal of English learning; growing learners motivation and self confidence in English learning; Avoiding learners anxiety and building good image in English learning; becoming English learning as enjoyable learning; creating a positive climate; providing speech community and developing English practice; English learning refers to habit formation process; giving learners opportunities to learn about important social/moral/ethical issues; creating an atmosphere of respect for each other's opinion, beliefs, and ethnic/cultural diversity; and maintaining a threshold of morality and ethics in the classroom climate.

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This international proceeding is a compilation of papers written by the speakers of both speakers in the plenary session and parallel sessions. This international seminar is annually held by STAIN (State College for Islamic Studies) Kediri, and this year event is organized by Tadris Bahasa Inggris (English education). Furthermore, the topic of the seminar—Character Building in English Language Teaching—was intentionally selected for we—English teachers—would also like to contribute to the character building of the nation, since in the last few years Indonesia has encountered moral decadence particularly among youngsters.