

CHAPTER 31

BRINGING TOPICS OF FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION INTO ENGLISH CLASSES (The Case of English Lesson at Senior High Schools)

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ABSTRACT

Though corruption eradication has been voiced out for such a long time, people see that corruption is even getting wilder and expanding. As an extraordinary crime, corruption must be fought extraordinarily. While strict rule of law, severe punishment –even death penalty–, and possibly social exclusion may be applied to those proven to have committed corruption, awareness on the harms of corruption must be introduced to young generation to prevent them from committing such crime. English lessons at schools can be the place where the awareness is instilled through the various presentations of learning materials as reading passages, conversation practice, writing practice, even grammar practice. Because of the flexibility of the nature of language learning, English lesson at school has the potential to be developed in such a way that promotes fight against corruption. This paper will elaborate how this idea can be implemented. It will start with the discussion of character building, topic of fighting against corruption found in existing English school books, and then is followed by elaboration on how the topic can be presented in English classes.

Keywords: corruption eradication, character building, English lesson

INTRODUCTION

Though corruption eradication has been voiced out for such a long time, this country cannot get rid of it very easily. Even there is an indication that the corruption is getting wilder and expanding. More persons from different levels of bureaucracies, legislative bodies both local and national, political parties, business and private sectors commit and get involved in that crime. They become suspects or

accused and have to stand for trial. Billion rupiahs of state budget are abused for the benefit and advantages of only certain groups and individuals.

The widespread of corruption in this country is also evident from Corruption Perception Index (CPI) issued by Transparency International (TI). Though there was a slight improvement, in 2010 Indonesia still ranked 110. A year before TI ranked our country 111, and 126 in 2008. In the same years, Gallup Center – a research hub based in the capital of the United Arab Emirates Abu Dhabi- scored 87 in 2010 and 80 in 2009. Gallup's survey also revealed that more Indonesians perceived that corruption was getting serious. More than 8 in 10 Indonesians say that corruption is widespread throughout the nation's government and businesses. Compared to citizens in other Southeast Asian countries, Indonesians are much more likely to say that corruption is prevalent in both the government and business sectors.

To combat the widespread corruption, the government through Law Number 30 Year 2002 established the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK). There used to be a lot of big thumbs for the commission for its ability to catch red handed and prosecuted high profile cases, but now the trust for the commission starts being doubted because it is considered fail to prosecute other big cases as Century Bank case. Some prominent figures from political parties even argue to dissolve KPK. The integrity and independency of the commission are under questions when some judges in local corruption courts very recently freed suspects involved in corruption cases.

We are aware that KPK alone will not be able curb the corruption and the corruptive behaviors of the citizens. The enactment of roles of other legal bodies as police and prosecutors and the support from the people as a whole, and most importantly strong commitment of the government are prerequisite for the success of corruption eradication.

Besides, preventive action to stop the widespread of corruption must also be taken. Young Indonesian children must be made aware of the danger of corruption and corruptive behaviors. Young Indonesians must realize that corruption is an extraordinary crime, a crime against humanity that they must never think of doing. Curbing the very massive corruption needs a collective awareness and a collective commitment.

This can be done through education since education is the best way to build awareness and commitment. Education teaches people what is wrong and what is right, what don'ts and what dos. Education here doesn't specifically refer to the teaching and learning of subjects as Religion and Citizenship (PPKn), rather all subjects given. Every subject at school including English into certain extent is supposed to contribute to the building of the students' awareness on corruption.

This paper tries to offer English teachers a perspective in teaching character building, especially the building of anti corruption character- integrally through English language learning by bringing issues of fights against corruption into the classroom.

CHARACTER EDUCATION

Character education has been emerging as a hot topic in recent years. It has been widely discussed in many different forums of seminars and conferences involving not only educators, government officials, political leaders but also businessmen as well as artists. The emergence of this topic seems to be the response to the failure of the nation in developing competitiveness. While countries such as India, China, Korea, Malaysia and even the long war-suffering country Vietnam have stepped far into prosperity with significant achievement in technology advancement, Indonesia is still occupied very much by cases of massive corruption, violence, dishonesty, irresponsibility, low discipline, nationalism and so on. It is therefore, despite the abundant natural resources and the fifth biggest population in the world, this country progresses very slowly in achieving its goals to become a prosperous nation.

Character refers to how good a person is. A person with a good character is he or she who exhibits personal qualities which fit those considered desirable by a 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 individual and good for the society. It is the development of knowledge, skills and abilities that enable the learners to make informed and respon-

sible choices. The purpose of character education is to affirm human dignity, promote well being and happiness of the individual, to serve the common good, to define one's rights and obligations and to meet certain universal ethics (Lickona, 1991). 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 the Indonesian context today, character education needs to be directed more specifically to respond certain issues and cases. One of those is the widespread of corruption. Then character education -according to me - should deliberately instill students' awareness concerning the effects and danger of corruption. Students, through various methods and materials, should be exposed to real cases of corruption and are encouraged to think critically and responsibly which later may build his / her anti corruption character. It is very urgent as it is mentioned earlier, corruption in this country has been very massive, octopused almost all aspects of lives of the nation. It has become a crime against humanity, it hampers the rights of the people to prosperity.

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

English lesson at school - I believe- can offer more than that. It can teach virtues not only by activities it has but also by topics presented during the activities. English lesson may present a wide array of topics through its reading, speaking, writing, even listening sections. Ideas, arguments, examples in favor of fighting against corruption can be presented in those various types of activities and forms. Topic selection will then contribute significantly to the molding and shaping of anti corruption character. I don't mean that topic of corruption should appear in every unit or chapter of English book, or is presented in every session of teaching. Rather, there should be some topics concerning corruption which are prepared carefully in order to help shape students' perception about corruption.

TOPICS OF FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION IN ENGLISH SCHOOL BOOKS

Standar Kompetensi Bahasa Inggris SMA mentions language skills that must be mastered by students: listening, speaking, reading and writing. It also mentions very specifically 5 competences of communicative, linguistic, socio-cultural, strategic as well as discourse competences. But it does not mention very specifically the content. What is meant here is that teachers and book writers have the freedom to select materials which may give students not only the competencies but also the values and norms conveyed in the language. Topics for dialogs of speaking practice, reading passages, and writing practice may be developed into the ones that involve those values and norms.

To find out whether English books for senior high schools have accommodated topics or issues of corruption and fights against corruption, three books were selected as sample of the study. Sample 1 was *Contextual English* which was published by Tiga Serangkai Putra Mandiri. Sample 2 was *English Alive* published by Yudistira, and sample 3 was *Look Ahead* which was published by Erlangga. These three books were sampled randomly from around 15 school books for senior high schools available in Central Java. Each title has three books, Book One (*Contextual English 1*, *English Alive 1*, and *Look Ahead 1*) is for grade X; Book 2 is grade XI and finally Book 3 is for grade XII. So there were 9 books which served as samples of the study. The samples were scrutinized page by page in order to be able to locate any presentation which had topic related to fight against corruption.

From the three samples (9 books), there were only two presentation of topic which may be related to corruption or fight against corruption. The first one was found in Book 1 of sample 3 of Unit 7 under the title '*Breaking News*' on page 174. The page presents a picture of a news program of *Liputan 6*. The presenter is a woman with a news title '*KORUPSI BULOG*' (page 174). The instructions put under the pictures are: 1) *Talk about what you see in the picture*; 2) *Do you like reading / listening to news? Why /Why not? Etc.* Though the focus of the presentation is discussion on news item, it may be extended into cases of other corruptions occurring in the present time so that the students have more understanding on the issue. Corruption in Bulog occurred years ago and it was not actual anymore. I believe that the students have a little to say about the topic.

The second presentation was found in Book 2 of sample 3 of Unit 6 under the title of *'It should Be Like This.'* This chapter is prepared for teaching exposition. Page 185 of this book present an example of an exposition text as the following:

The diagram shows a sample of an exposition text with four labeled components on the right side, each with an arrow pointing to a specific part of the text:

- Thesis** (Announcement of issue concern) points to the first paragraph.
- Argument 1** points to the second paragraph.
- Argument 2** points to the third paragraph.
- Recommendation** (Statement of what should or should not happen) points to the fourth paragraph.

The text itself is as follows:

Do you know what the meaning of corruption is? What is the relation between money and corruption? Well, corruption is common everywhere in the world, even in the U.S. It's just a matter of the intensity. However, it is quite shocking when one reliable survey claims Jakarta as the most corrupt place in Indonesia.

The survey has made me sad, actually, because I stay and earn a living here in the capital. As most people know, Tanjung Priok Port smuggling is not a new thing at all. Entrepreneurs who want to minimize their tax payments tend to do such a thing more often. They even bribe the officials.

Well, I think the measures taken so far to overcome the problem by punishing the corruptors is still not far enough. We have to prevent the younger generations from getting a bad mentality caused by corruption.

I believe we should start at the earliest stages in school and I think everyone should be involved in the effort to eradicate corruption. We must not make any distinctions.

(Adapted from: The Jakarta Post, February, 2005)

Unfortunately those are the only topics related to fights against corruption found in the samples of English text books of senior high schools. Comparing to the numbers of other topics, the pages available, also the opportunity provided by the curriculum- in the case the school based curriculum- it is sad to say that this is not enough.

SOME ALTERNATIVE WAYS

Though each book sampled in this study is organized differently, the possibility of bringing the topic of fight against corruption in each of them is very big. Moreover, the books into certain extent follow the genre based approach. Text types are presented one by one by unit or chapter. Thus, topics of fights against corruption may be presented descriptively in descriptive text, argumentatively in expository text, and persuasively in persuasive text.

tion text or perhaps in a piece of news in report text both as reading or writing materials.

The very rare appearance of the topic in the existing English text book must not mean that that we will really leave the topics out of the English lesson. As elaborated previously, the building of the character of anti corruption is necessary, and we, English teachers, are also responsible for this. Therefore, we need to work creatively to meet the demand. It is quite possible to prepare materials in supplement to the text book already available. A little modification of the existing materials will also be possible.

Besides reading and writing activities, topics of corruption may also be presented in speaking, listening activities or even grammar activities. Abundant texts on corruption-related issues are now available in the internet. English teachers only need to do a little move and everything is ready.

Grammar lesson can also be modified in such a way that may set awareness of the students about corruption. For example, Look Ahead 2 page 29 presents a grammar exercise about 'if sentence'. The exercise is as follows:

C. Enjoy this. Complete the following sentences.

1. If I wrote something on the board, she _____
2. If I were the teacher of that naughty student, I _____
3. She would run round the classroom if I _____
4. She would kick me if I _____
5. I always give a reward if _____
6. The head of the school will punish me if _____
7. She would throw things in front of her if _____
8. The children are amazing if _____

Look Ahead 2 page 39

It will be acceptable and also a good idea if we add 2 or 3 more exercises which relate to corruption as:

1. If you do corruption, we _____
2. If the development budget is corrupted, the development _____

Surely there are many ways of bringing topics of fights against corruption into the English classes.

CONSLUSION

Though corruption eradication has been voiced out for such a long time, this country cannot get rid of it very easily. Even there is an indication that the corruption is getting wilder and expanding. Collective effort is necessary to curb the crime. English lesson should also participate in the effort of eradicate corruption by instilling awareness to the students on the dangers and harms of corruption. This can be done by bringing topics of fight against corruption into the English classroom. Unfortunately, those topics are hardly found in the English text books. Teachers, should, therefore, prepare supplemented materials, or modify the existing materials in order to be able to voice out the fight against corruption. The presentation of the topics can be in the reading and writing activities, speaking and listening and well grammar practice activities.

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