THE INTERNALIZATION OF ISLAMIC CHARACTER EDUCATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract

Strengthening character education (PPK) is one of the main features in the Curriculum 2013. This is something new for some teachers, especially pre-service teachers. This study investigated the understanding of pre-service teachers about Al-Zarnuji's Islamic characters and the internalization of the characters during their learning processes. Observation, documentation and open-ended questionnaire were employed in the study. The findings showed that pre-service teachers were familiar with the characters and could internalize them. The study suggests that the internalization of characters needs to be integrated in the learning processes from which pre-service teachers get used to the characters.
Keyword: Islamic character, ELT, English Classroom, Character Education

Abstrak

Pendidikan penguatan karakter (PPK) merupakan salah satu poin utama dalam kurikulum 2013. Hal ini merupakan hal yang baru untuk para guru, kususnya para calon guru. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menginvestigasi pemahaman para calon guru mengenai nilai-nilai karakter Islam yang diusung oleh Al-Zarnuji dan penginternalisasiannya dalam proses pembelajaran. Observasi, dokumentasi dan kuesioner open-ended digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa para calon guru memahami dan mampu menginternalisasi nilai-nilai karakter tersebut. Penelitian ini mengimplikasikan bahwa penginternalisasian nilai-nilai karakter sangat diperlukan dalam proses pembelajaran, sehingga para calon guru terbiasa dengan karakter-karakter yang harus mereka integrasikan ketika mereka mengajar.
Kata kunci: nilai-nilai karakter Islam, pengajaran bahasa inggris (PBI), kelas bahasa Inggris, pendidikan karakter.

Introduction

Curriculum in Indonesia has been changing following the demand of the challenges of the world. Recently, Indonesian government applies the Curriculum 2013. This curriculum is implemented as one of the government's efforts to upgrade the education quality in Indonesia. One of the most highlighted aspects of the curriculum is the implementation of strenghthening character education (PPK). This must be implemented in all of the subjects in all levels of education. As a result, teachers must have the ability to integrate characters in their classrooms.

The implementation of character education has become a big issue in Indonesia (Zurqoni et al., 2018) because character becomes the vital core in education. There are some researchs that have been done in the implementation of character education in Indonesia (Dzo'ul Milal et al., 2020; Hidayat & Hasballah, 2020; Kosim et al., 2019; Muzammil Sa'dullaoh, 2019). Most of them focused on the students' character building, not on the qualification of the teachers. It means that teachers in Indonesia have not got enough attention in term of upgrading their competencies in strengthening character education.

In reality, the current situation of character education in Indonesia is till far form excellent (Rokhman et al., 2014). One of the factors that causes that situation is the teachers' competencies that are related to their pedagogical knowledge. This will be more problematics if the situation is applied to pre-service teachers due to their lack of knowledge in term of teaching and learning processes. To shed light on this stuation, this study tries to find out the internalization of Islamic character education in English language teaching for pre-service teachers. This study is conducted to investigate whether pre-service teachers understand and internalize or pick up some Islamic characters during their learning processes. The characters used in this study is based on the framework of **Al-Zarnuji's *Ta'lim al Muata'allim***

Strengthening Character Education

Strengthening Character Education (*Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter* or PPK) is an educational movement in schools to strengthen character through of students' formation, transformation, transmission, and potential development, in addition to being the core of educational activities that lead to the creation of a national character revolution (Presidential Regulation No. 87/2017)*.* While character education is a soul of education before the students get learning activity (Ratih, 2017). Character education has been intensively started

since 2010 (Listiawati, 2018), which is *Gerakan Nasional Pendidikan Karakter* but MoEC launched the PPK program in 2016.

Stakeholders emphasize the PPK program because there are issues affecting students: moral degradation, reflected by violence (including bullying), drug use, free sex, and teenage pregnancy (Kurniasih, Valentina, Utari, & Akhmadi, 2018).

According to Presidential Regulation No. 87/2017, characters in the PPK program divided into main-character, and sub-character. The five character values in the main-character of the PPK program are: religious; nationalists; independent; cooperation; and integrity. Besides, the 18 character values in the sub-character of the PPK program are: religious; honesty; tolerance; discipline; hard work; creative; independence; democracy; curiosity; national spirit; love the motherland; appreciating achievement; friendly/communicative; peaceful love; likes to read; care for the environment; social care; and responsibility.

The Purposes of Strengthening Character Education

According to Presidential Regulation No. 87/2017, PPK program has some purposes as the following:

1. Develop a national education platform that places character meaning and value as the soul or main generator of education administration.
2. Building and equipping the Indonesian Golden Generation 2045 to face the dynamics of change in the future with 21st century skills.
3. Restore character education as the spirit and foundation of education through harmonization of the heart (ethics and spiritual), the feeling (the aesthetic), the mind (literacy and numeracy), and sports (kinesthetic).
4. Revitalize and strengthen the capacity of the education ecosystem (principals, teachers, students, supervisors, and school committees) for support the expansion of the implementation of character education.
5. Building a community engagement network as a source of learning inside and outside of school.
6. To preserve Indonesian culture and identity within support National Movement Mental Revolution (*Gerakan Nasional Revolusi Mental*).

Nova (2017) added, the main purpose in PPK is the students not only recognizing what is right or wrong, but also being able to feel and internalize the good values and have the habit of practicing the good values in their daily life.

Al Zarnuji's Ta'lim al Muta'allim

Even though this book is written in the 13th century, it has given a lot of contribution to the educational world (Yahya, 2005; Mu'izzuddin, 2012). It is also used as a main reference and guideline by not only Islamic intellectuals but also Western scholars, especially in the field of education (Yahya, 2005). Its contents have given major influence, especially in the Indonesian context, because the use of this book is widely spread across Islamic institutions in Indonesia, like e.g. pesantren Gontor (Nata, 2005). Al-Zarnuji's frameworks have donated knowledge for students (*santri*) in their acquisition of knowledge (Hafidzah, 2014).

Fully packed with the principles of pursuit of knowledge, the framework serves complete ethical foundations for the teaching-learning process as based on the religious conservative (Huda & Kartanegara, 2015b). Thus, the contents of this work are appropriately believed that they can be used to teach the students good morality.

Islamic Spiritual Character Values of Al-Zarnuji's Ta'lim al-Muta'allim

The Islamic spiritual character values should not be separated with the terms of extent to construct at the certain level. In this regard, there are some Islamic character values of Al-Zarnuji's *Ta'lim al Muta'allim*, where all is oriented for the purpose of soul purification, as in the following:

Taubat (Repentance)

Explicitly, *taubat* (repentance) is a crucial ethical foundation required in the field of education, because it possesses the Islamic character values. That being said, it is obvious that Al-Zarnuji properly encouraged to care about soul refinement during learning process, namely keeping up good deed (*hasanah*) and avoiding bad one (*ma'siyat*). For both students and teachers, the effort as a main priority to complete is always trying to do what is permitted in Islam and to keep away from what is prohibited in Islam. In the case of analyzing, the power of memorizing is made as the standard to measure the level of successful achievement.

Zuhud

In terms of the nature *zuhud*, al-Zarnuji outlined by stating that in intention (*niyyah*) as formulation of aim in education the main and first priority is to achieve God's pleasure and all other purposes under that (Huda & Kartanegara, 2015b). It means that during the learning process, regardless the level of instruction, a student should never aim solely towards the worldly life, or more particularly for material purpose at temporary times. Such an aim would result in the loss of one original focus.

According to Maududi (1966) it is clear that belief in the Hereafter is another key factor in providing morality with a strong basis and purpose. It means that the besides living in this world, it is ensured the all human being, particularly members of the Islamic society, should make this worldly life as a bridge or medium to achieve worldly life purpose.

Sabar (Patience)

The nature of *sabar* is one of the compulsory spiritual values for those with belief. Hence, in the educational process, it is advisable for those who are in pursuit of knowledge, courage to practice patience on many levels. It means that the nature of *sabar* for the student shows that a student should have a heart that is steadfast and patient in accordance with the teacher; when studying a book it is not to be abandoned before perfectly studied and not to move to another field prior to understanding completely which holds true also to the place to learning when one is not to move to elsewhere except as forced, through the curriculum (Huda & Kartanegara, 2015a).

Tawakkal (submission to God)

Tawakkal means 'absolute reliance' balanced with 'hard work'. So, here are two main points as the significant effort for being *tawakkal*, in order to make a fundamental basis for equipping the human being with noble character. T*awakkal* is to act in accordance with Allah's scheme i.e. to adopt the principles and laws of the *shari'ah*, and to submit one's self unto Him. From this perspective, learners are necessary to instill tawakkal in his/ her heart and should not worry about the livelihood for it can deviate their focus

Tawaduʿ and Ta'zim (Respect)

Ta'zim is an attitude that should be possessed by every Muslim as a form of *akhlaq al-mahmudah* (a noble character quality). It can be defined as 'human attitude with balance position, neither bragging and nor boasting and at the same time, not humiliating or degrading themselves excessively (Huda & Kartanegara, 2015c). In addition, it is necessary to conceptualize such a process well designed to educate soul and mind element. The process is comprehensively and entirely concerning understanding, reflecting and practicing, in the order for performing the individual with knowledgeable quality, spiritual ability and good character (al-Shaybani, 1979; Huda & Kartanegara, 2015c).

Wara' (keeping away bad deed)

Wara' is defined as 'the nature containing prudence exceptional and lack of courage to approach something that is forbidden, as well as things that are hesitant. According to Al-Zarnuji, it seems clear to him to assume that whoever, in pursuing knowledge, education at all levels, should have the nature of *wara'*. As Adi & Satiman (2014) illustrated, it is sure not only through educational process, a knowledgeable human is produced, but also the knowledge acquired will be balanced between this world and the next.

Research Methods

This study employed case study in which open-ended questionnaire, observation and documentation were used as data collection. The participants of the study were 60 pre-service teachers in an English department of one of private universities in Bogor. They were taking a writing for academic class, in which they had to complete series of tasks given by the lecturer.

During the study, the lecturer took some notes regarding the activities during the classroom. The lecturer also collected some tasks and kept the results as documents. These two data were used and analyzed qualitatively by the researchers before the questionnaire was given to the pre-service teachers. The questionnaire was designed based on the framework of al-Zarnuji. Through the questionnaire, it was elicited the understanding of the pre-service teachers regarding the framework and its application to their life during their study.

The questionnaire was written in Bahasa Indonesia to make sure that the respondents understand about the content and it was given through Google form and the result was analyzed qualitatively to support the findings from observation and documentation. Three ways of data collection were employed to validate the data collected in the study, from which each data would validate the others.

Results and Discussion
Pre-service teachers' understanding about Islamic Character

The framework used in this study is taken from Al Zarnuji. It consists of six Islamic characters; taubat, zuhud, sabr, tawakkal, respect, and wara. The findings from questionnaire shows that most of the respondents understand about the characters. In the questionnaire, there are three choices that the respondents can choose to illustrate their understanding regarding the Islamic caharacters. They are very familiar, familiar, unfamiliar. The overall results can be illustrated in the following chart.
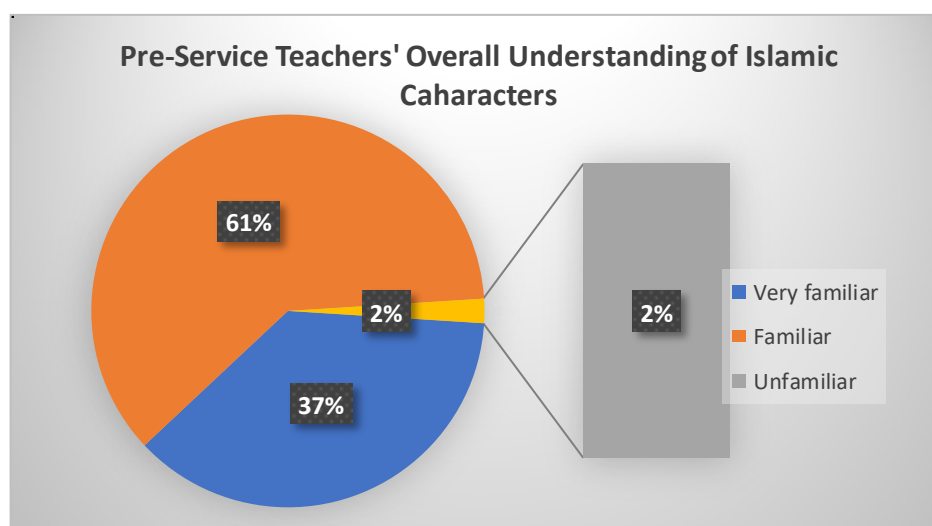

Chart 1. Pre-service understanding about Islamic characters.

From the chart above, it is clearly visualized that the respondents have understood about the concept of Islamic characters. It means that most of the respondents have no problems at all in understanding the Islamic characters.

The details for each Islamic character understanding of the respondents can be seen in the following table.

Islamic Characters	Very familiar (%)	Familiar (%)	Unfamiliar (%)
Taubat	40	60	0
Zuhud	12	77	11
Sabar	52	48	0
tawakkal	35	65	0
Respect	53	47	0
Wara	28	69	3

Table 1. Pre-service teachers' understanding about Islamic characters' Al Zarnuji

The table shows that the understanding of the respondents can be categorized into three different groups. They are very familiar, familiar and unfamiliar. From the total 6 characters studied here, more than 50% respondents admitted that they are very familiar with the characters sabar and respect, which are then followed by taubat, tawakkal, wara and zuhud. In the second group, familiar, zuhud was understood by 77% of respondents, that made it the highest understanding in this group. The other two three characters (taubat, tawakkal, wara) were understood by more than 50% repondents. In the third group, there were only two characters that were unfamiliar for the respondents. They were zuhud and wara. The percentage of these two characters were less than 15%.

Islamic Characters Internalized

Based on the findings of open-ended questionnaire, observation, and documentation, the results are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Taubat and Wara

These characters were internalized by some respondents of the study. The following excerpts visualize them.

> *I acted more meticulous during my readings and completing my tasks. I trained myself to be more critical, diligent, polite and respectful to others in class. (Excerpt 1)*

> *…. I always think positively and motivate myself during my task completion. (Excerpt 2)*

Excerpt 1 and 2 show that pre-service students have performed the acts of taubat and wara. When they keep up the good deed and avoiding the bad ones, it means that they can be categorized by performing the taubat and wara. It is also supported by the fact that the documents show progress of their study results. In addition, the observation during the learning process showed that the pre-service teachers were actively involved in the study. They asked questions when they had some doubts. It means that they were being honest and performing good deed.

Zuhud

In educational setting, zuhud can be seen from the action of using worldly life as the medium in reaching the hereafter life. In this study, it can be seen from the following excerpts.

When I have some difficulties, I always asked Allah to help me. (Excerpt 3)

During test time, I did not cheat because I am sure that Allah always watches me. (Excerpt 4)

The two excerpts illustrate that pre-service teachers always remembered God and realized that God is always with them. This is in line with the idea from Maududi (1966) that strong morality is an important factor in Islamic character. It is also showed during the learning process in which some students always said *istighfar* (remembering God) when they have some problems.

Sabar

Being patient is not a simple thing everyone can do. It needs practices that are repeated over and over. This character is implemented in the classroom, as the following visualizations.

I kept reading every paragraph and stayed patient even I don't like reading (academic article). (Excerpt 5)

In paraphrasing, I must stay focus and think harder (to finish it). (Excerpt 6)

The excerpts proved that the pre-service teachers were practicing sabar character during their study. Excerpt 5 showed that the respondent must train himself to be patient, as well as the excerpt 6. The observation also reflect the same performance result in which most pre-service teachers asked for more time to understand the reading materials. As the expalantion of Huda and Kartanegara (2015a), students must understand the materials before they move to the next ones.

Tawakkal

From the observation, it was clear that the class was always started and ended by praying together. These activities showed that the class has performed tawakkal character by relying everything to God. This is also supported by the result of the questionnaire as the excerpts below.

In my mid-term test, I did my best, then I rely to Allah for the result. (Excerpt 7)

After I completed my project (writing academic article and send it to journal) I prayed to Allah all the time for the publication. (Excerpt 8)

Excerpt 7 tells that the respondent had done the best effort in completing the mid-term test. It was then continued by relying the result to God. It means that the respondent realized that God is the only one that can make everything. She is performing tawakkal by doing this action. The same thins applies for the excerpt 8 in which the respondent rely to God for the publication of her article.

Respect

The excerpts below convey the application of respect character of the respondents during their learning process.

I respect my lecturer because he explains the materials clearly and patiently. He also guides us in academic writing. (Excerpt 9)

I wait for the explanation to end whenever I want to ask for some doubts or clarification. I must not interfere the explanation. (Excerpt 10)

Pre-service teachers show their respects during the learning process. It can be seen from the excerpts above and also the notes from observation result. It means that the respondents have internalize this character (respect) in their daily basis during their learning processes.

Conclusion

One of the demands of the Curriculum 2013 in Indonesia is the application of strengthening character education in the classroom. It needs some practices and realization of the teachers to be able to perform this in their classrooms. This study has shown that pre-service teachers can be trained in their learning processes to understand and experience the application of strengthening character education. In an English classroom, by giving some tasks and exercises, teachers can train pre-service teachers to make them realize that internalization of Islamic characters is possible. For the following researchers, it is suggested to study deeper on specific caharacters and to check whether the characters are also performed outside the classroom or not.

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