CHARACTER BUILDING IN ONLINE AND FACE-TO-FACE EFL CLASSROOMS IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL: THE STRATEGIES AND CHALLENGES

Astri Ratnasari*, Nunung Suryati, Ekaning Dewanti Laksmi
English Language Teaching, Universitas Negeri Malang

INFO ARTIKEL	ABSTRACT
	Abstract: This study aimed to scrutinize EFL teachers' strategies and challenges of character building in online and face-to-face classrooms. This case study involved two seventh grade English teachers as the subjects. The findings revealed that the teachers' strategies of character building in seventh grade EFL classrooms were through the use of speech acts, modeling, rule reinforcement, and habituation. However, the strategies to use in the online and face-to-face classrooms were different. The challenges the teachers faced during the teaching and learning process were time allotment, the absence of English in some elementary schools, and the zoning system. **Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meneliti strategi dan tantangan guru EFL dalam membangun karakter di kelas online dan tatap muka. Studi kasus ini melibatkan dua guru bahasa Inggris kelas tujuh sebagai subjek. Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa strategi guru dalam membangun karakter di kelas tujuh EFL adalah melalui penggunaan tindak tutur, modeling, penguatan aturan, dan pembiasaan. Namun, strategi untuk digunakan di kelas online dan tatap muka berbeda. Tantangan yang dihadapi guru selama proses belajar mengajar adalah alokasi waktu, tidak adanya bahasa Inggris di beberapa sekolah dasar, dan sistem zonasi.
Correspondence Address: Astri Ratnasari, ELT Master's Degree Program Universitas Negeri Malang Jl. Semarang no. 5, Malang E-mail: astriastri945@gmail.com	

Terminologically, character is derived from the Greek word "kharaktēr" which means a mark, trait, or personality, which distinguishes an individual from others (Rohmah, 2017). The normative view of character is to be "engaging in morally relevant conduct or words, or refraining from certain conduct or words" and those conducts reflect an individual's characters, whether it is good or bad (Wynne & Walberg as cited in Huitt, 2004). The individuals who have good characters are the ones who behave well without having any intentions to do bad or morally unacceptable things (W.J. Bennett as cited in Lapsley & Narvaez, 2007:250). One of the fundamentals of character is one's values, as it determines morality which also navigates one's conducts (Huitt, 2004). An individual who has knowledge without good characters or practicing good values potentially harms himself or herself, other people, and the society, since the individual has the tendency to not have high morality and do bad conducts, such as breaking rules. Thus, character building has existed, been discussed, and explored in the world of education since the early of 19th century (Nova, 2017; O'Sullivan, 2004).

Character building at school is defined as a developing practice which main objective is to establish student's good ethical behaviors (Katilmiş Eksi, & Öztürk, 2011; O'Sullivan, 2004). Character building has become a major concern in the world of education as school is the place where students spend most of their time every day, and has impacts on students' character development (Williams, 2000). Therefore, the educational institutions are responsible for the establishment of students' morals and characters (Kamaruddin, 2012; Karimi, 2015). Integrating character building at school aims to encourage students to be ethical and well-mannered individuals, who learn about values such as honesty, care, and any other important traits of a good citizen (Manalu & Marpaung, 2018). Thus, teachers have to take the pro-active role as "parents in school" which give them the responsibilities of building students' characters by implementing character building in school environment, especially in the classroom.

. In Indonesia, the formal education system employs 2013 curriculum or K-13 curriculum which integrates character building in the teaching and learning process. The efforts of character building are not implemented as a subject, but students' behavioral aspect is considered as one of the assessments in the curriculum. Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture introduced the curriculum as a response to social concerns about moral degradation or the loss of character values of the citizens. In the 2013 curriculum, it is stated clearly that teachers' roles are not merely as teachers at school, but also as counselors (Putri, Hartanto, Mocharam, 2017). There have been numerous cases which become the manifestations of moral degradation, especially of the youth in this nation, such as: pre-marital sex, drugs abuse, violent actions such as fighting and physical bullying, being less accepting or tolerant towards people from different backgrounds, and other immoral behaviors which may cause physical and psychological damages to other people (Lubis and Supriyoko as cited in Agung, 2011)

In EFL classroom context, this lack of established character building leads to numerous behavioral problems during the teaching and learning process. Beside the dishonesty problem mentioned previously, one of many common examples of problems happening in the EFL classroom is mockery or making fun of the teacher or a classmate when they try to pronounce certain words correctly the way English native speakers speak, which can be demotivating and causing lack of confidence. This act of mockery can be classified into verbal bullying which might affect the targets deeply psychologically as it is a form of disrespect and humiliation (Jan & Husain, 2015). Other problems found in the classroom are bullying disguised as jokes, showing disinterest towards the subject, underestimating the subject, not paying attention to the teacher, and etc (Arifin, 2017). These common problems happen during face-to-face lessons even when the students are under full supervision of the teachers.

When the pandemic started in 2020, schools were temporarily closed since face-to-face lessons were strictly prohibited to prevent disease transmission and almost every aspect of life went online. It urged educators to make a big shift from conventional face-to-face lessons to full online classes. However, many studies have been conducted in which the results show that doing the lessons online only add to more problems, especially students behavioral problems. The were several obstacles happened in online learning during the pandemic (Yuzulia, 2021). The study which involved 54 students shows that there were several challenges, such as: the lack of motivation, more distractions, and the amount of assignments given by the teachers, which had them prefer conventional face-to-face than online learning.

Indonesian government has been trying to restore and rebuild the citizen characters through character building program in order to develop and improve the human resource through joint efforts of the nation with the hope that it can improve the quality of education and advance the culture. This human resource development is done by shaping the students into Pancasila students (Permendikbud, 2020). There are six characteristics of Pancasila students namely Pancasila Student Profiles (Profil Pelajar Pancasila), which are piety to God, global diversity character, collaboration, independence, critical thinking, and creativity. Pancasila students are the embodiment of Indonesian students as lifelong students who have global competence and behave accordingly to the values of Pancasila.

There are several ways to integrate character building, which are; teachers have to be the role models, discipline has to be implanted, students' habits should be formed, the classroom atmosphere should be conducive, and character building itself should be integrated and internalized (Haryati, 2017). Integrating character building is done during pre-activity, whilst-activity, and post-activity, and each activity focuses on different personality traits to develop (Agustini, Tantra, & Wedhanti, 2014; Ratih, 2017). There are some ways to integrate character building such as choosing materials which contain good character values and using direct statements such as encouraging students to be discipline and honest (Ratih, 2017).

Other studies revealed that character building is done by two approaches, internally through the school authorities and externally by the help of parents and the society (Ahmadi, Haris, & Akbal, 2020; Buchory & Swadayani, 2014; Dalimunthe, 2015; Maunah, 2015). There are four steps of character building to be done internally, which are; the organization, implementation, habituation, and evaluation. The organization is done by the headmaster, school principals, and the teachers working together forming character building program based on the governmental regulation. Then, the implementation is carried out in the classroom through teaching and learning process and also the school area. The third step is done by all school authorities helping the students to adjust to the habits of what should or should not do. Finally, after integrating and observing the students, the evaluation process can be done usually at the end of the term.

This study intended to investigate teacher's strategies and challenges of integrating character building in Junior High School in both EFL online and face-to-face classroom. This study aimed to cover the shortcomings of the previous studies. The first shortcoming was that the previous studies only investigated about character building program in a broader context which was in school context. Teachers would need to know the strategies on how to build the students characters in the classroom context in order to help the students develop the desirable traits. This study focused more on investigating the strategies of character building in a more specific context which is in the classroom. The second shortcoming was that the settings of the previous studies are face-to-face classroom only, which did not cover the character building during online learning (Agung, 2011; Arifin, 2017; Jan & Husain, 2015; Katilmiş, Eksi, & Öztürk, 2011). To fill this gap, this study focused on character building in both settings of EFL online and face-to-face learning. The present study also aimed to focus more about the teachers own strategies of character building in the field, both online and face-to-face classroom and also its challenges faced by the teachers in EFL classrooms of Junior High School. Reflecting upon the underlying theories, there are two rresearch questions presented as follows:

1. How do teachers integrate character building in EFL online and face-to-face classroom in Junior High School?
2. What are the challenges of integrating character building during online and face-to-face EFL classroom?

METHOD

The research design employed in this study falls into one of the qualitative research designs named case study, since it is used to investigate extensively about the significant part of the life cycle of the subjects (Latief, 2016:87). The center of interest in case study is the emphasis on the exploration, description, and explanation of the phenomenon which happens in daily contexts (Crowe et al., 2011). The subjects of case study are typical, which means that they are selected not because they meet the criteria to represent a big group, but because they exhibit the prominent quality which distinguishes them from the others (Latief, 2016:89). In this study, the subjects were the teachers from a school which displays good character building in order to help the students achieve the best outcome. The criteria of the subjects were (1) English teachers (2) certified teachers (3) have minimum of three years of teaching, (4) seventh grade English teachers, and (5) the teachers who experienced online teaching. There were two teachers who met all the criteria, they were; Miss Amy and Miss Nina (aliases).

Instruments

The instruments used in this study were observation checklist, interview protocol guide, and also recorder for the teachers' responses. The observation checklist was used during the classroom observation to collect the data such as the teachers' strategies to integrate character building and also students' behaviors. The interview protocol guide was used to conduct the interview with the teachers, collecting the data such as teachers' knowledge, personal opinions, and personal experiences about character building in EFL classrooms.

Analysis

There were five steps of the data analysis; transcription, coding, theme generation, and interpretation (Creswell, 2012).The first step of the data analysis in case study is the transcription process. Transcription is the process of converting the data from recording to written data. In this study, the recording from teachers' interviews will need to be transformed into the form of text. Then, the next step of the analysis is data coding. By coding, it will be easier to have a description of the text segments since codes are used as labels, such as teachers' opinions, experiences, strategies, teaching practices, teaching activities, and etc. Next, after the segments are labeled by coding, the following step is generating themes. Generating themes is used to merge the similar codes in order to form a bigger idea to make it easier to describe. The fourth step is to display the findings. Findings display can be done by using a table, diagram, figures, mapping, and etc. The last step is the data interpretation. In this last step, the researcher is going to generate a meaning by adding some personal views, previous studies, or the combination of both of them.

RESULTS

Based on the classroom observations and interviews, it was revealed that the subjects, Miss Amy and Miss Nina, had different views and strategies regarding of building students' characters in the classroom. While Miss Amy liked to view herself as the students' friend, Miss Nina viewed herself to be more of an authoritative figure in the classroom. Miss Amy explained that she viewed herself as the students' friend because in that way it would be easier to get closer to the students and guide them to do the things she assigned. Meanwhile, Miss Nina explained that building students' good characters requires authority and assertiveness in order to have the students listen well and be obedient. Miss Nina was the teacher who preferred to deal directly with the students when they misbehave, while Miss Amy would ask for external help such as the students' parents.

From the interview, it was revealed that the teachers had similar opinions and experiences regarding of teaching English to seventh grade students. They actually enjoyed teaching the seventh grade, compared to eighth and ninth grade, despite the problems that may come up during the class. Despite their statements about how teaching seventh grade was fun, there was a problem where they would have to guide the students very carefully and in detail. The students would sometimes keep asking about the following steps, even though the teachers had repeated several times. The teachers agreed that the students who are going to be successful in learning English are those who are curious, active, diligent, and discipline. Miss Amy stated that she would be able to see the students' comprehension of the topic being discussed by the activeness of the students in the class. However, she needed to invite the students to ask first by asking them, "Is there any questions? If so, raise your hands please.". Students' participation during the lesson is being considered as one of the assessment consideration and she told the students that she would give additional points to those who are active.

Character Building Strategies in Online Classroom

The teachers admitted that it was easier to observe and handle the students directly in face-to-face setting. The reason was because there were a lot of problems during the online learning, such as student not attending the class. This disciplinary problem led to the teacher being unable to assess the students' academic competence. Miss Amy explained that it was very difficult to reach out to the students. Amid the chaos of formulating the teaching materials to be applicable in online teaching, which was all had to be computer-based, she also had to chase the students in order to make the students attend the class, do the assignments, and submit the assignments on time. It might have been more understandable if the students had notified the teacher first, but some of the students were absent without any notifications. Some other students would make excuses such as oversleeping and forgetfulness, which showed that they underestimated English class and also the teacher. Miss Amy then explained that she had to communicate with the students' parents and found the parents' involvement to be really helpful in order to make the students obey, and do what the teacher had asked. However, not all parents had the time to cooperate with the teacher because they were busy working or taking

care of other things. Different from Miss Amy, Miss Nina preferred to deal with the students herself and she would try to contact the students first before she gave up and let them be. During online teaching and learning process, they described that even though she had rules to apply during the lesson, the rules could not be applied online. When there were rule violations, they could not really do much about it.

The study found that the top most challenging character traits of Pancasila Student Profiles to develop during online teaching were discipline, responsible, independent, and then followed by cooperative, caring, and helpful since it was not possible to do group work.

Character Building Strategies in Face-to-face Classroom

However, since the notion of teaching and learning process had gradually shifted back to face-to-face setting, the teachers stated that it had been easier to collect the students' assignments from the online teaching and catch up. They could deal with the students directly without having to wait and hope for the parents' involvement. They could also integrate good character values in the way that she saw fit, such as discipline the students with punishments or encourage them with rewards.

1) *Piety to God and noble morality* - In this aspect, there are two main character traits to develop, religious and virtuous. In the class, the teachers' way to help the students to be more religious was by inviting them to pray and leading them to say "*Alhamdulillah*" or "Thank God". According to Miss Amy, with the help of having a good relationship with God will help the students develop good virtues such as honesty and kindness. The students will remember that there is God who always watches them and try to apply the religious teachings to guide them in their daily actions.

2) *Having global diversity character* - There are two main character traits to be developed, which are tolerant and open-minded. The example of helping the students to develop these traits was by exposing the students to new cultures through English then learn more about it, such as introducing the students to the concept of having a family name in other countries, which is not common in Indonesia.

3) *Collaboration* - There are three main traits to develop, which are cooperative, caring, and helpful. The way to help the students develop those traits was done by assigning the students to do group work. It can also be done by telling the students directly to share something and help their friends.

4) *Independence* - In this aspect, there are three main character traits to be developed, which are independent, responsible, and discipline. The teachers used rule reinforcement by giving rewards to well-behaved students and punishments to those who violated the rules. Miss Amy gave applause as a reward and additional assignment as a punishment. While Miss Nina would say thank you or give additional points as rewards, and score reduction or ask the students to go out of the class as punishments.

5) *Critical thinking* - There are two main character traits to develop in critical thinking aspect, which are; critical or analytic and communicative. The strategies in developing the traits were through videos, question and answers, group discussions, and also students' presentations.

6) *Creative* - For creativity, Miss Amy mentioned that she would give the students a material that the students can think about, discuss, or elaborate. While Miss Nina would ask the students to do a project relating to their personal interests, such as asking the students to write about K-Pop.

Teachers' Challenges

This study found that beside the students' disciplinary problems the teachers faced during the online teaching, there were several other problems which both teachers complained about, that also affected the character building integration, they were; time allotment, zoning system, and the absence of English in some elementary school.

1) *Time allotment* - Both teachers described similar situations where the teachers had to work hard during the teaching because the materials to cover were a lot yet the time for English lesson was limited. They complained about how little the time allotment for English lessons was, and still is. This time allotment issues forced the teachers to work even harder during the pandemic because teachers had to deal with both students' academic and behavioral issues. For the academic issues, the teachers could make it up by sending the materials before the lessons, but the teachers could not do much about the behavioral problems such as not attending the classroom, not reading the materials, or not doing the assignments.

2) *The absence of English in some elementary schools* – The teachers stated that one of the challenges of teaching seventh grade students was the absence of English subject in several elementary schools which caused some students lacking of prior knowledge. The teachers found it difficult to balance the academic competence and the character building when the teachers have to work hard on helping some students catch up with the others. The teachers had no choice but to focus more on the academic competence in order to cover all of the materials needed to deliver. the students' who were not taught English as a subject in their elementary school lack of confidence, which made it difficult to ask them to do assignments, group work, or present in front of the class. The teachers would try to give them special treatments such as giving them extra lessons or assignments outside the classroom to keep up with others.

3) *Zoning system* - Both teachers described that the zoning system indeed made the students' competence more various and the effort of avoiding school favoritism succeeded, yet it also has made the teachers have to divide their attention focusing on both students' academic competence and behaviors with such limited time to teach.

DISCUSSION

Teachers' Strategies

The findings of this study are in line with the previous study which suggested that there are several strategies can be employed for character building in the classrooms, which are; direct teaching, modelling, rule reinforcement, and habituation (Hasanah, 2016). However, this study also revealed that the teachers used the aforementioned strategies in more specific ways. The findings of this study added several specific ways included in the direct teaching, which were not only the interaction between the teacher and the students that is called speech acts, but also through the use of the teaching materials and media in the classroom.

1) *Speech Acts* - There are five classifications of speech acts, which are; directives, commissives, expressives, representatives/assertives, and declaratives (Searle, 1976). In the classroom context, there are definitions and examples of the speech acts which can be used by teachers during the teaching and learning process, which are; directives, commissives, expressives, representatives/assertives, and declaratives. Directives are utterances the teachers can use which aim to get the attention or information from the students or make the students do something. The examples of directive speech act are asking, questioning, inviting, advising, reminding, demanding, and etc. Commissives are the utterances aimed to indicate a commitment to do something in the future. The examples of commissive speech act are promising, offering, threatening, and etc. Expressives are the utterances used to express emotions towards something. The examples of expressive speech act are thanking, apologizing, congratulating, complaining, and etc. Representatives/assertives are the utterances teachers could use to tell the students about the teacher's knowledge of something. The examples of representative/assertive speech act are stating, telling, informing, confirming, asserting, reassuring, and etc. Declaratives are the utterances teachers could use to make a change of a situation. The examples of declarative speech act are declaring, appointing, dismissing, calling, and etc.

2) *Teaching materials* - The efforts of students' character building can be done by using teaching materials which contain good character values such as folklores, fables, or any other types of texts (Agustina et al., 2019; Hidayati, 2018). Teaching materials can be in the form of stories, texts, poems, song lyrics, worksheets, and etc. However, before using the materials, firstly the teachers should review and select the teaching materials carefully.

3) *Teaching media* - Character building can also be integrated in the use of teaching media. There are numerous types of teaching media such as books, pictures, videos, audios like recording of conversations or songs, flash cards, and many more, which the teachers should also review and select carefully in order to avoid negative values contradicting to Indonesian norms (Rachmajanti et al., 2014).

4) *Modeling* - Before helping the students to build good characters, the teachers must have the good characters themselves in order to be the example for the students to imitate (Hardiyanti, 2016). In this study, in order to be the students' role model, the teachers must exhibit the character traits of Pancasila Student Profiles such as religious, virtuous, honest, tolerant, open-minded, discipline, and etc. The teachers could also use students with desirable traits to be other students' model.

5) *Rule reinforcement* - Reinforcing rules to develop the students' sense of right or wrong awareness and discipline in the classroom can be integrated through giving rewards for good behaviors and punishments for rule violations (Hasanah, 2016). Rewards can be given in the form of materials and non-materials, verbal and non-verbal (Irawati & Syafei, 2016). Material rewards can be in the form of presents, snacks, or stickers, while non-material rewards can be in the form of compliments or applause. Punishments are given in the form of point reduction, warning, extra assignments, and etc.

6) *Habituation* - Our characters are basically a set of our habits (Hendriana & Jacobus, 2017). The process of character building could not be done in one or two meeting but it is continuous starting from the introduction of each character concept, implementation, and habituation.

Table 1. The Teachers' Strategies on Character Building

Aspects	Character Traits	Miss Amy's strategies	Miss Nina's strategies
Piety to God and noble morality	Religious, virtuous	Speech acts in the form of command and reminder (Inviting or giving extra time to the students to pray, reminding the students about religious	Speech acts in the form of commands (Inviting the students to pray, asking the students to be honest and kind) and prohibition (no cheating)

		teachings)	
Having global diversity character	Tolerant and open-minded	Modeling (Being open-minded wanting to learn about other people's cultures)	Through materials (Videos)
Collaboration	Cooperative, caring, helpful	Through materials (Group work)	Through materials (Group work)
Independence	Independent, responsible, discipline	Habituation (Involving parents to monitor the students)	Punishments (expelling disruptive students from class, taking test paper)
Critical thinking	Critical/ analytical, communicative	Through materials (videos, presentations)	Speech acts in the form of questions (asking students what and why)
Creativity	Creative	Through materials (Giving various topic to discuss)	Through materials (asking the students to do a project)

Teachers' Challenges

This study found that both participants, Miss Amy and Miss Nina, faced some difficulties due to the overload demands of the 2013 Curriculum, between the students' academic skill mastery and character building. There were three main challenges the teachers faced which affected the character building process, which were; time allotment, the absence of English in elementary school, and the zoning system.

The teachers' complaints regarding of time allotment were mainly during the online teaching. The time was very limited yet the materials to teach were a lot. Therefore, they had to divide their focus to the teaching and learning process and the behavioral problems of the students which disrupted the teaching and learning process.

The absence of English in some elementary schools was also the teachers' challenge in teaching seventh grade students. English is no longer included to be one of the subjects (Permendikbud, 2014). This regulation misaligns with the Ministry of Education and Culture vision and mission is to develop Pancasila Student Profiles, in which one of the key aspects is having global diversity character (Permendikbud, 2020). The way of having global diversity character is through learning English. English subject in elementary schools curriculum was unnecessarily abolished and English should be taught from early age (Rintaningrum, 2019). This abolishment of English subject in elementary school also adds to the burden of Junior High School English as some seventh grade students from private elementary schools have already learned English. Therefore, the teachers have to equate the students' English competences in seventh grade.

The zoning system does not make the teachers' work easier. Even though the zoning system has been successfully implemented, the teachers are affected with the disadvantage where they have to work hard to equalize the students' academic competences.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions

The first conclusion is that the study found several strategies which can help the teachers build the students' good characters based on Pancasila student profiles, which are; direct teaching (speech acts, teaching materials, and teaching media), modeling (teacher as the example and student as the example), rule reinforcement (rewards and punishments), and habituation. During the teaching and learning process, the teachers tend to use speech acts the most than any other strategies, specifically directive speech act, such as asking, questioning, inviting, requesting, and etc.

The second conclusion is that the strategies of character building in EFL online and face-to-face classrooms are very different. In online classroom, the integration of rule reinforcement such as giving rewards and punishments is not effective. The teachers can help develop the students' traits through integrating good character values in the teaching materials and media, and also through the speech acts. The teachers can also ask the help from the students' parents. Meanwhile, the character building for face-to-face classrooms is easier since the teacher can handle the students directly, set the rules in the classroom, and use rewards and punishments to reinforce the rules. The teachers can also use speech acts, the students can see the teachers as good examples, and they can form a daily habit.

The third conclusion is that the teachers faced a lot of challenges during teaching and learning process in seventh grade level, such as the students' behavioral problems, time allotment, the absence of English in some elementary schools, and also the zoning system.

Suggestions

The teachers should be the role model for the character building, and they should be able to exhibit the character traits first before trying to help build the students' character traits. For example, the open-minded trait, the teachers have to learn more about

worldwide cultures since they teach English. It will be better if the teachers can introduce the students to western cultures such as Halloween, Thanksgiving, and etc.

The school and educational institutions should also provide more facilities, such as providing worship places since one of the aims is to develop the students' religiosity. Not only a worship place for the majority group such as Muslims, but also teachers, students, and staffs who believe in other religions in order to develop their religiosity and expose the other students to diversity, for example the place of worships for Christians, Hindus, and Buddhists in the institution area.

The government should be clearer in helping the teachers as the agents of learning in the classroom and also for character building. The teachers are overworked since they are required to be able to balance both the students' academic competences and behavioral aspects at the same time.

Lastly, further researchers who are interested in similar topic about character building might want to investigate more about the strategy of habituation or the character building for teachers.

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