

## INTEGRATING CHARACTER EDUCATION AND LOCAL GENIUS THROUGH *BALABOLKA* IN TEACHING LISTENING

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**Abstract:** Nowadays, moral education is booming since there are many juvenile delinquencies in Indonesia. As the president began to worry and pointed us, as teachers, to hold the very crucial role in educating our students to prepare the future of Indonesia, we feel that some breakthrough on the media also should contain character education as well as local wisdom. This paper is aimed to give an alternative way in preparing media for teaching listening which can accommodate what we want. I propose *balabolka* software as the good choice for the needs of Indonesian students in general. Here, we can create our own media in the form of MP3 by inserting the important ingredients of character education, and local wisdom inside the content of our English teaching, especially teaching listening. By doing this, we expect that moral education and local wisdom which, obviously, can change our students behavior can be inserted in the English lesson, especially for listening skill.

**Keywords:** character education, local genius, *balabolka*, teaching listening

### INTRODUCTION

Law Number 20/2003 on National Education System article 1 states that among the objectives of national education are developing student's intelligences, personality, and noble character. This statement means that the objective of the education is not only to make the students clever, but also to make them have good personality and noble character. Besides, it states that there is also society-based education which highlights culture as the creation of, by, and for the society itself. This culture includes local genius of local wisdom which should be developed by the nation. Article 32 verse 1 Amendment of UUD 1945 writes that the nation promotes Indonesian national culture in the world civilization. This mandates us to strive maintaining our culture if we want to overcome the global crisis. These characters of knowledgeable, cultured, and civilized society are needed by a country in order to succeed in facing global challenges as

stated in the Policy Brief 2011 on Character Education for Developing Nation's Character.

Related to the regulations above, there is a gap between the law and the reality happening that the children have limited or even no character at all and have already forgotten with the local genius as their wealth. Like what Lickona (1992) wrote in Suyanto (2013, p.2) that a developing country experience the situations like: 1) the increasing of violence in the youth; 2) the bad use of language; 3) the influence of peer group to do violence; 4) the increasing of acts damaging their own bodies (drug abuse, alcohol use, free sex, and committing suicide); 5) the blur of good and bad ; 6) the decreasing of hard work; 7) the low of respect to teachers and old people; 8) low of responsibility as an individual and as a citizen; 9) dishonest habit; and 10) prejudice and vulnerability in the society. All of these situations are experienced by Indonesia right now. Those situations are not only related to character which are almost

damaged but also related to our culture which are also nearly disappeared. Therefore, to fill the gap it is an urgent situation for Indonesia to implement character education and cultural-based education in order to save our nation and to avoid global crisis. Just as what Bennett (2008) stated that by cultivating good character in our children and ourselves, we strengthen our families, our communities, and our world.

### **Developing Character Education while Teaching**

Character education is not a new term in education. The definition of good characters itself is vary. According to Lickona (1993) in Jovan (2013, p.9), character covers six pillars, they are: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. Aspen Declaration declared by nation's top character education developers (1992) in Jovan (2013, p.9) also defines character in ten essential virtues, they are: wisdom, justice, fortitude, self-control, love, positive attitude, hard work, integrity, gratitude, and humility. Howard, Berkowitz, and Schaeffer (2004, p.18) define that characters consists of values in action. Character has three interrelated parts: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral behavior. Good character consists of knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good – habits of the mind, habits of the heart, and habits of action. Moreover they add that they want our children 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. Related to the cores of character above, every good character is important to develop.

Now, the questions arise. What is effective character education? What do best practices look like? What kind of character education should be included in every lesson? Although, the questions are already answered, can it change people to behave well? Crittenden states that everybody can tell which one is right and wrong. The problem is how to get people to behave well and adhere to those values. Here, Bennet (2008, p.9) writes that the inclusion of character education curricula has sometimes been a dilemma for schools. It often reflects divergent

philosophical points of view about ethics and morality that have been debated for centuries.

However, Henderson and Kesson (2004, p.8) state in their Curriculum Wisdom that the focus of the educational decision making is to solve the problem with reference to one's understanding of good conduct, one's conception of a good life – this point is related to **character education**. Furthermore curriculum wisdom is as problem solving. By having understanding of good conduct and conception of a good life, the students are expected to be able to perform their good conduct to achieve their good life in their imaginative insights. Here, the ability to judge what is true or right from the perspective of life as a whole can be achieved. Furthermore, Henderson and Kesson (2004, p.13) write that character is one of the 5 C's – collaboration, caring, character, challenge, calling – of wise curriculum judgments. They believe that curriculum wisdom is personally demanding professional norm. It requires one to be openly self-critical and thus the practice of democratic moral wisdom requires a soul-searching honesty. The questions like "Do I listen carefully to people with whom I disagree?", "Do my judgments embody the democratic good life?" should appear when we teach our students. This will guide the students in finding the **imaginative insights** of good conduct and good life – good character –, thus they also will learn to practice it in their life. Besides, Bennet and Bush in Crittenden write that character education can redeem our fallen nation. While Aristotle in Crittenden writes in the Nichomachean Ethics that if we want to be honest, we must undertake honest acts. And if we want to be brave, we must undertake brave acts. It means that the idea of good character not only remains a theory but it must be practiced by the teachers themselves. Therefore, the character education can be effective.

In the other hand, Burrett and Rusnak (1993, p.8) propose six key principles for an integrated character education program in order the character education can be effective. They are:

1. Character education should be a part of every subject
2. The school and community are vital partners in the character development of youth

3. Providing a positive classroom environment that support character education is needed
4. Empowered teachers – that is teachers with good attitude and committed to implementing character education curriculum – are in the best position to achieve character goals
5. Character education being encouraged through administrative policy and practice
6. Character education is action education

This principle is also described in Policy Brief 2011 as shown in Figure 1.

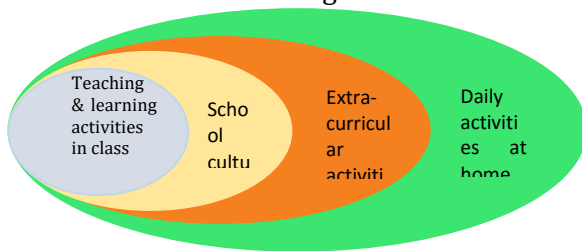


Figure 1. Micro Education Team of the Ministry of National Education Affair, 2010)

It is described that every activity happens in the classroom may become the students' habit. This habit can be brought by the students in the broader scope: at school, in their extra-curricular activities, and even at home where the students live. At this point, the character education is possible to be included in the school program expecting the students' good behavior will be performed.

In addition, Burrett and Rusnak (1993, p.13) state that school counselors should be:

1. developing competencies for all students in three essential areas, they are:
  - a. academic achievement
  - b. personal and social development
  - c. career planning
2. the bridge between the school and parents

By being helped by the school counselors, the students develop their intelligence – related to academic achievement, their character – related to personal and social development, and also their behavior – related to career planning. Besides, the school counselor becomes the bridge between the school and the parents. It highlights the responsibilities they share, not only the school's but also the parent's responsibility in educating the children in the hope that the students be able to perform good character wherever they are.

In Indonesia, operationally, how to develop students' character is shown in Figure 2.

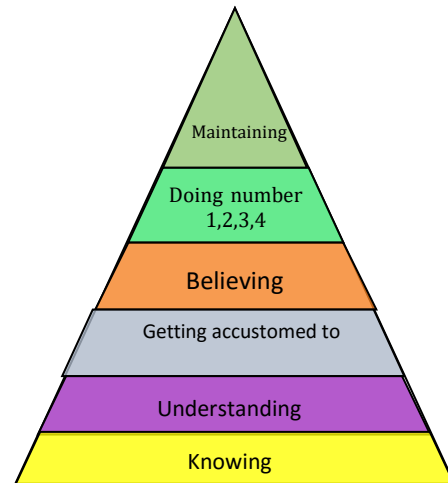


Figure 2. Phases in Developing Character (taken from Policy Brief 2011)

There are the phases of developing character building as written in the Policy Brief 2011 fourth edition on Character Education for Developing Nation's Character. First phase, students should be given knowledge about good character. In the process of teaching and learning good character, the second phase is expected to happen, that is the students understand good character. After that, the third phase is getting accustomed to do the good conduct. Here, the role of school is expected to happen. There should be some rules like: the students should throw garbage in the dustbin, the students must get in the school before 7, the students must not go out of the school area in the rest time, the students must speak English in the English speaking zone, and et cetera. First there are some rules on some good conduct, then it is expected that the students will be accustomed to doing those actions. The next phase is believing that doing some good actions or good conducts will get some benefits. Here, the teacher can give example of the advantages of doing good actions or good conducts as well as give example of the disadvantages of not doing good conducts or good actions when the students break the rules. For example, the students will increase their speaking ability because they have practiced speaking English a lot, or in the other example like the students will slip on the banana's rubbish when their friend throw it not on the dustbin, or give the students

example on the real event when a child is kidnapped when she is buying something outside the school area, and et cetera. By being given these examples, it is expected that the students will believe that what they do is right. Therefore, when the students start to believe those actions, they will do it without being forced. Then as the last phase, the students will maintain doing those good conducts in their life, not only in the school area. It means that it is in line with Berkowits et, al. above and also Dewantara in Policy Brief 2011 that three H – head, heart, and hand – should be developed, meaning that they will learn and understand, they will put it in their heart to seek the nature of good values, then they will do it with their hands. In addition to this, Bohlin in Bennett (2008) states that we need to develop both the student's intelligences and their character in order to achieve the objective of education as stated in Law Number 20/2003.

In conclusion, developing good character in a child is everybody's responsibility. We also, as teachers, have to take the responsibility to characterize our students because good character can be rooted in the classroom when we teach in case when the students' parents are busy people to teach at home. Effective character education may start in the classroom. There are phases that the students should go through in order to come to perform good character or good conducts. The students should be helped by the school, the parents and the environment where they live in order to succeed to become good characterized people, as a student, as a child, as a citizen who lives in a society, in a country, and in the world. Thus, there must be a link between schools, parents and environment in terms of providing the good practices to be perceived by the youth. Here, the effective character education can succeed.

### **Inclusion of Local Wisdom in Teaching English**

What is Local Wisdom? This question arises when the trend of teaching comes to include local wisdom in the part of the lesson in the classroom. Samawi (2009, p.10) states that local wisdom or local genius is a local creature or local uniqueness which can be found in a society conserving national culture. Its form can be physical or non-physical form.

The physical forms are like kitchen utensils, architecture, and so on. The non-physical forms are like religion, art, philosophy, ideology, and et cetera. Abdullah, Mujib, and Ahnaf (2008, p.1) state in their book that local wisdom is any practices or wisdom rooted from the local perspectives. It can be in the form of solemn rituals related to religion, philosophy, belief, or other practices done by the society. The definitions above direct me to state that the local wisdom we include here is the non-physical one. It belongs to the literature or the work of the art in which some cultural contents that we can insert in our teaching lie. The local wisdom that we can insert in our lesson is some stories or folk lore rooted from some areas in Indonesia.

As stated in the introduction at the beginning of this paper, that it is our responsibility as a citizen to develop local genius or local wisdom in order that we can face the global challenge. We can take the example like Japan and China that they always hold their culture, and this makes them avoid the global crisis like what happened in America and United Kingdom. Thus, Indonesian government regulated this in the Law Number 20/2003 article 1 on the inclusion of the local genius or culture in the teaching of every lesson. The other basis of including culture in the curriculum is the Amendment of UUD 1945 article 32 on national culture conservation. It mandates us to maintain our culture or local wisdom as our wealth. It is needed in order that we can compete with other countries besides it can help us to avoid global crisis today like what China and Japan do to face global challenges.

Having a look at regulations above, there is a gap in fact. The gap lies on the existence of our local genius in the part of the students. What happens today is the opposite condition. Not many of our students know, understand, tell, or do something which can be valued as our own culture. The students would rather watch Sinchan, Doraemon, Ultraman, than Roro Jonggrang, Kleting Kuning, and et cetera. Therefore, something must be done to save our youth, as our future nation. Because by having good knowledge on our own wealth—literature—, we can be strong in facing global competition.

Here, the teachers should take the responsibility in order to include local genius

while teaching in class. It must be done in order to conserve what we have. Besides, the teaching of English by using culture also has advantages. Cahyono (2013, p.xii) states that EFL learners have been living in their own culture and, thus, using their own culture in teaching of EFL will preserve their cultural identity. It is supported by Philips in Bafadal (2012, p.13) defines that local wisdom is as the nation's character as the traits which becomes nation's identity. This identity can be our wealth. It can make our tourism atmosphere bright. For example when there is cultural occasion like Grebek Suro, Ngaben, Kasada, and et cetera. Moreover, Octaberlina in Cahyono (2013, p.28) states that the use of local culture promotes local biodiversity. Besides, it helps the students to easily practice their English because they know the topic very well. Therefore, it is urged for the teacher to implement cultural-based education in the classroom.

The question which arises is that what kind of local wisdom or local genius can be included in the teaching of English especially listening. According to Bennet (2008, p.9) the local genius taught is the moral of the story. Hooks in Bennett (2008, p.10) states that life-transforming ideas have always come to him through books. Bohlin in Bennet (2008, p.11) mentions four issues in social importance which offers constructive advice to child readers. They are death and divorce, sibling rivalry, adoption, gender role and sexuality. Furthermore, according to her, these books provide a place for youngsters to examine and confront these issues in a protected vicarious situation. Character in literature provide us with a window to the soul through which we can examine the internal and external factors involved in becoming or failing to become the kind of a person we admire or respect. Besides, Kweldju (2011, p.11) also proposes the same. She points out that literature can shape the lives of the next generation. Here, it is clear that some experts above can introduce our local wisdom through literature.

Therefore, in pursuing the inclusion of local wisdom in the lesson, the teacher can use some folklore or folk tales which are originally from local areas in Indonesia. Some stories like Tangkuban Perahu or Banyuwangi can be the examples. Therefore, what we already have are not going to be vanished. These

stories should be taught in order that the students know what they already have in order to be able to conserve them. This is our wealth, as Bafadal states, that we can use for facing global competition.

### **Integrating both Character Education and Local Wisdom in One Media for Teaching Listening**

Considering difficulties owned by English Teachers in Indonesia has stimulated me to prepare a media which can accommodate every aspect related to English teaching. Many difficulties lay on the development of the materials suiting the curriculum as well as the students' condition. Second difficulty is on the preparation of the lesson -- from the strategies and the learning activities -- as well as the media which provides lots opportunities for the students to use English as a means of communication. Haven't solved these problems, English teachers must deal with another problem nowadays -- that is integrating their teaching with character education as the president points that this is the primary need to prepare good character generation. Lots of these burdens have put the teacher on the peak of the difficulty.

The evidence is shown by Susilo (2011, p.10) who writes that most teachers of English are not creative in taking the advantage of the materials in their environment. There are a lot of authentic materials surrounding which can be taken as the materials, for example: song, pictures, and newspaper but still the teacher rarely uses them. Although, some trainings have been held by English Language Fellows (ELF-US Embassy) to teach the teachers so that they can be creative teachers of English, still, it cannot show the good results. In addition, nowadays teacher is insisted to be able to teach English by inserting character education in their teaching. This is aimed to educate or more precisely to civilize the students in order to reduce juvenile delinquency nowadays. Those conditions have boosted the questions on how the English teachers can provide all of these things.

In this paper, I emphasize on the preparation of the media of teaching English, especially listening skill. As we know that any media of listening in teaching English is expensive and rare. In fact, the English teacher

in Indonesia has a special burden that is inserting the character education and local genius in the teaching as well. Therefore, the increasing need of listening media which integrates the two elements—character education and local genius—becomes compulsory to fulfill. Here, *balabolka* seems to give an answer in the process of preparing media for teaching listening. The arising of the listening media using *balabolka* starts from this condition where the teacher should provide a media which is *feasible* and *economical* to create *individually* by the teachers themselves.

### **Balabolka**

Balabolka is a Text-To-Speech (TTS) program. All computer voices installed on the system are available to Balabolka. Any plain text documents on the system can be opened for reading and editing via the "File | Open" menu. To create a new document, simply select "New" from the "File" menu in the computer.

Speech can be controlled using the standard play-pause-stop buttons found on the toolbar near the top of Balabolka. The program can read the clipboard content, view the text from AZW, CHM, DjVu (DjVu+OCR), DOC, DOCX, EPUB, FB2, HTML, LIT, MOBI, ODT, PDF, PRC and RTF files, customize font and background color, control reading from the system tray or by the global hotkeys. The on-screen text can be saved as a WAV, MP3, MP4, OGG or WMA file by selecting "File | Save Audio File" or "File | Split and Convert to Audio Files" from the "File" menu. Balabolka can save the synchronized text in external LRC files or in MP3 tags inside the audio files. When an audio file is played with players on a computer or on modern digital audio players, the text is displayed synchronously (at the same way, as lyrics for songs). The program can use various versions of Microsoft Speech API (SAPI) and Microsoft Speech Platform. It allows to alter a voice's parameters, including rate and pitch.

The teacher can apply a special substitution list to improve the quality of the voice's articulation. This feature is useful when we want to change the spelling of words or separating syllables. Balabolka uses two kinds of substitution lists: 1) the rules for the pronunciation correction use the syntax of

[regular expressions](#) and can be saved in the files with the extension \*.rex; 2) files with the extension \*.dic; this format is popular in Eastern Europe; the [syntax of rules](#) is simple, so the file can contain thousands of rules. Files for pronunciation correction are saved in the folder My Documents\Balabolka (or Documents\Balabolka in Windows Vista and Windows 7). If any dictionary is used, the program highlights the whole sentence or paragraph during reading; otherwise, the current word is highlighted.

The result of Balabolka in the form of MP3 can be used from the early level of students of junior high and senior high school. It cannot be used for university level students as the limitation of the MP3 is only for monolog. The teacher just plays the MP3 file for the students in listening class as the other MP3 file that the teacher usually uses in the classroom. There is no specific skill that the teacher should prepare in using the media. The students also do not need a special treatment as this media is only in the form of an MP3 file.

Here, I propose the phase the students may experience is described in Figure 2. First phase, students should be given knowledge about good character in a local literature. In the process of teaching and learning good character, the second phase is expected to happen, that is the students understand good character in that local stories. After that, the third phase is getting accustomed to do the good conduct like in the stories. There should be some values taught like: the students should not be selfish like in the case of Banyuwangi. They should not become betrayer because it will result bad condition. First there are some examples of the cause and effect about bad behavior, then it is expected that the students will be accustomed to avoid doing those actions. The next phase is believing that doing some good actions or good conducts will get some benefits. Here, the teacher can give example of the advantages of doing good actions or good conducts as well as give example of the disadvantages of not doing good conducts or good actions when the students break the rules. For example, the students will get good divine when they do good thing like in Kleting Kuning case. By being given these examples, it is expected that the students will believe that

what they do is the right choice as far as it is on the right track. Therefore, when the students start to believe those actions, they will do it without being forced just like the character in the stories.

Besides, this media of listening in the form of MP3 also helps the teacher develop multiple intelligences proposed by Gardner (2000, p.81), especially in interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences like what character education and local wisdom are aimed. Thus, this media can also be used to develop character education as well as local wisdom in the part of the students. It is expected that by using this media, the problem of teacher in providing the media of listening and the

problem of this country of the character deficiency and the disappearing of local wisdom can be solved.

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the use of Balabolka can help combine character education and local genius into one media. By learning the concept of moral value from the materials, the students have the example which is true and false, which they can imitate. By doing this, it is expected that the use of the media can teach the students the concept of moral value that help shape the behavior in the students' part which nowadays shows the unacceptable one.

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