

Character Education in the Last Song: A Conceptual Review

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Abstract

Character education becomes an important part in teaching and learning process since the ministry of culture and education affairs has included into an obligatory for school to teach it for their students. The problem especially for English teacher, how to teach character to students using English movie. English movie which is used to teach character should match with Indonesian character as stated by the government. In this paper, I suggest to use a movie from Disney which is titled the Last song. The Last song is an adaptation movie from Nicholas Spark Novel which has the same title. The story told about a young girl Ronnie who hates her father at first and transform into love caused by some inspirational events. I think the events in The Last Song, such as care to others, honesty and loving animals is good to enhance student's characters especially in Indonesian students.

Key Words: Character education, Movie, The Last Song

Gardner (2004) gives point of view about intelligences. Based on research conducted in 1960s, researcher makes a research about correlation between academic achievement and achievement in real world. Then they are divided into two groups based on their academic achievement, high achievement and low achievement. At the end of study in 1980s, High academic achievement in campus is not a guarantee a student's success in real life. Gardner (2004) shows the fact that most of school only teaches cognitive skills. In fact, according to Gardner, smart means you are champion in your fields. It is suggested a concept that everybody smart in it is own ways. It is suggested to try to adopt this concept. Teaching and learning process means teaching character to our students based on their own intelligence.

This study has some previous studies which has the similar object. Rahayuningtyas (2012:28) states that the main figures Ronnie has lack attention from her father. It could make impact on her behaviour to other characters. Besides, the study had support that the main character had been set to lose her father figures. Juwati (2014:19) states that character education has been done by adopting behaviorism. Nicholas Spark on his previous novel, *A Walk to remember* had included character education on the view of behaviorism method in teaching and learning values. It could be concluding that the author had included character education on his previous novel before the publication of *The Last Song*. Muzaki (2011) states that *The Last Song* is proper to teach character education based on Indonesian values. It states that *The Last Song* had taught moral value, that is the importance of presence of a whole family. The other previous which has done within the same theme had done by Sistiarsih (2015) who researched on ethics on a novel "*Laskar Pelangi*" written by Andrea Hirata. The focus is on ethics which is appeared in *Laskar Pelangi*. The results show that these novels have adopted honesty, courage, vigilance, wisdom, simplicity, and firm establishment on the novels as the character value.

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The other study had been done by Susandi (2015) that focuses on developing learning materials by using a novel entitled *Laskar Pelangi*. *Laskar Pelangi* developed as the basis to develop materials to rise up student's character. The similar study had been conducted by Mashuri (2014) that focus the study on the semiotics on a Novel Negeri 5 Menara. The result is the character values are represented by values and symbols.

Based on the explanation above, this study had taken place as confirmatory study. The aim is to explain teaching character education by English movie. The movie "The Last Song" had crossed cultural bound within most Indonesian culture. It needs additional study on an adaptation character education from the perspective of cross cultural understanding. This study still needs to be developed to adapt the materials for bilingual classrooms.

Review of Related Literature:

Stevenson (2006) explains that "Teaching Character education" is a term used to describe learning moral for personal development. Some areas emotional learning such as life skills education, conflict mediation" caring community is thought.

Character education is a term which is in broad scope and difficult to define. It is an umbrella many aspects of and under "ethic or moral. Kemendikbud (2011) explains this umbrella is wider and inter-disciplinary of knowledge. Students should have desire in learning character; they should have something to learn after teaching and learning process. The focus is not just synthesizing teaching and learning process, but students should find what is behind life-lesson. Teachers should be facilitators not guiders

Talking about character education in Indonesia is not as simple as talking about how to develop a lesson plan in a particular subject. It needs interdisciplinary background knowledge. Kemendikbud (2011) states that teachers should include character in their teaching and learning process. Including character in Indonesia should considering whether this character appropriate or not in students understanding levels. That is why; including character should consider the appropriate materials. Teachers as stakeholders need to assets material, whether developing or adopting. There are no perfect materials to teach character education. Especially it is for English language teaching in Indonesia. Teachers need to find appropriate materials.

In giving materials, especially to enhance students' character, there are some considerations, in particular for English subject. It explains three considerations. The first consideration, it should have meaning for students, they have to understand the moral value that included in that media. Secondly, the media to teach character should have appropriate culture for Indonesian. Third, the materials should have acceptable in Indonesia values. It is difficult to find those materials with those criteria. Some materials may good for western culture but it is not appropriate enough for Indonesian culture. There is only one solution; English teachers should be selective in choosing the appropriate materials for teaching character.

Movie is a good choice to teach character, I think, movie will give values to students. As commoners know, watching movie is easier rather than reading. In watching movie, the brained does not have to build an image of character, setting, and others intrinsic and extrinsic elements. While in reading, readers should add imagination to make them understand the plot and the message. The second reason, watching movie needs less time rather than reading. Reading a novel may takes a week, but watching movie maximum three hours, based on maximum length of Hollywood movie. That is why, I suggest teacher to use movie as a medium to teach character.

Depdiknas (2004) explains that the ideal character of Indonesian students are they have to be discipline, care with others, be concerned with nature, honest, forgive others, and obey every single rules from parents. This character is so difficult to explain using speech. It needs an authentic example. That is why, students should watch movie, which has those kind characters. This is a challenge for teacher to find good movie with those characters. Since, some English movies have those characters in addition those have some scene which is not appropriate in Indonesian context.

It has been suggested to for teachers to use *The Last Song*, as a good movie. I think *The Last Song*, based on Nicholas Spark novels which have the same title will give moral education for our students. It makes our students look the authentic example how to be a good person. If teachers ask students to read novel, it would be a difficult, since most of Indonesian students in school still in the beginner levels. It is difficult for them to understand the message behind those series or words in written form. Movie talks more than million of words.

Character Education in the Last Song

One of challenges ahead is to include character education in students' daily lives. Kemendikbud (2011), as the supreme authority in Indonesia education stated that character education is an obligation that must be incorporated into teaching learning process. Problem is arising, as an English teacher; it is an obligatory to teach character in accordance with Indonesian culture. In other hand, teachers are still teaching English language. In this paper, the author would like to share ideas the using *The Last Song* Movie as a medium to teach character education in lower secondary school (Sekolah Menengah Pertama)

Criteria of Good Movie to Teach Characters

In teaching character, it is better to use medium, to make sure students understand the authentic example. Character is an important point in choosing movie. It means, teacher should be selective in choosing movie. Not All movie has it character value which is match with Indonesian culture. Teaching character, the movie should follow some criteria.

There are five criteria to teach character for students. Criteria are below based on moral value in Indonesia. Those criteria are:

1. The movie that is used to teach character should teach how to respect parents.
2. The movie should give example how to care with animals.
3. The movie should show how to be honest; in spite of it is difficult.
4. The movie should illustrate how to forgive people.
5. The movie should have an example how a person transform into better person.

Why the Last Song?

Teaching character is as difficult as teaching subject. Students should have much awareness in learning it. They have to be able to find a meaning behind every single scene in life. Movie shows the authentic designed example in real life. *The Last Song* has five reasons use the song as a medium to teach character. Robinson (2011) develops *The Last Song* movie from Spark (2009). They develop some moral education in movie.

The first reasons, *The Last Song* teach students how to respect parents. Talking about character is equal with talking about life, students should have real life example. *The Last Song* opens by conflict between Ronney, a young girl, with her father. She was forced by her mom to stay with her father in holiday seasons. Main character of *The Last Song*, Ronnie, has problems with her father. Her father leaves her when she was kid. Ronney though that her father hated her. In fact, her father leave her and back to his town since he has lung cancer. Students should learn how to forgive what parents mistakes, before they are passed away. Respects parents is an important point in daily life.

There are some points in teaching characters, care with nature. The main character should teach step by step how to take care animals. In that movie, Ronney find a turtle nets, which are built in front of her father house. That is why; she tried to protect them by making protection. Before that, she called aquarium, then in the next day Ronnie's friend Will come to her and help her to give protection of that nets. Ronney think that animals, in this case turtles are God creations that should be protected.

There are some points in teaching character of honesty. Will burnt the church because of his unawareness when he plays firecracker with his friends. Rooney's father was blamed by society. After Rooney's father is sick and near to death, Will tell the truth that he makes the mistakes, not Rooney's father. Will takes the risk lost his friendship with Ronney. It is difficult to be honest, since honesty is the most difficult task but easy to say. The best scene is, Rooney's father give apologize to Will. He thought that Will and his friend transform into better person, by tell the truth, that they make mistakes burning the church. Rooney's father asked them to keep quiet and don't tell what real happens. It is a good example of a great man. The main points in forgive people is believe that every single person has an opportunity to be a better person.

In this movie, Rooney transform into a better person. She respects her parents. She also learns from his father to forgive Will. Then, at the end, she goes to college to continue her study. Before that, she doesn't have spirit since her entrance test in lower levels. She realized that a smart person has an opportunity to make mistakes.

The Smart person makes mistakes in simple and easy question. At the end of the Movie Rooney transform into a better person.

Some Consideration in Teaching Characters Education

In teaching character, a teacher should be able to formulate the steps. Formulating steps, teacher give explanation to students what they have learnt. It is important for students to know what they will learn, since their mind will set the target values what they will learn. There are six steps in teaching Character in movie.

Steps To Teach Character Education

First, Introduce the topic, students should know, they will learn how to respect parents, care with animals, being honest, forgive people, and transform into a better person. Next, they have to take notes about some important scenes. Students watch *The Last Song* monitored by teachers, some scenes are not appropriate. At the end of movie, students write the notes in simple sentences. The teacher leads discussion about character education in movie. Students and teacher make conclusion about movie, by correlating the definition of smart based on daily life.

By designing the steps, students will be able to find the character and applying what they have got in their daily life. It would be a great deal for them if they could transform into better person after teaching and learning process.

The Integration of Teaching Character and Writing Skills

Language is not consisted only from words, but also meaning behind those words. Brown and Yule (1983) believe that there are two components: intra linguistics and extra linguistics. Intra linguistics component means discourse build from word to word, phrase to phrase, sentences to sentences, paragraph to paragraph at the end it becomes discourse. Extra linguistics competences have some components, setting, purposes, and others component when the text is composed.

According to communicative approach, language is not empty spaces. It has meaning behind language. Brown and Yule (1983) believe language has transactional purposes and interactional purposes. Transactional is functioned to transfer meaning and context. For example, when giving invitation, asking opinion and other transactional events. Interactional function means how to keep human relationship. Language is a vehicle to learn more about the world. Writing is often believed to be the most complex one compared to the three other skills, I.e, listening, speaking, and reading (Cahyono & Widiati: 2011).

Rachmajanti and Sulisty (2008) explain that the teaching of English needs integration among macro skills, micro skills and the language competences. Rachmajanti and Sulisty (2008) explain that writing is a process. It should be consider about pre-writing, writing activities and post-writing activities (see appendices 1).

Conclusion:

Teacher should be able to find authentic materials in teaching and learning process, especially teaching character education. Teaching character means talking how to teach intelligences beside cognitive intelligence. It is an obligation for teacher to teach character, since students should have character in their own life. Smart not only means able in doing task in school, but they have to behave in good attitude. *The Last Song* is included in criteria as a media to teach character education. It has an authentic example in respect parents, care with animals, honesty, forgive people, and transform into better person.

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Appendices 1: Stages in Writing as a Process. Adopted from Rachmajanti and Sulisty (2008)**Stage 1**

Pre Writing

- Experience the problem
 - Taking the intention
 - Developing general focus on writing
- Pre-Writing
 - Developing an outline of the ideas

Stage 2

During Writing

- Draft Writing
 - Writing the First Draft
 - Revising first draft in grammar and spelling
- Revising and Editing
 - Peer reviews
 - Getting readers responses
 - Revising and editing based on readers response

Stage 3

After Writing

- Publishing
 - Proofreading
 - Deciding the layout
- Writers attitude
 - Feelings
 - Reflection of Writing process