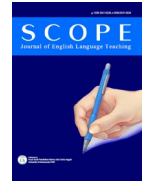




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Research Article

EFL Teacher's Strategies in Integrating Character of Pancasila Students in Junior High School

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KEYWORDS

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 Character Values;
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Profil Pelajar Pancasila;
 Teacher's Strategies

A B S T R A C T

In this 21st century, education not only focuses on academic purposes but also character development of students. In Indonesia, integration of character values into classrooms has been given much attention recently, particularly with the introduction of the new curriculum that establishes character development as a primary objective. This research explores teacher strategies to integrate character values in junior high school context. It is a qualitative case study involving one EFL teacher from a Leading School (*Sekolah Penggerak*) at a junior high school level. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the teacher's strategies in integrating character values, classroom observation and document analysis were conducted, followed by an interview with the teacher. The data were analyzed using triangulation to ensure a thorough exploration of the strategies employed by the EFL teacher. The results show that the teacher has integrated character values in her lesson plans and emphasized student engagement and interactivity through real-life examples. Various teaching strategies, including group discussions, role-play, case studies, group and pair works, and educational games were employed to integrate character values in the classroom. These efforts aim to develop students' character during the learning process. However, as challenges due to the diverse student backgrounds and limited resources persist, further research should cope with these challenges.

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INTRODUCTION

In a dynamic landscape of a contemporary education, the cultivation of moral and character values is a cornerstone of holistic student development. Character education has gained renewed importance in the 21st century due to the evolving social, economic, and technological landscapes. According to Singh (2019), character education in this century encompasses intentional efforts to nurture and

develop the young people's core ethical and performance values that are widely affirmed and accepted across all cultures. These include a broad range of concepts such as positive school culture, moral education, just communities, caring school communities, social-emotional learning, positive youth development, civic education, and service learning. The goal is to promote the intellectual, social, emotional, and ethical development of young people and help them become responsible, caring, and contributing citizens.

As character education in the 21st century faces the imperative of addressing diversity, inclusion, and cultural competence, Howard (2018) highlights the importance of fostering a sense of tolerance, respect, and cultural understanding among students. In a globalized and multicultural society, character education programs must emphasize the appreciation of diverse perspectives and backgrounds. This involves instilling values that promote inclusivity and empathy, preparing students to engage positively with individuals from different cultures and backgrounds.

Modern approaches to character education integrate cognitive, affective, and behavioral components, focusing on virtues like empathy, resilience, and mindfulness (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). An important development is the integration of character education into the school curriculum, allowing students to connect moral values with academic knowledge and practical skills (Kristjánsson, 2017). Character education is being adopted by many school districts throughout the country, with a revival of character education-based curriculum due to the emphasis on a well-rounded education that encompasses the person holistically, not just their performance on a standardized test (Santos & Morris, 2020).

In the Indonesian context, the integration of character education into the curriculum has gained much attention, especially with the recent implementation of the new curriculum, which is *Kurikulum Merdeka* (Literally translated as *Independent Curriculum*, the term used hereafter). This educational framework, also known as *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (Character of Pancasila Students, hereafter) emphasizes the holistic development of students by placing a strong focus on character building alongside academic knowledge. The main goal of the Independent Curriculum is to shape students' character in accordance with the principles of Pancasila, Indonesia's foundational philosophy that encompasses five main principles such as belief in one God, humanitarianism, national unity, democracy, and social justice (Kemendikbud, 2020) and noble values for its people. In the implementation of the Independent Curriculum students should be nurtured to have six dimensions of the Character Pancasila Students, namely (1) Belief in the one God, God-fearing, and good character, (2) Global diversity, (3) Mutual cooperation, (4) Independent, (5) Critical thinking, and (6) Creativity (Profil Pelajar, 2022).

With Character of Pancasila Students, the educational landscape in Indonesia is witnessing a transformative shift, acknowledging that the cultivation of moral and ethical values is integral to the overall education of students (Yonata & Prastikawati, 2020). This curriculum aims to go beyond traditional academic subjects, striving to instill a

sense of civic responsibility and ethical behavior in students, preparing them not only for academic success but also for active and positive participation in their communities and society at large. As Indonesia continues to navigate the evolving demands of the 21st century, the integration of character education within the Independent Curriculum underscores a commitment to nurturing well-rounded individuals capable of contributing meaningfully to the nation's progress.

Integrating values into English for Foreign Language (EFL) teaching can be a complex undertaking, often due to the potential disconnect between the character values emphasized in the curriculum and the primary teaching objectives of English lessons. However, based on some research, there are several effective strategies that educators can employ to seamlessly incorporate values into their EFL teaching practices. One approach is project-based learning, wherein teachers can design projects that specifically target values like respect, cooperation, and tolerance (Rass, 2014). These projects create practical contexts for students to apply these values, fostering a deeper understanding and integration of these principles within their everyday lives. For example, a project that involves collaborative problem-solving in English not only enhances language skills but also promotes teamwork and cooperation.

Teachers can also incorporate human values directly into their lesson plans (Rass, 2014). This approach aims to develop students not only professionally and academically but also as individuals with strong moral and ethical foundations. For instance, a lesson on ethics and honesty can be integrated into language lessons, encouraging students to engage in discussions and debates that require them to express their opinions using English.

Another approach proposed by Putri et al. (2017) to integrate character education in EFL classrooms is through the use of children's literatures as teaching materials. Teachers can use examples from literature as situations for students to make decisions and articulate the reasoning behind them, emphasizing the reasoning process rather than the decision itself. This approach provides good role models for behavior that can be shared with students in the classroom.

Apart from these specific value-focused strategies, teachers can leverage general teaching techniques for English language learners. Techniques such as a project-based learning, scaffolding (providing support and guidance as students learn), and using visual aids can enhance language acquisition while concurrently promoting the integration of essential values. These approaches collectively contribute to a holistic EFL education that not only equips students with language skills but also nurtures their character and social development. In

this way, EFL teachers play a vital role in shaping not only their students' language proficiency but also their moral and ethical growth, making the learning experience more enriching and impactful.

In Indonesia, the Character of Pancasila Students, a comprehensive framework encompassing the Pancasila values, plays a pivotal role in shaping the character and mindset of young learners. As one of the main objectives of the Indonesia curriculum which is Independent Curriculum, studies on the implementation of the Character of Pancasila Students have gained popularity among researchers. As stated in Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 22 of 2020 concerning the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Education and Culture for 2020-2024, researchers are concerned with the four approaches for reinforcing the Character of Pancasila Students. The studies range from the implementation of the strengthening project of the Character of Pancasila Students (Chamisijiatin et al., 2023; Fitriyani et al., 2023; Huda et al. 2023), the role of Islamic teachers (Yulaidi et al., 2022), designing a school culture, to the intra-curricular activities in the classroom (Aditama et al., 2022; Sofa, 2021; Utari & Afendi, 2022; Wasimin, 2022). Chamisijiatin et al. (2023) have an intention to reinforce the Character of Pancasila Students through the strengthening project of Character of Pancasila Students in secondary schools. Their discussion focuses on assisting junior high school teachers from the very beginning of implementing the strengthening project of Character of Pancasila Students; from designing to evaluating the project. While Chamisijiatin et al. focus on assisting teachers, Fitriyani et al. (2022) examine the strengthening project of Character of Pancasila Students to realize the global diversity aspect. Those research reports have confirmed that the strengthening projects employed in the schools give positive impacts to both the teachers and the students in integrating the character values.

Some researchers have also investigated that, in the reinforcement of the Character of Pancasila Students, teachers employ Project-based Learning (PjBL) methods in the intra-curricular activities (Shofa, 2021; Utari & Afendi, 2022; Wasimin, 2022). Utari and Afendi's discussion focuses on the implementation of PjBL in the learning process and how the Character of Pancasila Students is integrated. They argue that PjBL provides an authentic learning to promote the Character of Pancasila Students. This opinion is in line with Wasimin (2022) which observes how the Character of Pancasila Students are accelerated through PjBL in four Leading Schools.

Having another context, Shofa (2021) investigates how PjBL can be implemented to reinforce the Character of Pancasila Students in History subject in phase E (which is grade 10). In Shofa's discussion, the Character of Pancasila

Students dimensions observed were cooperation, critical thinking, and creativity. As subjects' matter, Aditama et al. (2022) has raised a distinct issue into another subject which is English. They discuss character education which is integrated through intra-curricular in the planning, implementing, and evaluating section of an English learning classroom in a regular junior high school. Their findings show that teachers already integrate the character education in the lesson plans and implement them in the learning process.

Apart from the four ways of Character of Pancasila Students realization mentioned above, there are also several researchers who are trying to find other aspects to strengthen the Character of Pancasila Students. Huda et al. (2023), for instance, explore what character education can be learned from the local wisdom of Javanese people which is *Rewang* (Cooperation) and be implemented as an innovative learning strategy for elementary school students. In addition, Yulaidi et al. (2022) argue that Islamic teachers also play an important role in shaping students' personality at the elementary school level. They focus on the noble character as one of the aspects in the Character of Pancasila Students.

The abovementioned studies on the realization of the Character of Pancasila Students indicate a significant gap in understanding how English teachers' strategies toward the Character of Pancasila Students are implemented in Leading Schools. While the integration of character education has been part of the Curriculum 2013, the relatively new initiative of Leading Schools, supported by the Ministry of Education and Culture, presents a unique context that warrants specific investigation. This research aims to explore the novel strategies employed by English teachers in Leading Schools to integrate the Character of Pancasila Students. By addressing this gap, I seek to provide fresh insights into the practical application of character education in this innovative educational setting. The urgency of this research lies in the potential consequences of neglecting the effective implementation of character education in Leading Schools, which could undermine the development of students' moral and civic virtues, ultimately affecting the broader educational objectives of fostering well-rounded individuals.

After a thorough discussion of the background of this study, the researcher proceeds to formulate the research questions that will guide the investigation. The research questions are as follows:

1. What are the EFL teacher's strategies to integrate the Character of Pancasila Students in teaching practices?
2. What are the challenges faced by the EFL teacher to integrate the Character of Pancasila Students in teaching practices?

METHOD

This research employed a qualitative case study to explore an EFL teacher's strategies in integrating the Character of Pancasila Students in a junior high school. A case study focuses on providing a detailed account of one or more cases (Creswell, 2012). One EFL teacher participated in this research. The participant holds a bachelor's degree in English language education and has been teaching at a Leading School since 2023, with 5 years of teaching experience. The sampling method used was convenience sampling, chosen because the participant was available and willing to contribute to this research (Creswell, 2012).

The main sources of data were documents, specifically the lesson plans created by the participant. These were examined to understand how the teacher integrated the Character of Pancasila Students into her English teaching practices. Additionally, a semi-structured interview with the EFL teacher was conducted. The interview guideline consisted of 15 questions aimed at gaining detailed information about the strategies and approaches she employed in the classroom. The interview lasted approximately 20 minutes. Furthermore, a classroom observation was conducted during a single classroom session to provide real-time insights into the practical application of character education in the classroom setting.

In summary, the data collection included a detailed analysis of multiple lesson plans, one semi-structured interview with 15 questions lasting around 20 minutes, and one session of classroom observation. This systematic approach to data collection provided a comprehensive understanding of the EFL teacher's strategies and the integration of the Character of Pancasila Students in the context of a Leading School.

The data were analyzed using triangulation to ensure a thorough exploration of the strategies employed by the EFL teacher. Lesson plans were first analyzed to identify how the Character of Pancasila Students was integrated into the English curriculum. The semi-structured interview was then transcribed and analyzed, with key themes such as the teacher's strategies, challenges, and the impact on students being identified to support findings from the lesson plans. Classroom observation notes were also analyzed, emphasizing teacher-student interactions, classroom activities, and student responses to provide practical insights. By combining these three sources—lesson plans, interviews, and classroom observations—a well-rounded understanding of the teacher's strategies was ensured. This approach confirmed the reliability of the findings by cross-checking information across different sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The EFL teacher's strategies to integrate the Character of Pancasila Students in teaching practices

There are several key findings from the data analysis regarding the teacher's strategies in integrating the Character of Pancasila Students into her teaching practices. The analysis resulted in several themes related to the integration of the Character of Pancasila Students into lesson plans, lesson design strategies, teaching methods, application in the classroom, challenges in implementation, and recommendations for other teachers. The teacher already integrates the Character of Pancasila Students both in her lesson plan and in the classroom learning activities. She emphasizes the importance of integrating Pancasila principles into her lesson plans as what have been designed and instructed in the Independent Curriculum. The goal is not only to teach the English language but also cultivate good citizenship. This is evident in the following excerpt.

“Of course, when I create my lesson plans, I try to include Character of Pancasila Students dimensions but in the classroom, I don't always use those exact words, but I want to help students learn about things like faith and fear of God the Almighty, noble character, collaboration, and independence. It's not just about English; it's about making good citizens.”

The result of the interview above aligns closely with the research conducted by Indriana et al. (2023) which emphasized that English teachers in a senior high school in Kediri Regency, East Java, have integrated Character of Pancasila Students and chosen which Character of Pancasila Students dimensions to include in their classes and view these dimensions as required components of the teaching module. The interview provides a real-world example of how one teacher actively incorporates the ideas of Character of Pancasila Students into the instruction of English. This alignment shows that teachers have the freedom to choose the best way to integrate these moral principles and qualities into the curriculum.

Furthermore, the notion that teachers have the freedom to modify the language and approach in order to ensure that the content is understandable and accessible to students is consistent with the teacher's pedagogical flexibility, as discussed in the interview. As a result, the interview data provide a practical implementation of the responsibilities and autonomy discussed in the earlier study.

Table 1 outlines the key teaching strategies employed by the teacher to integrate Character of Pancasila Students into the classroom. These strategies encompass various aspects of lesson planning, pedagogical approaches, teaching methods, and their application in the classroom.

Table 1 Teacher's Strategies to Integrate Character of Pancasila Students

No.	Section	Explanation
1.	Lesson plan design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritizing engagement and interactivity. • Using real-life examples and situations to connect with Pancasila values. • Fostering open discussions for critical thinking.
2.	Pedagogical strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to creating lessons emphasizing interaction and engagement. • Selecting topics to reinforce Pancasila values.
3.	Teaching methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group discussions for open communication. • Role-play to enhance empathy and tolerance. • Real-life situations for ethics and social justice. • Values-based scenarios for practical understanding.
4.	Classroom application of strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open discussions about Pancasila values. • Case studies, role-playing, and visual aids for reinforcement. • Integration of educational games for an enjoyable and memorable learning experience.
5.	Interactive learning environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of dialogue, group and pair work, and role-playing historical figures. • Emphasis on interactive and engaging learning for language acquisition and character values.

In designing the lesson plan, the teacher employs strategies that prioritize engagement and interactivity. She uses real-life examples and situations to connect with Pancasila values and foster open discussions that encourage critical thinking skills. This approach ensures that learning is both practical and meaningful. She told,

"I design my lessons to be engaging and interactive. I use real-life examples and situations that relate to the values of Pancasila. For instance, I might discuss topics like teamwork and decision-making in English, which indirectly reinforces the principles of Pancasila. I also encourage open discussions among students to allow them express their opinions and practice critical thinking."

This finding supports what has been done by Rass (2014). According to Rass, there has been a great deal of success in putting real-world discussions related to values into practice in the classroom. The teacher's commitment to creating lessons that emphasize interaction and engagement is indicative of a pedagogical strategy based on an understanding of the significance of values in education. She makes sure that Pancasila values are not just abstract ideas but are intricately woven into the fabric of students' daily lives by presenting examples and circumstances from real life. The selection of topics such as decision-making and teamwork in English classes is a smart way to subtly reinforce Pancasila's values by showing how these principles can be applied in real-world situations. Additionally, allowing students to freely express their opinions in a discussion-based setting helps them develop their critical thinking abilities and promotes a deeper comprehension of the values that Pancasila promotes.

In designing the learning process, the teacher utilizes a range of teaching methods. These include group discussions, role-play, real-life situations, and values-based scenarios. The teacher also emphasizes the use of stories, community projects, and differentiated learning to accommodate unique learning styles. These teaching methods and techniques help the students both in learning the language and also acquire character values as what Character of Pancasila Students promotes. This is evident in the following excerpt.

"I use different methods to suit various students. We have group discussions for open communication. Role-play helps students understand empathy and tolerance. We explore real-life situations to teach ethics and social justice. Values-based scenarios show how Pancasila works in daily life. Stories make the concepts engaging. Community projects promote unity and respect for diversity."

In the classroom, the teacher effectively applies these strategies. Open discussions about Pancasila values, case studies, role-playing, visual aids, community projects, and student reflection activities are used to reinforce these principles. Additionally, the teacher integrates educational games that incorporate Pancasila principles to make learning enjoyable and memorable. Maintaining a joyful classroom environment is of utmost importance throughout

this process. The following excerpt serves as clear evidence.

“I share stories that convey the ideals of Pancasila in an engaging way, and I organize role-playing activities for students to practice concepts like mutual cooperation and I involve students in age-appropriate community projects that promote global diversity. Additionally, I create educational games that incorporate Pancasila principles to make learning enjoyable and memorable.”

This teaching approach is not just a personal choice; it lines up with studies done by Adriyanti (2021), Heriansyah (2019), and Rass (2014). Adriyanti suggests group activities to encourage collaboration and responsibility in the main learning activities. Heriansyah discusses about small projects and cooperative learning assignments. Rass, on the other hand, highlights content-based learning using things like folklores, problem-solving learning to promote critical thinking, and incorporating technology into lessons. Pinkley (2012, as mentioned in Rass, 2014) recommends activities like dialogue, group and pair work, and role-playing historical figures as models for good and bad behaviour. These methods create an interactive and engaging learning environment, helping students not just learn a language but also understand and practice the character values promoted by Character of Pancasila Students.

Moreover, according to Adriyanti (2021), through fun activities such as games, students' positive character development can be promoted. Games provide an interactive and enjoyable avenue for learning, fostering teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills. Beyond the academic aspect, these activities create an environment where students can practice virtues like cooperation, resilience, and respect for others. By integrating such engaging methods into the learning process, the teacher not only enriches the language acquisition experience but also actively contributes to the nurturing of well-rounded individuals with strong character foundations. This approach aligns with the broader goal of education, emphasizing not only the mastery of subject matter but also the cultivation of values that will serve students well in various aspects of their lives.

The challenges faced by the EFL teacher to integrate the Character of Pancasila Students in teaching practices

The teacher acknowledges several challenges in integrating Character of Pancasila Students in the teaching practices. These challenges include the diverse backgrounds of students, language proficiency differences, limited resources for suitable materials, the need to balance

language learning with values education, differing learning styles, and classroom management during discussions. This can be proven by the following excerpt.

“The challenge is the diverse backgrounds of students, as their prior experiences can vary widely. Another challenge is language proficiency, as not all students may have strong English skills.”

She added,

“Limited resources can also make it difficult to find suitable materials. Balancing content between language learning and values education is also challenging. Students' different learning styles can add complexity. Classroom management can be a challenge when encouraging discussions. Lastly, finding appropriate assessment methods to measure progress in Pancasila values is an ongoing challenge.”

The teacher's challenges in integrating Character of Pancasila Students align with the findings of Purnamasari and Nuraeni (2021). Both highlight the obstacles associated with a large student population, where addressing individual differences becomes complex. Additionally, the lack of consideration for character education among students and the inadequacy of learning materials supporting national character values contribute to the shared challenge. The teacher's struggle to find suitable resources mirrors the broader issue identified in the study, emphasizing the need for tailored approaches in integrating language learning with values education. Purnamasari and Nuraeni (2021) emphasize the challenges of managing character education in a classroom setting, citing the impact of a substantial student number, students' limited awareness or prioritization of character education, and insufficient learning materials supporting national character values. Both the teacher's firsthand experience and the study underscore the importance of addressing these challenges collectively to enhance the effective integration of character education, such as Character of Pancasila Students into the learning environment.

Apart from the strategies suggested by Purnamasari and Nuraeni (2021), Heriansyah (2019) highlights more challenges for the teacher in integrating character education. The first is the challenge of commitment, which means everyone—teachers and students—needs to stay dedicated to including values like those in Character of Pancasila Students in their daily learning. Second, there is the challenge of having a good support system involving the school community and parents. This means everyone, including teachers, parents, and the school community, should work together to make sure students understand and practice these values consistently. Additionally, Heriansyah emphasizes the importance of appreciation,

meaning it is crucial to recognize and celebrate moments when students show positive values. Acknowledgment of these efforts helps create a positive atmosphere for learning and practicing character values in the classroom.

To overcome these challenges, practical solutions have been recommended. One approach includes rearranging where students sit and providing worksheets, as suggested by Purnamasari and Nuraeni (2021). By strategically organizing student seating, the classroom environment becomes more conducive to learning, fostering engagement and managing diverse learning styles. Worksheets offer a tangible solution to the scarcity of suitable learning materials, providing a structured way for students to engage with the values promoted by Character of Pancasila Students

Moreover, the teacher's role as a model is underlined as crucial in overcoming obstacles related to character education in a diverse classroom, aligning with the solution proposed by Heriyansyah (2019). Acting as an example and being a role model for students becomes a powerful tool. By embodying the values advocated in Character of Pancasila Students, the teacher not only emphasizes the importance of these principles but also inspires students to adopt them. This dual approach, combining practical changes with the teacher's positive example, forms a comprehensive strategy to effectively integrate character education in a diverse classroom setting.

The research might be related to global context since it contributes to the wider discourse on character education. This research moves beyond its regional focus to give insight with far-reaching implications by examining the localized context of character education in Indonesia and analyzing the strategies used by EFL teachers. The findings not only highlight the subtle dynamics of character education within an Indonesian context, but also provide a useful reference point for educators and policy makers worldwide. In a world that is increasingly interconnected and diverse, knowing how to cultivate good character becomes essential. Thus, this research is a shining light in respect to character formation. Hence, offering practical implications and possible adaptations can be applied across different cultural backgrounds or educational settings. When bridging the gap between local practices and global educational goals, it helps inform decision making processes about what should be done at each level from national down towards individual schools' administration. Therefore, this research serves as a substance for informed decision-making and policy development in character education on an international scale.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to give insights on innovative approaches to values-based language instruction by exploring the

strategies employed by the EFL teacher to integrate Character of Pancasila Students into the classroom. The result showed that the teacher already integrates Character of Pancasila Students dimensions in her lesson plans. The teacher prioritizes engagement and interactivity by using real-life examples to connect with Pancasila values. Several teaching strategies are employed in her classroom such as group discussion, role-play, case study, group and pair work, and using educational games. These efforts are expected to foster positive character development of the students as they engage in the process of learning the English language. However, challenges like diverse student backgrounds and limited resources persist. Practical solutions, including strategic seating and positive role modeling, are proposed to address these challenges. This study underscores the importance of tailoring approaches for effective character values integration in diverse language learning settings, emphasizing the teacher's pivotal role in creating a supportive learning environment.

Since this study only explored the EFL teacher's perspective, it is suggested to explore the long-term effects of integrating Character of Pancasila Students into English language classes and examine how it influences students' language skills and character qualities over time. Additionally, analyzing students' self-assessment toward the strategies employed by teachers, giving valuable insights into how students assess themselves regarding character values they have is also essential. Furthermore, understanding the perspectives of students and parents on character values in language education could provide a more comprehensive view of its impact.

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