POSITIVE LEARNERS’ RESPONSES ON MORAL VALUES BASED STORIES: CONSTRUCTING AND DEVELOPING KNOWLEDGE

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Abstract

Purpose of the study: The study aims at investigating the students’ responses about moral education values behind the sentences from different historical texts in a classroom action research on the Intensive Reading course to find out their responses based on their experiences and to understand the values as well as understanding micro text elements.

Methodology: The subjects of the research are the 2nd-semester students at the English Language Education Program of Slamet Riyadi University, Indonesia. The research method is a classroom action research. The methods in collecting the data were observation, a questionnaire, and document analysis. The data were analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.

Main Findings: Research findings showed that the students’ responses on the passages entitled (1) “Restaurant Then and Now” indicates that they responded about local product, i.e. local food and beverages and beneficial activities during eating; (2) “Ray Harryhausen, Special Effects Genius” indicates they respond innovation, creativity, professionalism, and trust; (3) “Interview with a Young Environmentalist” indicates they respond professionalism, autonomous, creative, and working social activities together; and (4) “A New College Course: What Motivates Altruism?” show their response that valuable, sense of regard, autonomous, professionalism, and trust for altruism.

Applications of this study: The study can be useful in the area of English language teaching, especially in teaching reading because students have to read and respond. Responding occurs if there is integration between prior knowledge, language experience, and critical thinking; therefore the researchers intend to encourage them to respond to understand the texts fully.

Novelty/Originality of this study: Positive responses for positive sentences dominate the students’ response; so that they understand which sentence’s content is good or not at their mind. Their positive responses indicate that they are open, able to differentiate between good and bad activities, and able to read and assess the phenomena based on their various educational background.

Keywords: Classroom Action Research, Comprehension, EFL Learners, Intensive Reading Course, Moral Values, Positive Learners’ Responses.

INTRODUCTION

Educational values, also called moral education or character education, is an effort to develop goodness, morally approvable, and social qualification and admiration for adolescents (Berkowitz, 2011). Formal schools areas the place to begin, to foster, and to reinforce a variety of basic values, i.e. social, moral, politics, and economic values (Stephenson & Ling, 1998). Specifically, teaching those values is also through a passage, particularly reading a moral story on narrative text (Narvaez, Gleason, Mitchell, & Bentley, 1999).

There are several studies on moral messages (educational values). Don & Goldman, (2015) studied the use of bible stories as learning materials for children and they were asked to recognize rules of moral activity and to group those based on the rules of activities. Besides that, a study carried out by testing comprehension and evaluating responses outcomes from a manipulated variation of information about the reason and the goal, writing a variance of a story about Kohlberg Heinz and the drug, and the goals and consequences were manipulated (Stein & Trabasso, 1982). Moreover, a study on the ability of third, fifth-grade students, and adults to be tested about their ability to comprehend the moral messages taken by three selected stories from the book virtues and other sources and the result was the score of reading comprehension was not a single parameter to know their comprehension of the moral theme (Narvaez, Bentley, Gleason, & Samuels, 1998). To test learners’ comprehension about the lesson from moral stories, a study conducted to 3rd, 5th, and college students and the result was the significance of their moral theme comprehension was different in terms of development (Narvaez et al., 1999).

A variety of methods to teach moral values, particularly summarizing method has been studied. There is a study on the students’ summary on the point of narrative and exposition, and the result was summarizing narrative was easy, but it was not for exposition (Taylor, 1986). Another study conducted by experts to extract themes from passages but he found that they automatically constructed the topic sentence of topic-familiar texts necessarily more than they conducted for passages about unfamiliar topics (Afflerbach, 1990). In addition, another study conducted by asking children to extract realistic stories and fantasy stories. The result was that their extracting themes on realistic fiction were better than fantasy fiction (Lehr, 1988).
To perceive moral values in texts, teachers need to analyze problems’ of students in reading text and, then propose the solution. Readers commonly have two problems in reading: prior knowledge and difference of readers’ skill in reading (Narvaez et al., 1999). An example of a study on learners’ prior knowledge has been conducted by Reynolds, Taylor, Steffensen, Shirey, & Anderson (1982). They asked their participants to recall two different wedding stories: India wedding and United States wedding. Those who had the same cultural background had better recalled. Ismail (2013) states that movies provide natural language and context visually to assist learners’ understanding and learning skill improvement. To conceive moral values, there are many previous studies that focus on asking learners to respond by paraphrasing the text (Taylor, 1986)(Afflerbach, 1990)(Lehr, 1988).

In this article, I would like to describe one of my research findings on the students’ responses during cycle one and cycle two about the moral values written in four texts. Responding to a text correctly is evidence that they understand it and they were assisted with video to construct and develop content mastery and language input to improve their understanding in reading.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many activities indicating learning moral education in the classroom. The pre-service English language teachers learn to become aware of the students’ live and responsible teachers and attempt to have self-esteem, initiative, and care in their professional careers (Cubukcu, 2014). Educational values assist the students on how to have an attitude and to act properly when it is applied in the aspect of theory and practice (Jordan, Silvanus-davis, & Taylor, 2008). Inserting moral education values in English as a foreign language classroom is by learning its curricula based on the assumption that it assists students in fostering their linguistic, cognitive skill, social awareness, emotion, critical thinking, and a tolerant view (Shaaban, 2008). Asking the students to do personal and impersonal dilemma task to know how bilingual language affects the different decision on moral judgment and to know how language experience affect their decision (Wong & Ng, 2018). Teacher expectation affects the attitudes of the students about English lessons positively and improves their academic achievement (Toksoy & Acar, 2019).

A number of studies involving cultural learning to learn educational values. An attempt to improve the number of foreign cultural materials textbooks to foster the student’s appreciation of foreign culture (Yuen, 2011). Participating in intra and extra-curricular activities, i.e. seminars, English corners, English speech contests in order to enhance their cross-cultural ability (Wang, 2008). Reading heroes story teaches the students about behavior values based on culture, and other values, i.e. honesty, tolerance, compassion, and soon (Sanchez, 1998). Working together between teacher educators and Chinese teacher trainees from different cultural backgrounds to increase the competence of cross-cultural competence (Skinner & Abbott, 2013). The use of drama as a medium to teach moral education because it contains context and culture during the implementation in a classroom (Shenfield, 2017). Reading literature in the EFL reading course assists teachers and students to enhance their personality because it is a tool to learn a target culture and culture teaches tolerance for multiculturalism, emotional intelligence, and empathy appearance (Kiçüko & Arikan, 2011).

There are a number of studies about students’ responses in a classroom. Park & Park Sungiae (1997) state that prior perception affects the students’ responses based on evidence. Haja & Clarke (2011) studied the use of the students’ justification (The two-tier tasks) is to gain insight pedagogically to foster multiplicative reasoning skills. Evans & Po (2007) also conducted research to integrate digital text into classroom writing and ask the students about the integration to know their argument and obtain experiences. Moreover, Silver, Leung, & Cai (1995) state that producing multiple solutions and explanations in both verbal and visual is very important for a certain case. There is also a study to get responses from the students for the college magazine and newsletter to encourage them to contribute to certain content, i.e. content about volunteers to raise their donation (Ranganathan, Loebi, & Radosевич, 2011). Besides, Wolburg (2006) studied to get positive responses from nonsmokers to champion the cause of smoking and Negative responses from smokers to antismoking messages mean that people who like something tend to champion their tendency. Boeckmann (2002) conducted a study to obtain his students’ response to the negative speech, i.e. hate speech because it has social impact broadly. Finally, Hand, Hohenshell, & Prain (2004) carried out research to know the students’ comment shows the process of revising a paper to improve the goal of communication and to give a clarification about meaning further for self and others.

METHODOLOGY

The type of research is classroom action research. This research was carried out at the 2nd semester students of Slamet Riyadi University, Indonesia in the academic year of 2017/2018. The participants were 39 students. This research was conducted from February up to June 2018. The place of the research was room H.23 at Slamet Riyadi University. The methods of collecting the data were observation, questionnaire, and document analysis. The observation was conducted before cycle one, during cycle one, and cycle two. It includes an interview in the classroom to know the students’ responses. The questionnaire was distributed to the students before cycle one, after cycle one, and after cycle two. The document which analyzed were their daily, mid, and final score of the previous subject (basic reading in the 1st semester), and their pre-test of this research. To analyze the data, the researchers used interactive analysis that comprised data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions.
There were four different topics in each meeting. They were the history of the restaurant; Ray Harryhausen; Kids Saving The Rainforest (KSTR) community; and Altruism. The history of the restaurant talked about the journey of a restaurant from before and after the 18s century. It told about kinds of food served, names of restaurants in the past, and activities of consumers in a restaurant. Meanwhile, Ray Harryhausen as the topic of meeting two described the history of him from early career up to creating sophisticated movie works. It was a starter with his interest in the movie at that time and he met his cooperative friend, Ackerman who recognized his science fiction. His career was begun in that meeting. They worked cooperatively to create movies, although he was still behind the scene in the beginning. Finally, He created big movies: The Voyage of Sinbad, Jason and the Argonauts, and Clash of the Titans.

In the 1st meeting of the 2nd cycle, the material is Kids Saving the Rainforest (KSR). It told us the story of a girl and her friend who joined KSR when she was only nine years old. Their activities were promoting to keep the forest, i.e. avoiding illegal logging, preserving oxygen by going green activity. Finally, the topic “altruism” was giving an example of such activities on the campus, i.e. joining altruists to accompany them to promote altruism activity.

**FINDINGS/ RESULTS**

The students’ written responses were given after watching a video. The content of the passage was the stimuli to gain the responses. It was intended to change the common position of reading learning sources from passages into questionnaires. Variation of reading material form was to practice their critical thinking about the condition reflected on every sentence in a questionnaire and it was compared with their own culture. (1) “Restaurants, Then and Now” and “The History of the Restaurant”; (2) “Ray Harryhausen, Special Effects Genius”; (3) “A Young Environmentalist”; dan (4) What Motivates Altruism. In this discussion and analysis, the authors intend to describe the sample of analysis in terms of positive responses about positive activities from four different texts in cycle one and cycle two.

**Positive responses to positive activities**

1st text in the 1st meeting of cycle 1

In the 1st text entitled “Restaurants, Then and Now a” and “The History of the Restaurant”, the researchers found 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 8th, 9th, and 10th sentence that has positive responses. 1st text talks 1st sentence is “In the 2000s, people in the U.S. are trying to eat healthy food”. The students responded positively: to get healthy life; to get healthy for a long time, and it is also for people in this era to get health and to avoid disease. All the students agreed and had a positive opinion as well. There are some samples of the students’ responses below:

Student LJ said “I agree with this because healthy food gives us good effect and make healthier

Student IN said “I think it is a daily life in the US to maintain their own healthy by choosing healthy food for themselves”

2nd sentence is “In the 2000s, people in the U.S. are interested in foods from all over the world”. They gave positive responses: it is good; foreign food is also delicious, and to have eating experiences. The samples of opinion are below:

Student PJ said “that is very good to add experience in consuming others’ countries’ food”

Student S said “I think it is good because food from other countries is delicious too”

3rd sentence was written. “People in the U.S. liked foods from home”. Their positive opinions were to save their body; food from home is healthier and it is hygienic and cheaper. The samples of opinion are below:

Student RT said “it is very good because beside food from home is obviously healthier because we make it by ourselves”

Student EH said “I agree because home food is clean and the ingredients are safer and not contaminated”

2nd text in the 2nd meeting of cycle 1

In the 2nd text, there are 10 questions comprising the values of education. The students were asked to give an opinion about those questions by writing in the agree and disagree column. This text was talking about a special graphic legend that produced excellent works in that era. His effort has educational values to be learned. His inspiring struggle was creating than consuming. It was written in detail in the explanation below.

1st sentence was written, “Ray Harryhausen is famous for his stop-motion FX technique—turning the camera off, changing a scene, and turning the camera on again”. The students’ responded it was good activity; he was genius; it was interesting; everyone had its own talent. There are some samples of the students’ responses below:

Student AP said “he is really smart and his brain is really brilliant”

Student RA said “agree because according to the text Ray Harryhausen is very skillful about giving special effect”

2nd sentence is “Ackerman introduced Ray to science fiction, and the two became friends for life”. They argued that it is to meet people and to become our friends; knowledge as the way to get a relationship. There are some samples of the students’ responses below:
Student RT said “I think that is so amazing because, from fiction, two persons become a friend”

Student RP said “So, Ray should be very thankful to him”

3rd sentence is “in his teens, Ray learned a lot about special effects by himself. He did experiments with special effects in his backyard. He made models and studied photography”. Their response is the learned special effects by himself. There are some samples of the students’ responses below:

Student LS said “we must be brave to explore ourselves to face the world”

Student MW said “yes, I think it is very interesting because he never learn about the special effect before but he can make it and it is an amazing effect.

3rd text in the 1st meeting of 2nd cycle

3rd on 1st sentence was written, “When she was only nine years old, she and her friend started Kids Saving the Rainforest”. Some responded positively that it was to teach kids how to save the forest, to join the community, to give responsibility, to inspire each other, to have the bravery to save the rainforest, to have a new experience, it was amazing activity, to introduce kids with advantages and disadvantages of the rainforest, to do what makes them happy, to develop kids’ sensitivity, and good attitude. There are some samples of the students’ responses below:

Student EH: “I think that’s good because kids teach us how to save nature”

Student RA: “that’s good because it can teach her to more care with nature and can also build their mentality”

3rd text on 4th sentence talked about “Readers become a volunteer by going to the KTSR Website and learn about becoming a volunteer for the earth”. They responded it appeared consciousness; saving our home and earth; they could learn anything; it was also our responsibility; and inspiring. There are some samples of the students’ responses below:

Student YN: “I agree because readers feel so inspired with kids saving the rainforest; therefore they can do something this earth by saving the population of the rainforest”.

Student NA: In my opinion, volunteer for saving the environment is very good. So, we must become a volunteer by going to the KSTR. We must go to the website and learn about becoming a volunteer for the earth.

3rd text on the 5th sentence was composed “Saving earth by buying wood from the legal place and by recycling”. The students who agreed responded that it was managed to save our earth and our life; to reduce illegal logging; to get the advantages from selling the woods; regeneration of woods; choose old woods. There are some samples of the students’ responses below:

Student RG: “It’s good because we participate to save the earth by reducing the cutting down of the trees”.

Student DM: “That’s good if legal wood provided can do a recycling wood and make trees regenerate”.

4th text in the 2nd meeting of 2nd cycle

4th text on 1st sentence is “the Students also went to class and read books and wrote papers on altruism”. For argument were to have creativity; to have more spirit; to get knowledge by writing and reading; to improve their reading and writing; to work hard; to get experience; to prepare before writing and reading. There are some samples of the students’ responses below:

Student IG: “It is good because it’s to teach them to be diligent”

Student RG: “I think it’s a good activity when the altruists come and bring some books and help the students to read more books when they have some spare time”.

4th text on 2nd sentence was written “Adam and the couple work with many non-profit organizations in the community”. Those agreeing it said it was awareness and very motivated; getting experience and knowledge; to do cooperation; to give benefit to others; having business first before being altruism, and to socialize.

Student YA: “I agree with that; therefore we can get many volunteer for helping and make it easier to help someone”.

Student S: “It’s good because life doesn’t think about getting much money, but it’s about helping each other and making people happy”.

4th text on 3rd sentence is “Adam and the couple went shopping with elementary school children to buy holiday gifts for poor families”. They responded positively that helping each other; to educate others; empathy; sharing things with each other; to learn social activity; to take care of the poor family; inspiring each other; giving their generosity.

Student RT: “I think it is a good idea. Adam has wishes which are good and we must imitate him to participate for others”.

Student KI: “I think it can educate children to have a caring feeling for others”.
Table 1: List of sentences containing Positive responses about positive activities

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DISCUSSION

Based on such research findings, the researchers discussed those with the previous studies. One of the learning materials in this research is filling out a questionnaire. The questionnaire was prepared by us as converting text; however, the students still read the text in each meeting. They responded sentences by writing in agree and disagree columns and then giving the reason. This activity is in line with studies carried out by Afflerbach (1990) in which he asked his students to summarize narrative and exposition text; familiar and unfamiliar text; and fantasy and realistic stories. But in this research, responding by filling out the questionnaires shown that they comprehended the text and their positive argument about positive moral values indicated that they conceived the values behind the story.

Learning materials in this research were from a global English book. The materials, of course, referred to global materials. In fact, the students had not sufficient amount of prior knowledge about the topic (history of the restaurant; Ray Harryhausen; Kids Saving the Rainforest (KSTR) community; and Altruism), so they would have a problem in reading. As stated by (Narvaez et al., 1999) that one of the readers’ problems in reading was their prior knowledge. Therefore, the researcher utilized video having the same topic as the text in each meeting to provide adequate input in terms of language and content.

Encouraging the students’ responses for a variety of sentences is beneficial to know their interest in certain activities; therefore teachers can use the responses to know their ability to give an opinion whether it is supported by evidence or not. It is in line with Park & Park Sungiae (1997) who state that prior perception affects the students’ responses based on evidence. In this research, the use of the students’ justification (The two-tier tasks) is to obtain insight pedagogically to foster multiplicative reasoning skills (Haja & Clarke, 2011). In this research, the students’ responses to the sentences from the texts are to know their argument and to get experience in reading a variety of cases in different texts. It is in line with Evans & Po (2007) who studied to Integrate digital text into classroom writing and asking the students about the integration is to know their argument and obtain experiences. In this research, the students try to recall their experience and their critical thinking to respond to solve the case in the texts. It is in line with Silver, Leung, & Cai (1995) who state that producing multiple solutions and explanations in both verbal and visual is very important for certain case. Appearing and encouraging the students’ interest and enthusiasm was conducted in this research to know their responses about the certain cases to know their empathy, interest, and impression in order to be designed as the final test materials. It is in line with Ranganathan, Loebl, & Radosevich (2011) who conduct responses of the students for the college magazine and newsletter encourage them to contribute to certain content, i.e. content about volunteer to raise their donation. The students’ responses about a specific case in this research’s text, i.e. reading negative sentences and responding to them is to know their character whether it is good or not. It is in line with Wolburg (2006) who studied to get positive responses from nonsmokers to champion the cause of smoking and Negative responses from smokers to antismoking messages mean that people who like something tend to champion their tendency. Also, their responses from negative sentences gave them information that it has a broad negative impact; therefore they have to avoid negative activity in order to avoid bad social impact. It is in line with Bueckmann (2002) who studied to obtain his students’ response to the negative speech, i.e. hate speech because it has social impact broadly. In this research, the students’ responses appear their critical thinking to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the texts; therefore they have a role to revise and edit the texts to get a better result in future texts. It is in line with Hand, Hohenshell, & Prain (2004) who studied to know the students’ comment show the process of revising a paper to improve the goal of communication and to give a clarification about meaning further for self and others.

CONCLUSION

Finally, we come to the conclusion that prior knowledge is crucial since global materials are not conceived without knowledge. It seems to be taught visually to show the content and language of the topic. Language is commonly utilized as a problem in watching videos as well. Therefore, visuals speak prominently beside language to inform and provide input. Integrating prior knowledge having been gotten from the input and the topic of the videos and texts is beneficial as one of the requirements to comprehend the text. Another requirement to conceive text is the ability to integrate text elements. Understanding the main idea and detail information as major components in passages is compulsory because they provide complete content and help to understand the questions of unfamiliar words’ meaning and references. Vocabulary and reference, as micro-skills, are better conceived after understanding the main idea and detailed
information. To check learners’ comprehension, it does not only need the main idea, reference, vocabulary, and reference questions, but also a response of students about the educational values behind the content of the texts. Those who respond positively about the moral value, it means that they understand the content and the values as well.

LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD

The study limits the students’ responses from the text based on their experience, prior knowledge, and critical thinking. The future scope is to test students’ from three different aspects above as well as testing the indicators of reading (main idea, detail information, reference, and vocabulary); therefore the paradigm of teaching and testing reading is not only based on the indicators of reading but also their critical thinking.

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