

Integrating Values into Literature-Based Learning Materials

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INTEGRATING VALUES INTO LITERATURE-BASED LEARNING MATERIALS

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Abstract

Literature-based materials are believed to be interesting and engaging for a foreign language teaching. They provide readers with linguistic inputs and value inputs. Integrating the values, however, is not always easy. Original version of literary texts is not written for the purpose of foreign language teaching. When the students find it hard in dealing with the linguistic inputs, the values inputs become harder to be inculcated. This writing suggests the notion of materials adaptation as an alternative. Using the approach of literature as resource, a literary text is used as the basis to teach language skills as well as to inculcate appropriate values.

Key Words: literature-based materials, values, materials adaptation

A. INTRODUCTION

In the globalize world, learning materials should represent the pluralistic and dynamic nature of English. Such nature deals with the diversity in term of forms, uses, and users of the English language. Ideally, the learning materials should be developed in the framework of promoting respect and tolerance toward those differences. One of the promising ways to do so is by including three layers of cultural content covering global culture, future interlocutors' culture, and learner's own culture (Matsuda, 2012: 168-169, 176-177). Cultural differences should be underpinned by such values as respect and tolerance. Integrating such values is then essential.

Within Indonesian context, learning materials should include good models of text that stipulate noble values. While the values might be universal, the way to integrate them into instructional activities might be particular. Grouping the learners in Islamic schools, for instance, might be different from that of in general schools. The same is true with the models of texts; the texts might be constrained by the syllabus or by the educational context. Consequently, a careful selection of the text becomes an important aspect of integrating values.

In the last two decades, the use of literary texts to teach language has been a global trend. The texts are believed to provide the learners with linguistic inputs and values inputs. Collie & Slater (1994: 3-5) argue that literary texts might serve as valuable authentic materials, foster cultural enrichment, help language enrichment, and encourage personal involvement. The texts are not only useful resources for reading activities, but also interesting prompts for oral activities.

This writing deals with the use of literary text as the basis to teach English and to integrate values into learning materials. The values will be integrated through two schemes namely: text and task. The former refers to literary text and its adaptation. The latter pertains to the task which is built around the adapted literary text. These two schemes will be subsumed under an umbrella term called literature-based teaching.

B. THEORETICAL REVIEW

1. Paradigms of Teaching Values

The term *value* has been variously defined. Commonly it relates to something good or worth such as beauty, truth, love, honesty, and loyalty. Values can be understood as principles, fundamental convictions, ideals, standards, or criteria which are used as general guides in evaluating or in decision-making (Halstead & Taylor, 2005: 4-5). Value can be expressed through one single word, such as 'beauty', representing a broad concept. When value functions

1 as a principle, it ought to be presented in a sentence such as 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder'.

Further, Jokhoo (1998: 1) divides values into either 'innate' or 'acquired'. Innate values include those inborn virtues or qualities like love, compassion, peace, mercy, happiness, respect, tolerance, humility, cooperation, responsibility, and simplicity. Meanwhile, acquired values cover external values which are commonly adopted from the environment. They cover dress code, traditions, habits, tendencies, and cultural customs.

In Indonesian educational context, values might be plausibly connected to religions. The existing curriculum stipulates the teaching of religion from elementary level to tertiary level. It should be noted here that values do not necessarily point out certain religions, yet religions are vehicles or medium for learners to understand, internalize, and implement positive values in their social lives. To strengthen the values, a teacher of a religion-based institution might use religious quotes.

Ling & Stephenson (1998: 13-15) propose at least three paradigms underpinning the strategies for values teaching. They are:

- a. *Religious monopolism*. Values are taught within the framework of certain religion. This paradigm is not appropriate for pluralistic society nor for heterogonous learners in terms of religion.
- b. *Moral universalism*. Teaching universal moral principles; moral principles which are common to all religions; teaching common and universal meanings and understanding.
- c. *Consensus pluralism*. The values and principles to be taught in the school are obtained through consensus and negotiation. This paradigm is mainly adapted to maintain a secular, democratic and pluralist society.

As for the first paradigm, religious monopolism, it is applicable for religion-based institutional context such as Islamic schools or Christian schools. The second paradigm, moral universalism, is suitable for general schools in Indonesia. The last paradigm, consensus pluralism, might not yet be applicable for Indonesian context because religion, as opposed to the secular idea, is a vital part of the country's educational policy.

2. Literature-Based Materials

The term "literature-based materials" in this writing refers to the use of any genre of literature (fiction, poem, drama) as the basis for instructional activities. Following the approach of "literature as resource", literary texts serve as springboards to engage with language learning activities (Maley, 2012: 303). Literature can be an interesting resource for teaching language skills ranging from listening to writing.

Nevertheless, literary texts belong to upper-register texts for native readers, let alone for non-native readers (Bernhardt, 2011: 81). Such texts are not specifically written for the purpose of teaching of the target language. To use such texts for a language classroom, a teacher needs to adapt them first. In other words, materials adaptation techniques are needed when a teacher intends to utilize literary text in English as a foreign language (EFL) context.

3. Materials Adaptation

The term materials refer to anything that provide the learners with the information about the language being learned. They iclude texts, video, CD-Rom, a cassette, textbook used to present the target language. Meanwhile, materials adaptation refers to such activities as reducing, adding, supplementing, modifying, and omitting the existing materials. Such adaptation is aimed at making the materials suitable for particular type of learners (Tomlinson, 1998: xi). For the purpose of this paper, the materials are limited to text as a means of integrating values.

Materials adaptation is commonly conducted due to several assumptions. Cunningsworth (2008: 136-139) proposes four related assumptions as follows:

- a. Every learning situation is absolutely unique. The learners characteristics, resource availability, classroom dynamics, and syllabuses are among the factors that make the learning situation unique.
- b. The published materials might not perfectly suit all learning situation. They need to be adapted. Matrial adaptation is, then, a very worthwhile activities for it will give added value to the learners' real situation.
- c. Teacher needs to figure out the strengths and weaknesses of the published materials and match them to his or her syllabus or requirements.

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- d. Many materials contain a lot of good contents, but the actual examples or exercises contained in the book may not be suitable for a particular class.

McDonough, Shaw, & Masuhara (2013: 70), write five techniques for materials adaptation. They are: (1) adding (including expanding and extending); (2) deleting (including subtracting and abridging); (3) modifying (including rewriting and restructuring); (4) simplifying; and (5) reordering. It is worth mentioning here that a teacher might utilize other published materials to adapt the existing ones. Otherwise, the teacher can create his or her own materials to extend the existing materials.

A special note to 'simplifying' technique is asserted by Tomlinson (1998: xii). It is stated that simplification often includes the reduction of the text, shortening of sentences, and replacement of difficult words. Although such of simplification makes the text easier to understand, but it hinders the learners from achieving global understanding of the text. Simplification would be more profitable by adding examples, repetition, paraphrasing, and related information. Thus, simplification deals more with lengthening text rather than shortening it.

Cunnings worth (140-141) asserts two important concepts with regard to the adaptation techniques:

a. Personalizing the drills

Many drills in the published materials are designed to practice certain structure. They do not always present the real context of use. Personalizing drills imply: (1) teacher should focus on the structure, (2) teacher should relate the structure to the learners' contexts, (3) learners should talk about their own experience in a real life, and (4) learners communicate with one another through English.

b. Using authentic content

Authentic content refers to real facts and information. It should not be a made-up content. The language used for the authentic content might be authentic or simplified according to the level. The term authentic content should not be confused with authentic materials which are not written for language teaching purpose like song, newspaper, etc.

C. DISCUSSION

To put the above theories into practices, a teacher might want to do the following alternative steps:

1. Selecting Published Literary Text

Selecting literary text is the first crucial step. Vardell, et.al. (2006: 736) maintain that a literary text should be selected based on its content, language, visual, and cultural accessibility. The topic, language level, illustration aid, and cultural content should be relevant and appropriate for the learners. The following Text A is an original version that can be used as an alternative

Text A: Original Version

Title: The Blind Ones and the Matter of the Elephant

Author: Idries Shah (1967: 25)

BEYOND Ghor there was a city. All its inhabitants were blind. A king with his entourage arrived nearby; he brought his army and camped in the desert. He had a mighty elephant, which he used in attack and to increase the people's awe.

The populace became anxious to see the elephant, and some sightlessly, gathering information by touching some part of it.

Each thought that he knew something, because he could feel a part.

When they returned to their fellow-citizens eager groups clustered around them. Each of these was anxious, misguidedly, to learn the truth from those who were themselves astray.

They asked about the form, the shape of the elephant; and listened to all that they were told.

The man whose hand had reached an ear was asked about the elephant's nature. He said: 'It is a large, rough thing, wide and broad, like a rug.'

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And the one who had felt the trunk said: 'I have the real facts about it. It is like a straight and hollow pipe, awful and destructive.'

The one who had felt its feet and legs said: 'It is mighty and firm, like a pillar.'

Each had felt one part out of many. Each had perceived it wrongly. No mind knew all: knowledge is not the companion of the blind. All imagined something, something incorrect.

The created is not informed about divinity. There is no Way in this science by means of the ordinary intellect.

2. Adapting the Literary Text

Suppose that a teacher uses the paradigm of moral universalism and s/he intends to inculcate the values of respect and tolerance. S/he might adapt the above text using such techniques as *shortening of sentences*, *restructuring*, *replacement of difficult words*, *deleting*, and *adding*. To make the adapted text more inviting, the teacher can change the title and insert relevant visual aids.

The following is an alternative step-by-step of the materials adaptation procedure.

a. Making the title of the story more inviting

The Blind Ones and the Matter of the Elephant is absolutely a good title. To make it challenging, it might be changed into *What is an Elephant Like for the Blind?* A title sated in a question sentence is believed to be inviting.

b. Shortening the sentences

Examples:

Original sentence(s):

BEYOND Ghor there was a city. All its inhabitants were blind.

Shortened sentence(s):

There was a city where all its inhabitants were blind. (shorter)

c. Restructuring

Examples:

Original sentence(s):

As they did not even know the form or shape of the elephant they groped sightlessly, gathering information by touching some part of it.

Restructured sentence(s):

They never knew what an elephant was like. They did not know its shape. Each of them tried to gather information by touching the big elephant. (longer)

d. Replacement difficult words

Examples:

Original word(s):

...a mighty elephant; the populace

Replacement:

...a big elephant; the inhabitants

e. Deleting

Example:

Original text:

Each had felt one part out of many. Each had perceived it wrongly. No mind knew all: knowledge is not the companion of the blind. All imagined something, something incorrect.

The created is not informed about divinity. There is no Way in this science by means of the ordinary intellect.

Adapted text:

The above paragraphs are deleted.

f. Adding

Example:

Original text:

There are three blind persons who touch the elephant.

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Adapted text:
There are six blind persons who touch the elephant.

g. Inserting visual aid

Example:
 Original text:
There is no visual aid.

Adapted text:
A visual aid of six blind persons touching an elephant is inserted.

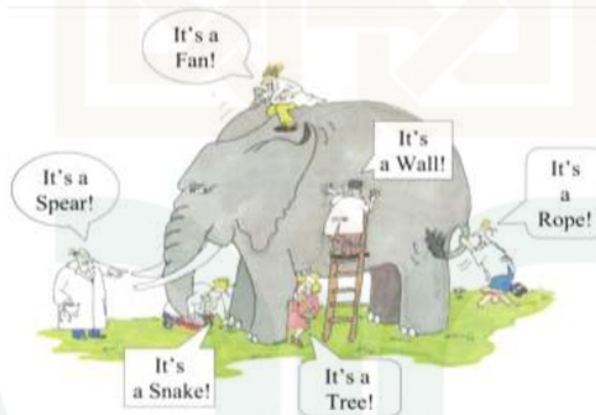
Putting all the above procedures together, the adapted materials are presented as in Text B.

Text B: Adapted Version
Title: What is an Elephant Like for the Blind?
Author: Idries Shah (1967: 25)

There was a city where all its inhabitants were blind. One day, a king with his army arrived and camped near the city. He had a big elephant. The inhabitants of the city were curious to see it. Six blind inhabitants were lucky to find it.

They never knew what an elephant was like. They did not know its shape. Each of them tried to gather information by touching the big elephant. Each touched different part and thought that he knew something. They returned to their city. Soon, they were surrounded by their fellow-citizens.

The fellow-citizens asked about the form and the shape of the elephant. They were eager to find out the answers.



Source: cviteacher.files.wordpress.com

- The first person : 'In my opinion, elephant is like a spear.' This man had touched the tusk of the elephant.
- The second person : 'I don't agree with him. Elephant is not like a spear. It is like a snake.' The man had touched the trunk.
- The third person : 'Well, I honestly feel that elephant is like a tree.' The man had touched the food.
- The fourth person : 'Not everyone will agree with me, but elephant is like a wall.' The man had touched the body.
- The fifth person : 'I don't think so. Elephant is like a rope.' The man had touched the tail.
- The sixth person : 'That's not entirely true. Elephant is like a fan.' The man had touched the head.

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3. Designing the tasks

For the purpose of this writing, the tasks are designed on the basis of integrated-skills approach. Listening, reading, grammar, speaking, and writing are taught consecutively. These macro skills of language are integrated into four sessions of a lesson plan, namely: warm-up session, presentation, exploration, and follow-up. Each session contains related task(s).

a. Warm-up Session**Task 1: Listening**

The value being transferred through this task is respecting the person (teacher) who is reading aloud.

- a) The teacher reads aloud the entire text of 'What is an Elephant Like for the Blind?'
- b) It would be helpful if the text is presented in power point slides.
- c) The teacher's reading the narrative serves as modelling.
- d) Such reading is conducted before the learners read the printed version.
- e) This task is aimed at setting the learners' mood, create their interest, and spark their curiosity.

b. Presentation**Task 2: Jigsaw reading**

The value being transferred through this task is respecting the person (classmate) who is reading aloud.

Instruction:

In a group 3-5 read the text of 'What is an Elephant Like for the Blind?'

- a) The teacher has the learners read aloud the entire text.
- b) Each student in a small group reads aloud different part of the text.
- c) There will be only one text allowed for each group.

Task 3: Efferent reading

The value being transferred through this task is cooperation in the sense that a learner should work together positively.

Instruction:

In pairs, answer the following questions.

- a) Were all the inhabitants of the city blind?
- b) Who camped near the city?
- c) What were the inhabitants curious about?
- d) How did the six inhabitants gather the information about the elephant?
- e) Who said that an elephant was like a wall?
- f) Who said that an elephant was like a fan?
- g) Who said that an elephant was like a snake?
- h) Why did the first person assume that elephant is like a spear?
- i) Why did the fifth person assume that elephant is like a rope?
- j) Why did the third person assume that elephant is like a tree?

c. Exploration**Task 4: Aesthetic reading**

The values being transferred through this task are respect and tolerance.

Instruction:

A teacher might have the learners justify their choice.

- a. Individually, read to the end of 'What is an Elephant Like for the Blind?' Then choose three statements which seem to you most appropriate. If none seems suitable to you, write one of your own.
 - Truth has many sides.
 - We should respect other's opinion.
 - Tolerance means appreciating differences.

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- Don't label people from their past failures.
 - The more we know, the more we realize we don't know.
 - Every cloud has a silver lining.
 - Don't burn the bridge behind you.
 - Customs reconcile us to everything.
 - Don't judge a book by its cover.
 - Your own: '.....'
- b. In my opinion, the first blind person in the story is....
- arrogant
 - objective
 - stubborn
 - selfish
 - bad-tempered
- c. If I were the sixth blind person, I would say...
- 'They are all wrong. Elephant is like a fan.'
 - 'Don't trust them. Elephant is like a fan.'
 - 'They might be right, but to me elephant is like a fan.'
 - 'I don't think they are telling you the real fact.'
- d. The morality that emerges from the dialogue in the story is...
- We should listen other's opinion although we don't agree with them.
 - We should interrupt when we don't agree on something.
 - Interrupting is a sign of superiority.
 - A good speaker is always better than a good listener.
- e. My favorite part of the story is...
- When the inhabitants were curious about the elephant
 - When the six blind persons expressed their opinion politely.
 - When the six blind persons did not interrupt one another.
 - Your own: '.....'

d. Follow-up

The values being transferred through this task are observance and creativity.

Instruction:

This stage might include grammar, speaking, or writing tasks. When the time is limited, a teacher might want to choose one of the following tasks:

Task 5: Grammar in context

Instruction: In pairs, answer the following questions.

- a) Underline all nouns in the story of 'What is an Elephant Like for the Blind?'
- b) Develop the nouns into noun phrases by adding pre-modifier and/or post modifier!
- c) Add adverbials wherever possible to make the story more interesting!
- d) Rewrite the story by adding your own noun phrases and adverbials.

Task 6: Speaking

The values being transferred through this task are respect and tolerance.

Instruction:

Study and practice the following dialogues. Pay attention to the expression in bold.



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Task 7: Speaking

The values being transferred through this task are respect and tolerance.

Instruction:

Give your responses to the following statements. Look at the example.

Example:

Tolerance is a sign of weakness.

I don't think so.

Tolerance is not the purpose of education.

Explanation:

Language focus		
Stating personal opinion, conviction, and disagreement		
Personal opinion	Conviction	Disagreement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In my opinion, ▪ I personally believe... ▪ I personally think... ▪ I personally feel... ▪ Not everyone will agree with me, but... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I honestly feel that... ▪ I strongly believe that... ▪ I'm convinced that... ▪ I'm absolutely certain that... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I don't think so ▪ I'm not sure ▪ I don't agree with you ▪ That's not entirely true ▪ No, I am afraid not.

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Task 8: Writing

The values being transferred through this task are cooperation, responsibility, respect and tolerance.

Instruction:

- a. In a small group, write a letter to another group in the class!
- b. Tell the group about how six blind persons describe the king's elephant.
- c. Tell them about the lessons you have learnt from the story.
- d. Ask them to reply your letter and to tell the lessons they have learnt from the story.

D. CONCLUSION

Within the context of learning materials, values could be possibly integrated into texts and tasks. As values ought to be transferred smoothly or implicitly, the texts and the tasks themselves should reflect the desired values. Literary text is the most relevant resource to be used as a springboard for designing communicative tasks and teacher's modeling the values is believed to be most essential.

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