

FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION, RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE AND GENDER EQUALITY IN ENGLISH SCHOOL BOOKS

A Study of English Books for Senior High Schools Distributed in Central Java

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Fight against corruption, religious tolerance, and gender equality are among the important issues that need to be disseminated massively to all levels of society by the government, religious and political leaders, public figures as well as schools and educators. Corruption has ruined the most essential pillars of social justice; religious intolerance potentially threatens the nation unity; while gender inequality is against the principles of human rights. English lessons at schools have the potential to be developed in such a way that sustains and strengthens the efforts to create better Indonesia through the introduction of values and norms in favor of the fight against corruption, religious tolerance and gender equality. It is so because English lesson may present a wide array of topics through its reading, speaking, writing, even listening sections. This study is aimed at investigating how this potential is explored by curriculum and material developers –reflected on the books they wrote, and how those values and norms are presented on texts. This study is explorative which puts English school books as its objects. The population of the study is English school books distributed in Central Java. Samples are taken and serve as the focus of the analysis. The data are descriptively analyzed by employing CDA approach. The results of the study are useful for curriculum designers and materials developers especially in equipping their efforts to write English books which cover not only linguistic aspects but also values and norms.

Key words: values and norms, English school books, material development.

1 INTRODUCTION

Fight against corruption (FaC), religious tolerance (RT), and gender equality (GE) are among the important issues that need to be disseminated massively to all levels of society by the government, religious and political leaders, public figures as well as schools and educators, since these issues are essential for the creation of better Indonesia. FaC is extremely important because it seems that today corruption is not slowing down but is spreading more massively like an octopus to almost all levels of bureaucracies and organizations. Everyday we read, listen and watch news about corruption and corruptors. They are government officers, legislators, businesspersons etc. Because of corruption, the country's wealth is only enjoyed by small parts of society. Corruption has ruined the most essential pillars of social justice.

When this paper was prepared –for example- two major corruption cases allegedly involved important figures were under investigation of the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK). The first case was the corruption in the construction of athletes' dorm (*Wisma Atlet*) for

the Sea Games 2011. This case has brought M Nazzarudin – the ex general treasurer of the Democratic Party – behind bars. The party's leaders were also under intensive media scrutiny.

The second case was the corruption in the Ministry of Man Powers and Transmigration as the KPK caught in the acts two officials from the ministry who were receiving a bribe of 1.5 billion rupiahs (US\$175,500) serving as '*Idul Fitri bonus (THR)*' from a businesswoman to accelerate an infrastructure project in a resettlement area in the West Papua capital of Manokwari. How shameful it was, when the budget for development was easily misused for personal purposes.

Though it has been improving, RT and harmony must be promoted and sustained continuously by all members of society. Indonesian people must keep exploring ways and means to develop a society where people of diverse faiths and culture can live together in peace and harmony. As a country with different religions and faiths, Indonesia is fragile of conflicts triggered by a 'narrow-mindedness' of few religious believers who view other believers as rivals and enemies rather than partners who can work and live together side by side to achieve peace and harmony. The destruction of places of worships, physical conflicts among sects of religious believers, the riot in Ambon and a terror attack in a church in Solo both in September 2011 – which into certain extent might be triggered by religious issues- are clear signs that religious intolerance will always pose threats to national unity. We must agree without any reserve that no society will be able to survive if religious intolerance is permitted to thrive. Intolerance destroys the communities, and when the communities are destroyed, so is the nation. School children must be made aware of this as early as possible through many forms of engagement in teaching and learning process.

The condition of women in Indonesia varies among regions and ethnic groups. In big cities and educated communities, significant progress has been made in achieving a gender balance between men and women. In education sector for example, nowadays we see many girls are pursuing their education at universities. In business sectors, we can also find many women occupy important positions. Some women have also achieved high positions in government, legislative bodies as well as political parties.

Despite the achievement, the stereotypes and sex role prevail in rural areas and less educated communities where men are perceived as the breadwinners and decision makers in the family while women will only serve as mothers and housewives. Gender balance awareness, therefore, is still crucial issue that must be addressed by the nation. Letting practice of gender inequality is against the basic principles of human rights which view men and women are born equally.

2 CHARACTER EDUCATION

Character education has been emerging as a hot issue in recent years. This seems to be the response to the failure of the nation in developing competitiveness. While Indonesia has a very large territory with abundant natural resources and the fifth biggest population in the world, this country progresses slowly in achieving its goals to become a prosperous nation. Corruptive behaviors, low discipline, decreasing spirit of nationalism, preference to instant result rather than process, intolerance to diversity are among 'unproductive' characters frequently attributed to many Indonesians. Law Number 20 Year 2003 on National Education System signifies the importance of character education. It stipulates clearly that the objective of the Indonesian

Education is to create devoted, ethical, strong, intelligent, creative, independent, democratic and responsible human beings.

Tim Pakar Yayasan Jati Diri Bangsa (2011) suggests 7 changes to improve effectiveness of character education at schools. They are changes in perspective, environment, learning processes, learning materials, success criteria, principal and teachers' capability, and school – students' parents relationship. Koesoema A (2010) suggests 5 methods of character education. They are teaching, modeling, prioritizing, priority practicing, and reflection.

Thus, values and norms must be disseminated through the process of learning and teaching both directly and indirectly. Direct dissemination can be in the form of presentation and discussion of values and norms as what the students at schools may have in lessons such as Religion, Citizenship (PPKn), Social Sciences (IPS). While indirect dissemination can be in the form of exposure through lessons as language, arts, sports etc.

3 ENGLISH SCHOOL BOOKS

Many different English school books are available for students of Senior High Schools in Central Java. To mention some are (in alphabetical order) *Contextual English* published by PT Tiga Serangkai Pustaka Mandiri, *Developing English Competencies* by Pusat Perbukuan Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, *English Alive* published by Yudistira, *English for Better Life* by Yrama Widya, *English Zone* by Erlangga, *Interlanguage* by Pusat Perbukuan Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, *Look Ahead* by Erlangga etc.

The prices of these school books vary. Some cost very cheap as *Developing English* which is sold at around Rp 11.000,- while some others are relatively expensive as *Contextual English* which is sold at around Rp 70.000,-. The majority of the books are sold around Rp 30.000,- to Rp 45.000.

Though there are differences in the details of materials, most those school books claim to have met the criteria for content standard (*standar isi*) 2006. They have included four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary.

These English books are used as resource and practice books for English lesson. However, there seems to be different ways of using them. Some schools use them as the main learning materials. Students learn and discuss what are presented on, do practices and exercises page by page. They also serve as reference for assessment and evaluation. Some other schools use these books only for supplement. The students do not go through all the materials presented. Instead, they use student work books (LKS). Many LKS are composed by the teacher association (MGMP). They usually have fewer pages, compacted materials, are printed in reused, black and white papers. Some teachers recommend LKS to their students because of its price and availability. They may get them through their teacher and have cheaper prices.

4 HOW VALUES AND NORMS MAY BE PRESENTED IN ENGLISH SCHOOL BOOKS

English lessons at schools have the potential to be developed in such a way that sustain and strengthen the efforts to create better Indonesia through the introduction of values and norms in favor of the FaC, RT, and GE. It is so because English lesson may present a wide array of topics through its reading, speaking, writing, even listening sections. Those values and norms can be presented in various types of activities and forms.

Standar Kompetensi Bahasa Inggris SMA mentions language skills that must be mastered by students: listening, speaking, reading and writing. It also mentions very specifically 5 competences of communicative, linguistic, socio-cultural, strategic as well as discourse competences. But it does not mention very specifically the content. What is meant here is that

teachers and book writers have the freedom to select materials which may give students not only the competencies but also the values and norms conveyed in the language. Topics for dialogs of speaking practice, reading passages, and writing practice may be developed into the ones that involve those values and norms. For example, conversation practices for asking and giving opinion: 'What do you think of the women today? Can they do things as well as men?' will serve not only as a model of asking opinion but also a trigger for critical thinking about GE. Reading passages may involve many types of texts as recount, narrative, exposition, descriptive, etc.. FaC, RT, and GE can serve as topics for those texts.

5 METHOD

5.1 Research Design

This research was explorative. It was aimed at looking for information on the subject, in this case was to see whether English school books for senior high schools distributed in Central Java have accommodated the introduction of norms and values concerning FaC, RT, and GE. Previous research and information are not very much available; therefore, an exploration to see what the schools books are like is necessary.

5.2 Population and Sample

The population of this research was English school books of Senior High School distributed in Central Java. The word 'distributed' in this study means that the books were available and sold on book stores. Student's work books (LKS) which were locally published and used as supplement to the school books were not included as the population. Three books were taken as samples for the study. They were *Contextual English*, *English Alive*, and *Look Ahead*. These three samples were taken randomly from the population.

5.3 Unit of Analysis

As an explorative study, the research didn't definitely limit the unit of analysis into for example texts of reading passages. Instead, the researcher looked through almost all line by line of the samples to see whether there were presentations of the topics. It was very possible that the topics of FaC, RT, and GE each of them were presented only in a single separate sentence as sentence for grammar practice, dialogs or conversation practice, writing tasks, or reading passages.

6 FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The study of the samples revealed that topics of FaC, RT, and GE - though they were still minimum - have been selected as learning materials in English School books for senior high schools from grade X to grade XII.

Related to FaC, *Look Ahead 1* for students of grade X was the only book which presents something related to corruption. It presents a picture of a news program of *Liputan 6*. The presenter is a woman with a news title 'KORUPSI BULOG' (page 174). The instructions put under the pictures are: 1) *Talk about what you see in the picture; 2) Do you like reading / listening to news? Why /Why not? Etc.* Though the focus of the presentation is discussion on news item, it may be extended into cases of other corruptions occurring in the present time so that the students have more understanding on the issue. Corruption in Bulog occurred years ago and it was not actual anymore. I believe that the students have a little to say about the topic. This picture appears again in *Look Ahead 3* page 158 unit 5 *Thinking Critically* under the instruction give points on TV programs.

Look Ahead 2 also presents a reading passage which serves as a model for hortatory exposition. The topic is '*Corruption: Jakarta as the most corrupt place in Indonesia*'. The passage follows the structure of thesis, argument 1, argument 2, and recommendation. Interestingly in the recommendation it says: '*I believe we should start at the earliest stages in school and I think everyone should be involved in the effort to eradicate corruption. We must not make any distinction.*' (Look Ahead p. 185).

There was no clear presentation of RT on the samples. *Contextual English 1* presents a chapter entitled: '*Religious and Moral Education*' (pp. 17 -32) In this chapter there were reading passage, vocabulary exercises, paragraph making practice, text organization and many more. Unfortunately the statement saying that as religious believers we must respect other religions is hard to find. The reading passage only describes on how to behave well both at school and at home.

The school book in the samples that best describe GE is perhaps *English Alive*. The presentation of GE is not in the forms of passages but in the forms of pictures. These books have a lot colorful pictures of boys and girls, men and women. *English Alive 1* presents a profile of Irene Kharisma Sukandar -who was described as the most successful chess player- as a model for descriptive text (p 94). On the next page Wimar Witoelar is presented as a famous public figure.

7 CONCLUSION

Not all English school books for senior high school have included topics of fight against corruption, religious tolerance, and gender equality. The analysis of the samples shows that the presentation of those topics was very minimal. Popular topics are dominating. Topics as fight against corruption and gender equality were presented both reading passages and pictures. This study didn't find topic which can be said as overtly signifying religious tolerance. As the issues of fight against corruption, religious tolerance, gender equality are important, we expect that in the future material developers and curriculum designers would like to include those topics in their books.

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