



## The Integration of Character Education in Freedom Writers Movie into ELT Materials

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### Abstract

Education is necessary for students who are not only oriented to master subject matters but also to focus on character development. All students seemed to pursue value, rank, or medals, whereas the process of creating an actual character is more important than academic achievement. As a result, students grow up to be smart but characterless. The present study aims to explain the integration of character education in the Freedom Writers movie into ELT materials. These mixed methods study deeply investigated character education in the film which mean this research applying both quantitative data to calculate the frequency of the data and qualitative data to explain the results of the data. The data are dialogues and actions reflected on all the movie characters. The data were collected using theory of Bialik et al. (2015). The study shows that ethics is the most commonly found in the movie (81 items), followed by curiosity (80 items), mindfulness (59 findings), leadership (20 items), courage (19 results), and resilience (7 items). Moreover, the findings show the existing strengths in integrating character education into ELT materials for the students by adapting Model of Russell (2009). Hopefully, this research contributes as a reference to integrating character education into ELT materials.

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## INTRODUCTION

The world of education is forced to transform because the results of the education system, which has only focused on the cognitive domain, were less effective in producing a generation with intellectual and moral intelligence (Taqwim, 2017). With only armed with intelligence without any character who controls it, it is no wonder if harassment increases in schools, manipulation in various aspects of life is more massive such as systematic corruption and so on. As Roosevelt stated that “to educate a person in mind, and not in morals, is to educate a menace to society” (as cited in Rahmawati, 2019, p. 2). These all indicate that people need character education to form a good character.

Good character is a concept that contains good habits of the mind, the heart, and the action (Saleh, 2014). It is a kind of engine of social change as an attempt to develop students' characters in schools. Academically, character education fosters students' awareness of positive values, develops students' competence in deciding what is right and wrong, maintains the right or good characters, and enhances the implementation of positive and prosocial behavior in students' daily lives (Berkowich, 2010). Character education should be developed for students since they are young to make them grow with the values as their guide to think and behave ethically among others. It is essential in developing the next generation of a nation because a strong nation is a nation whose people have strong character and good character both individually and socially.

O'Sullivan (2004) suggested that the easiest way to promote character education is using literature study since the stories serve as role models that connect experiences and morals. One of the literature studies is a movie. Klarer (2004) stated that a film is a performing art and also a dramatic genre that uses actors as the primary means of expression, has optical power, and needs modes of presentation such as camera angle, editing, slow and fast motion, recorded with a sound that tells a story. It means that a movie is not only an art form and medium of

mass entertainment, as Fujiati et al. (2020) said that teaching media could reduce the students' bored in the learning process. Functionally, movie characters are given attitudes, gestures, statements, motivations, and appearances that are at least based on social roles and general motions about how a policeman, factory worker, debutante, mother, or husband is 'supposed' to be. As Saputra & Sutopo (2016) stated that movies are social representations. In this way, the movie experience acts as emotional memory for the students and allows them to implement it in their daily lives.

For educational purposes, the movie entitled *Freedom Writers* can be chosen. This movie is about a dedicated teacher (Erin Gruwell) in a racially divided Los Angeles school who has a class of at-risk teenagers deemed incapable of learning. Instead of giving up, she inspires her students to take an interest in their education and plan their future. She gives reading material assignments related to their lives and encourages them all to keep journals.

It is a fact that there have been a large number of studies out there reporting on character education; kinds of character education (Irvani, 2015; AM et al., 2017; Bahroni & Muna, 2017; Suryati, 2018; Nasir et al., 2019) and character education in literature (Almerico, 2014; Astuti et al., 2014; Turan & Ulutas, 2016; Novianti, 2017; Kristanto, 2020; Murti et al., 2020). In addition, a study by Astuti et al. (2019) and Pusumakeja (2018) takes a similar approach to the present study: character education in the movie. The difference is that the two previous kinds of research did not explain how to integrate character education found in the film into ELT materials unlike current research. Considering that, the study would use categories of character education proposed by Bialik et al. (2015) that are different from the previous investigations to describe character education in *Freedom Writers* movie and would adapt the Model of Russell (2009) to explain the integration of character education in *Freedom Writers* movie into ELT materials.

Hence, six research questions were raised in this study: (1) How is the concept of

mindfulness in Freedom Writers movie integrated into ELT materials? (2) How is the concept of curiosity in Freedom Writers movie integrated into ELT materials? (3) How is the concept of courage in Freedom Writers movie integrated into ELT materials? (4) How is the concept of resilience in Freedom Writers movie integrated into ELT materials? (5) How is the concept of ethics in Freedom Writers movie integrated into ELT materials? (6) How is the concept of leadership in Freedom Writers movie integrated into ELT materials?

The explanation about the concept of character education in the Freedom Writers movie integrated into ELT materials will provide some contributions. Theoretically, this study will contribute to the enrichment of the teaching method and the provision of additional sources as well as previous theories and studies about it. Practically, this study will provide a detailed overview of the teaching method and hopefully can contribute thought and benefits to the following parties: teachers, lecturers, students, societies, writers, and readers. Pedagogically, the results of this study will be able to be used as a teaching method to teach character education to students of English Language Development.

## METHODS

The type of research that fits this research is mixed methods design. This current research applied both quantitative and qualitative data. It is appropriate for this research because it calculates the frequency of the data and explain the results of the data.

The subject of this research was dialogues and actions that appeared in the Freedom Writers movie. Meanwhile, the object of this research was character education comprising mindfulness, curiosity, courage, resilience, ethics, and leadership, as reflected in all characters in the movie.

For this study, the researcher, as the key instrument, played the role of the data collector, data analyst, and data reporter.

This research used the theory of Bialik et al. (2015) as the instrument to collect the data.

The instrument was in the form of a table. The table was modified from Thamrin & Wargika (2013).

In collecting the data, there were several procedures in this study which were presented as follows.

- (1) Search the Freedom Writers movie and the subtitle on the internet.
- (2) Download the movie on driverays.com and the subtitle on subscene.com.
- (3) Watch the movie.
- (4) Pay attention to the dialogues and actions reflected in all the movie characters, which describe character education categories, mindfulness, curiosity, courage, resilience, ethics, and leadership.
- (5) Select the dialogues and actions reflected on all the movie characters, which described character education categories: mindfulness, curiosity, courage, resilience, ethics, and leadership.

After the data were collected, it was analyzed by following the six steps of Creswell (2012). Firstly, the data were identified by choosing the selected dialogues and actions. Afterward, they were classified based on the theory of Bialik et al. (2015). Further, they were reduced to removing the irrelevant data. Then, the data were interpreted on the table of findings of the datasheet. After that, the data were reported qualitatively in the form of a description and an explanation. Lastly, the data were verified to make sure the data were valid, and then the conclusion of this research was drawn.

This research validation process was done through two kinds of triangulation: theory and investigator. For theory triangulation, the theory of Bialik et al. (2015) and other theories from other experts such as Kabat-Zinn (1990), Voss & Keller (1983), Komives et al. (2007), etc. were used in describing categories of character education in Freedom Writers movie. Furthermore, for investigator triangulation, Sri Endahwati, S.Pd. and Dian Hapsari, S.Pd. as the

English teachers in SMPN 6 Tulang Bawang Barat Lampung, was asked to examine the integration of those character education in the movie into ELT materials.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings showed that ethics was considered the highest as the percentage overlapped the other character education in the Freedom Writers movie. It is followed by curiosity, mindfulness, leadership, and courage. On the contrary, resilience is the least common character education found in Freedom Writers movie. The portion was provided in table.

**Table 1.** Total findings

No	Character Education	Findings	Percentages
1	Mindfulness	59	22.18
2	Curiosity	80	30.07
3	Courage	19	7.14
4	Resilience	7	2.63
5	Ethics	81	30.45
6	Leadership	20	7.51
Total		266	100%

### The Integration of the Concept of Mindfulness into Freedom Writers Movie

Mindfulness can be defined as a focus on thinking to realize something. It is the perfect instrument for shaping the mind and changing the view. The findings of this category of character education are 59 in number and 22.18% when converted into a percentage. It makes mindfulness the third-highest finding of character education categories in the Freedom Writers movie. The sample of mindfulness findings is (*Margaret: "Erin, I think you're a lovely, intelligent woman."*) in scene time 0:05:50 of the movie. This dialogue shows an appreciation or praise from someone, a form of mindfulness according to the theory of Bialik et al. (2015). In the case of this dialogue, Margaret praises Erin.

### The Integration of the Concept of Curiosity into Freedom Writers Movie

Curiosity is a strong desire to know new things. It can be understood as encouragement because people try to minimize the discomfort of uncertainty. The findings of this category of character education are 80 in number and 30.07% when converted into a percentage. It makes curiosity the second-highest finding of character education categories in the Freedom Writers movie. The sample of curiosity findings is (*Erin: (Looking around the school and smiling)*) in scene time 0:07:11 in the film. The action shows an exploration of a new environment in which the form of character education of curiosity based on the theory of Bialik et al. (2015). In the case of this dialogue, Erin explores her new teaching place.

### The Integration of the Concept of Courage into Freedom Writers Movie

Courage is the power to act without fear. Simply, courage is the willingness to embrace any dangers. The findings of this category of character education are 19 in number and 7.14% when converted into a percentage. It makes courage the fifth rank finding of character education categories in the Freedom Writers movie. The sample of courage findings is (*Sindy: "I feel like I have to protect my family."*) in scene time 0:52:27 in the film. The dialogue can be said as courage because it shows a solid determination to do something in accordance with the theory of Bialik et al. (2015). It can be proven through Sindy, who has the determination to protect her family.

### The Integration of the Concept of Resilience into Freedom Writers Movie

Resilience focuses on individual characteristics, which 'harden' children and young people growing up in a challenging environment and enable them to succeed. The findings of this category of character education are 7 in number and 2.63% when converted into a percentage. It makes resilience the lowest discovery of character education categories in the Freedom Writers movie. The sample of resilience findings is (*Wilson students hold dance concert to raise money for guest speakers.*) in scene time

1:24:17 in the film. It shows the action, which is part of resilience according to the theory of Bialik et al. (2015). It can be seen through the effort of people to earn money. In the case of this action, Wilson students hold a dance concert to raise money.

#### The Integration of the Concept of Ethics into Freedom Writers Movie

Ethics is the knowledge that provides an understanding of human values between good and bad. It deals with human relationships—how humans treat other beings. The findings of this category of character education are 81 in number and 30.45% when converted into a percentage. It makes ethics the highest discovery of character education categories in the Freedom Writers movie. The sample of ethics findings is (Erin: “You can write about whatever you want, the past, the present, the future. You can write it like a diary, or you can write songs, poems, any good thing, bad thing, anything.”) in scene time 0:45:44. It shows the dialogue as it indicates how ethics works and proves its existence in the movie based on the theory of Bialik et al. (2015). The conversation clearly shows a help of advice for others. In this case, Erin advises on what to write in a diary.

#### The Integration of the Concept of Leadership into Freedom Writers Movie

Leadership is not a mere individual trait but a process of influencing others. It is the ability to direct others to achieve common goals. The findings of this category of character education are 20 in number and 7.15% when converted into a percentage. It makes leadership the fourth rank finding of character education categories in the Freedom Writers movie. The sample of leadership findings is (Principal: “It is our policy not to discuss the subject inside the classroom.”) in scene time 0:27:16 in the movie. It can be said as leadership because it shows socialization from superior to subordinate in accordance with the theory of Bialik et al. (2015). In this case, it is the Principal who carries out the socialization.

#### The Integration of Character Education into ELT Materials

In every lesson planning, there are several steps in learning. The learning steps include pre-activity, whilst activity, and post-activity. At each step can be integrated character education. The explanation of integrating character education in the Freedom Writers movie into ELT materials adapting the Model of Russell (2009) is as follows.

##### Pre-Activity

Pre-activity is conducted for 15 minutes. Four activities are shown in this step. First, students are opened with greetings and prayer to start learning, and their attendance is checked as an attitude of discipline. In this activity, character education that can be integrated is mindfulness and resilience. When students say greetings and pray, this activity is a form of character education of mindfulness based on the theory of Bialik et al. (2015). Meanwhile, when students are checked for attendance, this activity is a form of character education of resilience because it shows self-discipline according to the theory of Bialik et al. (2015).

The second activity in the first step of this learning is students are associated with the material/theme/learning activity that will be conducted with their experiences. Character education that is integrated into this activity is curiosity in accordance with the theory of Bialik et al. (2015). By exploring students' experiences connected with learning material, students can be more enthusiastic about participating in learning because of their high interest.

The next activity in the first step of this learning is students are given motivation about what can be obtained (objectives and benefits) by studying material: Personal Recount Text; Giving and asking for information related to personal experiences in the past. According to the theory of Bialik et al. (2015), in this activity, character education integrated is curiosity. This activity answers students' interest in the reasons for studying the material.

Then, in the last activity, in the first step of learning, students are explained the thing to be studied, the competency to be achieved, and the

learning method to be taken. Based on the theory of Bialik et al. (2015), when doing this activity, character education of curiosity and courage are integrated. Based on the activities conducted at this step, students become more enthusiastic when they know what things will be done in the teaching and learning activity. Moreover, the learning method used differs from the usual one to achieve the learning objectives. The learning method used on this occasion is discussion.

#### Whilst Activity

This second step has five activities: literacy, critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity. These five activities were conducted for 160 minutes. Literacy activity is the initial activity in the whilst activity. Literacy activity begins when students are motivated to focus on the topic of Personal Recount Text by viewing, observing, and reading through displayed PowerPoint. The integrated character education in this activity is mindfulness and curiosity in accordance with the theory of Bialik et al. (2015).

The next activity in the second step of learning is critical thinking. During the whilst activity in this section, character education of curiosity can be integrated into teaching and learning activities based on the theory of Bialik et al. (2015). Because in this section, students can ask or be asked as much as possible about Personal Recount Text material, giving and asking for information regarding personal experiences in the past and Freedom Writers movie shown. This aligns with the Model of Russell (2009) who stated this activity introduces the film to students, explains the purpose for viewing the movie, and clearly connects the movie to the topic or unit currently being studied. Students can ask questions they do not know yet or are asked as follows.

1. Do you know what Personal Recount Text is?
2. Do you know the social function, generic structure, and language features of Personal Recount Text?
3. Have you ever watched or heard of the Freedom Writers movie?

Besides character education of curiosity, in critical thinking activity, character education of courage can also be integrated when students answer the questions above, whether they are right or wrong according to the theory of Bialik et al. (2015). By answering the questions, students can increase their confidence in expressing opinions.

The next activity in the second step of learning after critical thinking is collaboration. In this activity, students were formed into several groups to discuss, collect, re-present, and exchange information about Personal Recount Text through Freedom Writers movie. It aligns with the Model of Russell (2009) who said this activity discuss what is required during the viewing of the film. This activity has three integrated character education: resilience, ethics, and leadership in accordance with the theory of Bialik et al. (2015). For character education of ethics and leadership, how to integrate them into learning is by students forming and discussing in groups. Character education of ethics is integrated when they are in groups. There will be mutual respect, trust, care, and so on. It can be proven by freedom of opinion to each other.

Meanwhile, character education of leadership is integrated when they are not selfish and focus more on teamwork when working in groups. At this stage, students form seven groups, each consisting of three to four students. Each group was assigned to find a generic structure consisting of orientation, events, and re-orientation from the Freedom Writers movie during its screening.

Then, character education of resilience is integrated when students collect information to answer the questions while watching the Freedom Writers movie, such as looking for the generic structure of the film. This aligns with the Model of Russell (2009) who expressed this activity students take notes. The effort of these students is a form of character education of resilience.

After the collaboration activity, communication is the next activity in the second learning step. In this activity, students present the group work results classically, express opinions

on the presentations, and then respond to the presenting group. This aligns with the Model of Russell (2009) who said this stage includes required activities: Review, clarify, or discuss major points, concepts, issues, scenes, or inaccuracies; and Assess student learning. According to the theory of Bialik et al. (2015), all character education can be integrated into this activity. The technique is that when each group has found the generic structure of the Freedom Writers movie, they explain it in general terms.

Afterward, the teacher highlights the dialogues and the actions that have character education in the generic structure of the Freedom Writers movie. The purpose of doing this is to perfect students' work and explain the main story of the Freedom Writers movie. Therefore, the character education of the film can be easily understood by students. Here is the character education.

It begins with orientation. Orientation is the first of three structures in the generic structure of Recount Text. This first structure contains information about the character, the place of the incident, when the incident occurred, and so on. The information provided by the writer is expected to provide knowledge or information needed by the reader to understand the storyline. Orientation in Freedom Writers movie starts from the beginning of the film up to scene time 15:26. In this section, there are three-character education integrated into the main story of Freedom Writers movie, namely curiosity, courage, and ethics based on the theory of Bialik et al. (2015).

The following generic structure is events. Events are the second structure which is the content of the text or in the form of a story about events or experiences that the writer wants to convey to the reader. Events in Freedom Writers movie starts from scene time 15:27 to 1:52:27. In this section, there are five-character education implemented: mindfulness, curiosity, resilience, ethics, and leadership in accordance with the theory of Bialik et al. (2015).

The last generic structure is re-orientation. Re-orientation is the third structure that contains a conclusion and summary or repetition of

information in the orientation structure. Re-orientation in Freedom Writers movie starts in scene time 1:52:32 until the end of the film. Three-character education is implemented in this section: mindfulness, curiosity, and ethics according to the theory of Bialik et al. (2015).

Furthermore, creativity is the last activity in the second step of this learning. In this activity, students with the teacher's help make conclusions about what they have learned related to Personal Recount Text. Moreover, students are allowed to ask again about things that have not been understood. Based on the theory of Bialik et al. (2015), two-character education integrated into this activity are curiosity and courage. Character education of curiosity is integrated when students ask questions. Meanwhile, character education of courage is integrated when students make conclusions.

#### Post-Activity

Post-activity is conducted for 15 minutes. There are two activities carried out in this step. First, students, with the teacher's help, make lesson summaries about the essential points that appear in the learning activity that has just been carried out. In accordance with the theory of Bialik et al. (2015), character education that can be integrated into this activity is courage. By making summaries, students dare to make their own decisions.

The second activity in this learning step is that students are given reinforcement of the material studied by being given assignments, delivering the next lesson planning, and ending with closing greetings. In this activity, three-character education can be integrated, including mindfulness, curiosity, and resilience according to the theory of Bialik et al. (2015). For character education of resilience, when students are given assignments, namely looking for language features in Freedom Writers movie, this character education can be integrated so that they are more diligent in learning. The following character education that can be integrated into this activity is curiosity. This character education is integrated when students are delivered with the next lesson planning. The goal is for students to become enthusiastic about future learning. Then,

character education of mindfulness is integrated when teaching and learning activities end with closing greetings.

This research is a new product that other researchers have never done. Let us say Astuti et al. (2019), who researched character education in the Nusa and Rarra movie. Further, Pusumakeja (2018) conducted research to see character education that exists in the main character in The Fate of the Furious movie. Both of these researches are looking for character education in the film. It is the same as the current research. The difference is the two previous studies did not explain how to integrate character education found in the movie into ELT materials, unlike recent research. From this void emerges current research.

The application of character education is necessary for students in their life. Several researchers stated it as well such as Abdurrahman (2016); Marhayani (2016); Mustoip (2018); Muttaqin et al. (2018). With help from all parties strongly supports the implementation of character education programs optimally. It also indicates that all parties need to increase 3C (Communication, Coordination, and Cooperation) in implementing character education.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of the integration of character education has been discussed. Despite that, the researcher will continue concluding all the results. This research has six main findings. The first is about the integration of the concept of mindfulness into ELT materials through greetings, praying, observing, caring, and happiness, and others during teaching and learning activities. The second finding is the integration of the concept of curiosity into ELT materials by making students become curious or enthusiastic, ask questions, direct themselves, be motivated, and so on. The third finding is the integration of the concept of courage into ELT by making students enthusiastic, confident, optimistic, brave, etc. The fourth is the integration of the concept of resilience into ELT

by making students self-disciplined, trying and persevering in something, and so on. The fifth finding is about the integration of the concept of ethics into ELT, among other students, help, respect, trust classmates, etc. The sixth finding is the integration of the concept of leadership into ELT through students working in groups, guiding each other, not being selfish when in groups, and so on during teaching and learning activities.

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