

# Strengthening the Character: Uphold Ethics in Indonesian Language Study Pass by Supplementary Books

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**ABSTRACT:** Nowadays, characters reinforcement matter has been taken into account for the sake of the nation. We can learn from other countries that succeed in managing education; so that the integration of character education in our country, Indonesia, must be conducted. For that objective, the writer assumes that supplementary books are facility usable for teacher of Indonesian language and literature subject to be exploited. Meanwhile, the effort of Indonesian language study teachers in strengthening student character and upholding ethics is one of effort in improving human resource quality. This effort is very essential, considering the quality of Indonesian citizen is still unsatisfying. Through speaking and writing skills, teacher can evaluate the use of language ethics among students, both directly and indirectly. This article aims to present a study of optimizing language learning to form students' character and ethics. By combining creativity, character, and ethics to Indonesian language and literature learning, the writer optimizes also implicitly the role and function of Indonesian language and literature learning in accordance to its target, among others for character and students language ethics reinforcement. So, students as the next generation should be prepared to socialize and live properly. Therefore, Indonesian language and literature learning should optimize the students' role through supplementary books.

**KEY WORDS:** Character education, teaching and learning process, supplementary books, Indonesian language, and students as the next generation.

## Introduction

Change and growth toward positive is everybody's expectation. Nowadays, characters reinforcement matter has been taken into account for the sake of the nation. We can learn from other countries that succeed in managing education. General study held on Friday in January 27, 2012, at the Pakuan University in Bogor, West Java, Indonesia revealed that ethics implementation has made New Zealand as the best education organizer in the world. Besides, we also must anticipate ten life phenomenon posed by Thomas Lickona, namely: (1) the increasing of violence at adolescent; (2) the use of harsh words; (3) strong peer group influence in conducting violence; (4) the increasing of drug abuse, alcohol, and free sex; (5) the fade of moral value; (6) the decreasing of working ethos; (7) less respect to parents and

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teacher; (8) less responsibility as individual and citizen; (9) dishonesty; and (10) suspicious and hate among people (cited by Syihabuddin, 2009).

The effort surely has to be comprehensive, not merely among academic society but also public society must participate actively. Moral degradation aspect must be considered in every activity. The effect of any activity should be beneficial for societies. It is relevant, if these days discussion about character education is frequently increasing compared to the past time. That discussion is based on desire for always upgrading life quality through education.

Number of research results express moral degradation; among others Cucu Lisnawati (2004) stated that students' or adolescents' behavior and conduct at this time is very worrying, a student now behaves not as a student should be. They tend to communicate in harsh language. They also behave impolitely to their parents and teachers. It is influenced by less moral value education they get from their surroundings. Then, Dedi Mulyasana (2007) research result showed that children behavior is affected by: (1) peer and sibling with their environment; and (2) parents ignorant because of their work load.

Certainly, those facts should be handled by many parties, including Indonesian language and literature teachers. It is true, up to now there is no special subject as such character education as expressed by the Head of National Curriculum Center in Jakarta that government, starting at 2010, will include cultural education and nation character through curriculum reinforcement from elementary level until university level as part of national education system reinforcement, and will not add distinctive subject for cultural education and nation character but merely reinforcing each subject which considered weak (<http://m.berita8.com>, 13/1/2010).

Important question to be raised is why character education must be related to Indonesian language and literature study base supplement books? Can student character be repaired by supplementary books at Indonesian language and literature study? If it is possible, in what way it is implemented?

Based on the previous question, then, integration of character education must be conducted. For that objective, the writer assumes that supplementary books are facility usable for teacher of Indonesian language and literature subject to be exploited.

### On the Character Education

National education vision is realizing Indonesia citizens who are peace defenders, democratic, competitive, developed, secure, and prosperous Indonesian society in the form of Republic of Indonesia that supported by healthy, independent, religious, noble, patriotic, obey the law, environmental oriented, science and technology savvy, and hard working (Depdiknas RI, 2005:6).

Besides those visions, we can also learn the value within the Law of National Education System or UUSPN (*Undang-Undang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional*), especially number 2/1989, section 4, containing national education target which is to brighten the nation life and to develop Indonesia humans, who obey and

believe in God the Almighty and are kind hearted, knowledgeable and skillful, healthy, independent and socially responsible, and have high sense of nationality (Depdikbud RI, 1990).

Afterward, in order to implement Law Number 20/2003 on National Education System, government releases the Government Regulation or PP (*Peraturan Pemerintah*) number 19/2005. Section 4 from PP referred as Standard of National Education or SNP (*Standar Nasional Pendidikan*) in order to guarantee national education quality to brighten nation life and to form character and prestigious nation civilization (Depdiknas RI, 2006). Indonesia follows holistic education, or education that aims to give chance to the students to develop themselves intellectually and facilitate their soul and body growth as a whole to create Indonesia citizens with strong character that can elevate the nation pride (<http://www.character.org/key-topics/what-is-character-education>, 13/1/2010).

To realize it, many parties must participate. Further, in order to be effective, character education must involve everyone, because basically education cannot stand alone. Education is influenced by other strengths; it needs support from family, society, social organization, political policy, economy strength, and others. It must be integrated into the curriculum as well as school character. When school communities unite in developing character, schools will gain amazing results.

Character education is the intentional effort to develop good character among young people. As stated by Thomas Lickona, Eric Schaps and Catherine Lewis (2010) that “*When we think about the kind of character we want for our children, it’s clear that we want them to be able to judge what is right, care deeply about what is right, and to do what they believe is right*”. The following eleven principles serve as criteria that schools and other groups can use to plan a character education effort and to evaluate available character education programs, books, and curriculum resources.

*First*, character education promotes core ethical values as the basis of good character. Character education holds, as a starting philosophical principle, that there are widely shared, pivotally important core ethical values – such as caring, honesty, fairness, responsibility, and respect for self and others – that form the basis of good character.

*Second*, character must be comprehensively defined to include thinking, feeling, and behavior. In an effective character education program, character is broadly conceived to encompass the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects of the moral life. Good character consists of understanding, caring about, and acting upon core ethical values.

*Third*, effective character education requires an intentional proactive and comprehensive approach that promotes the core values in all phases of school life. Schools committed to character education look at themselves through a moral lens and see how virtually everything that goes on in school affects the values and character of students. An intentional and proactive approach plans deliberate ways to develop character, rather than simply waiting for opportunities to occur.

*Fourth*, the school must be a caring community. The school itself must embody

good character. It must progress toward becoming a microcosm of the civil, caring, and just society we seek to create as a nation. The school can do this by becoming a moral community that helps students form caring attachments to adults and to each other. These caring relationships will foster both the desire to learn and the desire to be a good person. All children and adolescents have a need to belong, and they are more likely to internalize the values and expectations of groups that meet this need.

*Fifth*, to develop character, students need opportunities for moral action. In the ethical as in the intellectual domain, students are constructive learners; they learn best by doing. To develop good character, they need many and varied opportunities to apply values such as responsibility and fairness in everyday interactions and discussions.

*Sixth*, effective character education includes a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners and helps them succeed. Character education and academic learning must not be conceived as separate spheres; rather there must be a strong, mutually supportive relationship. In a caring classroom and school where students feel liked and respected by their teachers and fellow students, students are more likely to work hard and achieve.

*Seventh*, character education should strive to develop students' intrinsic motivation. As students develop good character, they develop a stronger inner commitment to doing what their moral judgment tells them is right. Schools, especially in their approach to discipline, should strive to develop this intrinsic commitment to core values.

*Eighth*, the school staff must become the learning and moral community in which all share responsibility for character education and attempt to adhere to the same core values that guide the education of students. Three things need attention here: (1) all school staff – teachers, administrators, counselors, coaches, secretaries, cafeteria workers, playground aides, bus drivers – must be involved in learning about, discussion and taking ownership of the character education effort; (2) the same values and norms that govern the life of students must govern the collective life of the adult members of the school community; and (3) the school must find and protect time for staff reflection on moral matters.

*Ninth*, character education requires moral leadership from both staff and students. For character education to meet the criteria outlined thus far, there must be leaders (a principal, another administrator, a lead teachers) who champion the effort and, at least initially, a character education committee (or several such support groups, each focused on a particular aspect of the character effort) with responsibility for long-range planning and program implementation.

*Tenth*, the school must recruit parents and community members as full partners in the character-building effort. A school's character education mission statement should state explicitly what is true: Parents are the first and most important moral educators of their children. Next, the school should take pains at every www to communicate with parents about the school's goals and activities regarding

character development – and how families can help.

*Eleventh*, evaluation of character education should assess the character of the school, the school staff's functioning as character educators, and the extent to which students manifest good character. Schools can also assess the three domains of character (knowing, feeling, and behaving) through anonymous questionnaires that measure student moral judgment (for example, "*Is cheating on a test wrong?*"); moral commitment (for example, "*Would you cheat if you were sure you wouldn't get caught?*"); and self-reported moral behavior (for example, "*How many times have you cheated on a test or major assignment in the past year?*"). Such questionnaires can be administrated at the beginning of a school's character initiative to get a baseline and again at later points to assess progress (Lickona, Schaps & Lewis, 2010).

### On the Character Building and Language Education

Therefore, content standard that exists in curriculum is expected to have a positive effect, not only on student life, but also teacher, parents, school, and nation. Indonesian language and literature subject intrinsically aims to enable students to: (1) Communicate effectively and efficiently in accordance with applicable ethics both orally and literally; (2) Respect and proud to uses Indonesian language as the unified and nation language; (3) Comprehend Indonesian language and use it correctly and creative for various objectives; (4) Use Indonesian language to improve intellectual ability, as well as emotional and social maturity; (5) Enjoy and exploit literary work to extend knowledge, to refine ethical conduct, and to improve language knowledge and ability; and (6) Respect and proud to Indonesia literature as part of Indonesian cultural and intellectual richness (Maryam, 2003; and Sauri, 2006).

Description above directs education activity to be cornered to the improvement of national prestige quality. It is clearly stated, but the clarity cannot guarantee the success of the practice. Dorothy Strickland and Donna Alvermann (2004) confirm that all students or human can learn. That statement can be made to motivate teachers to educate students at school, so that they can be formed to be the national asset in improving, extending knowledge, wisdom, excellence, skill, personality, and independence. Therefore, at the end it might create educated and highly qualified nation.

Idra Djati Sidi (2001) explains that future school is not merely processing linguistics intelligence and logical-mathematic, but it must include lesson that can develop personality as a whole. This statement demands the teachers to hold learning process that makes the students learns; how to learn through various sources to get complete competence in knowledge and technology, religion, personality, and at the end it will form the students' characters.

Characters as part of culture, slivers it's bearing with values, like: truth, sincerity, and justice. It's clear that ethics as a value is a matter of having an important, and ideal meaning in human life. It is in line with Dahlan who affirms that words that

glide from someone tongue is his heart content (cited by Sauri, 2006). Discussion content empirically can be recognized as existence of saying word in high, usual, low, and skin-deep quality.

Language with high quality and high contain will process good person who is comprised with idea, solution, science/knowledge, and recitation that realized in standard, good, beautiful and correct language. Language with high quality usually comprises expression which is situational, and be based on speaker experience. Language with skin-deep quality more presents itself arrogance, itself greatness, and speaker egoism (Maryam, 2006).

From explanation above, it shows that ethics is related not only to ethics itself but also to values. Based on his research result, Sofyan Sauri (2006) expresses that principle and meaning have the decent language that are derived from *Al-Qur'an* (holy book of Islam), namely *sadida* such as gentle, clear, downright, precise, fair, and good; *ma'rufa* such as polite, fine, beautiful, correctness, please, appreciation, and standard; *baligha* such as correctness, communicative, get an impression, and touch liver; *masyuro* such as easy, soften, fine, nice, and optimism; *lasyina* such as gentle, touch liver, and good; and *karima* such as glorifying, respect, exalting, and appreciation.

Ethics is attitude of speaker to respect his talking partner that is being realized in polite utterance. Respect is ability for implementing our value to others. Its materialization needs emotion, cognate, and social maturity. The students need to know how to learn from various sources indicate that education is a process. Good education only can be obtained through good process. For getting the good student character, it requires learning process that involves students in education activity. It is in accordance to John Dewey (2002) that affirms that three basic factors that determine education goals are students, problem matter, and society.

The importance of students to learn to adapt to changing that happened in society is based on the essence of learning process that aims at forming students' behavior to be in line with social norm and conduct. Therefore, students must learn social values and culture that have been planted in society (enculturation) and also new values (acculturation) so that they can anticipate the future.

We need to know the definition of character first, before knowing the real meaning of character education. Anton M. Moeliono *et al.* (1988:389) explain that "character" is psychological characteristics, character or ethic of conduct that differentiate one with another, personality, noble character; have personality. Human values usually relate to: (1) God, (2) Human himself, (3) People, (4) Environment, and (5) Nation.

Character education is being synergized with Indonesian language and literature study based on supplementary books in purposively. "Supplementary books" are compiled based on a number of requirements including high values such as the truth, kindness, beauty, interest, faith, religion, dignity, justice, patience, toughness, sincerity, and benefaction. In other hand, supplementary books must be compiled in accordance to Indonesian context.

Indonesian context means that books content supports the Constitution or UUD (*Undang-Undang Dasar*) 1945, sections 32/1 which states that government should encourage Indonesia national culture in the middle of world civilization by guarantee the society freedom in maintaining and developing its cultural values (Setneg RI, 2000). Through Indonesia context, students are directed to grow their horizon, professional, and superior, futuristic, have self confidence and pride, so that they can be the role model as it is dreamt by society and the nation.

By concerning how huge the national education burden is, as teacher of Indonesian language of study, we must take role in influencing and coloring our students' life. As the process of character forming, character education can be interpreted as a systematic and systemic activity in building good character. It is called systematic because education process takes place through continuous stages. It is also called systemic because takes place in all condition, in environment that fills each other (house environment, school, and society). At school, teacher must bring students to a better life – having perfect ability and awareness to their social relation and task. Students' success to play a part in their social environment is basically their education success as process of preparing good citizen.

### On the Supplementary Books

For getting an understating about supplementary books, we should cite the textbook definition beforehand. It is needed because supplementary books are part of non-text resource. By differentiating between textbook and non-textbook, we are expected to be able to differentiate also the referred books role and function. Henry Guntur Tarigan defines completely textbook definition as follows:

Textbook is school book in a certain study that is standard, and arranged for instructional objectives, equipped with compatible instruction mediums, and easy to understand by its users at schools and college, so it can support the instruction program (Tarigan, 1986).

Further, Henry Guntur Tarigan (1986) cited the definition from Lange that states that textbook is standard book of special study consists of two types which are main course books and supplementary course book. Main course book refers to textbook and supplementary course book refers to supplementary books.

In brief, non-text course book is supplementary books function to enrich certain subjects. Certain words in detail can refer to field of study taught at schools. In general, it refers to various areas of science studies such as literature, art, and culture. Hence, it can be assumed that “non-text book” is book that can be informational about science, technology, literature, and culture deeply and widely (Depdiknas RI, 2009). In addition, it is not used as subject. The differences between the two can be seen completely at the following tables.

**Table 1:**  
Differences between Text Book and Supplementary Books

No	Characteristic	Text Books	Supplementary Books
1.	Target.	Consist of written material that should be comprehended by student in the unit of education.	Add knowledge to students and teacher in the unit of education.
2.	Function in unit of education.	Main source.	Not as the main source, just a complement.
3.	Position in unit of education.	Obligatory.	Not as the main source, just a supporting.
4.	Need of supporting tool/assistant.	High.	Not high.
5.	Writing reference.	Bounded by curriculum.	Unattached to curriculum (scientific discipline, life need, progress or era growth, life experience).
6.	Teacher help.	Obligatory.	Not is obligatory.
7.	Book anatomy.	Always consists of subject matter, discussion, practice, and evaluation completely.	--
8.	User.	Student dominant.	Not student dominantly.
9.	Usage place.	Dominantly in class/school.	Not dominantly in class/school (house, waiting room, public hall, etc).

(Source: Depdiknas RI, 2011)

Table above informs that supplementary books as one of non-text books offer some advantages compared to textbooks; supplementary books can be read all the times, in any place, and for various targets. If students have had no awareness to read supplementary books, it is better for teachers to integrate its use in the learning process. The rigor explanation above is to give an understanding about the difference between textbooks and supplementary books. As for what included into supplementary non-text books are reference books and teacher guide-books. Afterward, the discussion will be focused on supplementary books.

Minister of Education regulation number 2 years 2008 explains that supplementary book is books that contain material that enrich elementary, secondary, and tertiary education (Depdiknas RI, 2009). Supplementary books can be grouped into three types those are knowledge enrichment, skill enrichment, and personality enrichment books. To know the role and function of the three of types of supplementary books are referred, in successively discussed one per one.

*First, Knowledge Enrichment Book.* These days, formal education uses curriculum at unit of education level or KTSP (*Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan*). The curriculum implementation demands the teachers to compile and present subject matter by themselves. It is not so easy though. There are number of teachers who are not yet ready to do it. It is true that textbook has been available. However, to fulfill demand of KTSP, it is necessary to provide more books. That



needs actually gives opportunity for teacher to develop supplementary books. Many teachers only rely on the existing textbooks, though the use of those books has not yet fulfilled student need and curriculum demand. It means that the learning process has not yet matched with what is expected. Textbook that is used has not yet fulfilled the needs of current and future education. Therefore, supplementary books are needed to broaden the students' knowledge and horizon.

The breadth of insight can stimulate human brain to think. Human brain has the extraordinary power. Many spectacular events are the results of human thinking (Suwirta, 2005). That greatness does not occur by itself, it must be stimulated, conditioned, and processed correctly; and directed to think positively. Hernowo (2002) explicates that human with his brain can jump and make amazing leaps. There is a passion to produce meaningful ideas.

To realize it, the conducive learning should be created. It is expected to lead the students to have willingness and ability to read supplementary books. This effort can be considered as literary development. However, it is still insignificant as showed by research result of Centre for National Assessment in 2003 (cited in Maryam, 2006). Further, it also requires efforts to develop healthy school.

**Second, Personality Enrichment.** Indonesian socio-culture puts emphasize on language politeness. Indonesian society still maintains East cultural features. Then, supplementary book must direct its reader to have good conduct. In consequence, the usage of its language must refer to the previous target. Consequently, the diction also must consider politeness.

Politeness equals to manner or etiquette. According to W.S. Hasanuddin (2009), politeness is a matter that includes conscious to others prestige. The implementation is in form of accepted procedures, traditions, or habits in a civilized society. Politeness is rule of conduct that has been specified and agreed on together by a certain society. Therefore, politeness becomes a requirement that is agreed on in social behavior.

Politeness can be seen from various facets: (1) it shows attitude that contain manner value or etiquette in everyday interaction; (2) politeness is very contextual, it is only applicable in a certain society, place, and situation, but it might not be applicable in other society, place, and situation; and (3) politeness is always bipolar, or has two polarity relationship, like the relationship between children and parents, the young and the younger one, and readers and writers. Politeness is reflected in the way of communicating, acting, and behaving.

Language politeness, according to S.C. Levinson (1985), at least can be conducted within five ways: (1) it is necessary to apply politeness in language use. This principle tries to maximize enjoy and wisdom, advantage, respect or put other benefit beyond everything, less respect to one self, and emphasize on empathy to others; (2) language politeness should avoid taboo words in communicating; (3) the use of euphemism in order to maintain language politeness; (4) politeness can be reached by using honorific words, which is expression to show respect and soft utterance; and (5) politeness can be formed by applying appropriate non-linguistics

aspect. By applying this language politeness, offensiveness can be avoided until the conflict in society can be minimized.

To maximize the use of personality enrichment books, teachers' willingness to select supplementary books that have criteria above until students get the meaningful learning from the books.

*Third, Skill Enrichment.* These days, life is getting more competitive in various areas. Skill of all nation elements must be optimized. Considering graduates of higher education cannot get the job indirectly. Data indicates that huge numbers of graduates wait for job formation with slight possibility to be accepted. While in other side, the demand of working force is very high. Till now, there is no link and match between academics content and expectation of user as the consumer. As the consequence, in the future it is necessary to prepare skillful generation.

New paradigm must be developed by education, including supplementary books for building life skill and entrepreneurship in addition to professionalism. For Indonesian language study, for example, skills and professionalism that can be developed are in areas like: tour guide, master of ceremony, priest, holy Qur'an reciter, religious speaker, consultant, instructor, authors, editor, poet, novelist, short story writers, dramatist, broadcaster, journalist, and many others.

The forming of those professions needs supplementary books that can answer challenge from the future. Professional ability must be prepared so that Indonesia will have the ability to create independent job market. From the three of type of supplementary books above, book of personality enrichment is the most important to be developed for character building and reinforcing students' ethics. Both types of other supplement books even also can play a part in Indonesian language and literature study, but for the cognitive and psychomotor purpose.

Application of character education in Indonesian language and literature in supplementary books is relevant to Rule of National Education Minister Number 2/2008. Section 6 verses (2) sounds that "*Besides course textbook as referred to verse (1) teacher can use educator guide-books and can use supplementary books and reference book in the learning process*" (Depdiknas RI, 2009).

It is referred that classroom activity can use various sources. Ideally, book variation would give wide opportunity to see world. If the use of knowledge enrichment books in school is optimized, then student will be able to follows the progress of communication science and technology these days.

Utilization of personality supplementary books in literature study is very possible. Research result of Siti Maryam (2003) proved that short story as one of cultural product can be made as medium or material to teach social value and culture. Supplementary books can be made as medium of truth conveyor. In the old Indonesian society, literature becomes inseparable part of everyday life. Ajip Rosidi (1995) affirmed that poets were placed in high position. Their words were more valuable than pearl.

Literary work is considered not merely as the solace but also as medium of truth conveyor that have strength which was not limited by space and time. In

fact, literary reading not only can be made medium of the truth conveyor but, as Siti Maryam (2006) finds, that varieties of essay writings can be also used as the medium of truth conveyor.

Besides, language ethics reinforcement must be done in comprehensively until students' possess language politeness. If it is realized, then its contribution to society especially to student will be very significant. In order to reach it, the language learning must be based on ethics. Therefore, teacher must be role model of using polite language. Furthermore, students must be facilitated more in using polite language. The gist that often is forgotten is giving appreciation to children that can use polite language, so it can fertilize student habit as person that not merely polite but also can express their opinion in all situation and condition.

By increasing knowledge quality, skill, and student personality, then Indonesian language study must include supplementary books in reading, speaking, listening, and writing courses. Of course its execution must be based on KTSP (*Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan* or Curriculum at Unit of Education Level). After teacher determines basic competence and indicator, then teacher can plan at which step supplementary books can be used as supplementary material in learning activity. Cutoffs of the supplementary books can be made as course material or example. It also can be used for practice activity, tasks, evaluation, or other exercises.

### Conclusion

Effort of Indonesian language study teachers in strengthening student character and upholding ethics is one of effort in improving human resource quality. This effort is very essential, considering the quality of Indonesian citizen is still unsatisfying. Through speaking and writing skills, teacher can evaluate the use of language ethics among students, both directly and indirectly.

Written language that learnt by student can be in the form of textbook and also supplementary books. One of the types of supplementary books is personality enrichment book, which can be use as medium to support the forming of student character in school. Supplementary books can fulfill student need, in a sense that it can develop personality, extend knowledge, and uplift life skill which is beneficial in building social independence.

As it is explicated earlier, directly and indirectly that education environment would form students' behavior to live in society, especially in minimizing or even preventing social conflict. Teachers must involve in learning activity, since it has closed relationship to the reinforcement of moral values that suitable with general rule of conduct admitted as common truth.

Those varied of truth can be obtained through personality enrichment book. Open mindedness will effect on someone behavior. Many social problems are caused by ignorance or lack of society knowledge. Students as the next generation should be prepared to socialize and live properly. Therefore, Indonesian language and literature learning should optimize the students' role through supplementary books.

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