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Дальневосточный федеральный университет Дальневосточная общественная организация преподавателей английского языка

ОБЪЕДИНЯЯСЬ ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНО ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПРЕПОДАВАНИЯ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА В АЗИИ: НА ПУТИ К СОВЕРШЕНСТВУ

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CONNECTING PROFESSIONALLY ON ELT IN ASIA: CROSSING THE BRIDGE TO EXCELLENCE

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CONTENTS

Coi	NTENTS	1
TEA	ACHING METHODS	5
	Empowering Teachers for Excellence	5
	Galina LOVTSEVICH, Stephen M. RYAN	
	Analyzing NEST and NNEST Linguodidactic Discourse in Japanese ELT	11
	Inna ATROSCHENKO	
	ESP Teaching Under Pressure of New Educational Standards	17
	Natalya BORODINA	
	Beyond Linguistic Accuracy: What Speaking Tests Must Also Evaluate	24
	John CAMPBELL LARSEN, Cameron ROMNEY	
	An Exploration of Chinese Idioms as Resources for the EFL Classroom	30
	Xing FANG	
	An Empirical Study on College English Writing	36
	Jingxiang FU	
	Listening Autonomy through Podcasts	41
	Reginald GENTRY	
	Cooperative Learning in the EFL Classroom in a Russian University	47
	Larisa GOLOVACHEVA	
	Building Communicative Grammar Teaching Methodologies: Not an Either/Or Approach	53
	Junya HIRANO, Tomoko MATSUMOTO	
	Exploring the EAP Curriculum in EFL and ESL Contexts	57
	Shinya HORI et al.	
	Recipient Design for Teacher-talk for Shared Understanding	63
	Ritsuko IZUTANI	
	Teacher-Student Conflict and Teacher-Teacher Conflict	68
	Jitsuko KITSUNO, Yoko KOBAYASHI	
	Challenges of Designing IT Course for English Majors	74
	Larisa KRAINIK, Yulia POLSHINA	
	A Study on the College Oral English Teaching Model	79
	Lan LUAN	
	Development of Language Competence Through Extracurricular Activities	84
	Iraida LYSOVA, Liudmila RAKITSKAIA	
	Scaffolding Excellence: A Four-year Content-Language Integrated Undergraduate Econom	iics
	Curriculum	87
	Philip C. MacLELLAN	

Teacher Professional Development Opportunities in the Jewish Au	onomous Region 92
Elena MATVIENKO	
What Do Non-English Majors Think of English Language Self-Acc	ess Classes? 94
Tanja McCANDIE	
The Semi-Collaborative Research Paper: Development of a Writin	
EAP Course	99
Charles M. MUELLER	404
Testing and Assessment: Core Principles and Misconceptions	104
Elena ONOPRIENKO, Yulia POLSHINA	't' Cl 100
Portfolio Assessment for an Undergraduate Intermediate Level Wi	iting Class 108
Jenny PAKASI	Dundan EEL Classes 110
Dictionary of Common Errors as a Tool for Error Treatment in the Lidiia PAVLOVA	Russian EFL Classroom 116
	125
Cultural Content in School Textbooks of English Elena POTEKHINA, Marina RASSOKHA	125
	riculum 129
EFL Teachers' Reconciliation with Moral Forces Brought into Cur Uswatun QOYYIMAH	riculum 129
	134
Getting Students' Home Culture into the English Classroom Marina RASSOKHA	154
Text Complexity Levels and Second Language Reading Performan	ce in Indonesia 140
SAHIRUDDIN, Yosi AGUSTIAWAN	te iii fiidoliesia 140
Syntactic Errors in Extrovert and Introvert EFL Learners' Essay	Vritings 147
Dedi SANJAYA, SUMARSIH	viitings 147
Teaching English Spoken Academic Professional Discourse to Stud	ents of Pedagogical
Universities	153
Yulia SLEZKO	100
Ten Ways to Retell the Text	160
Tatyana VLASOVA, Maria DYUZHEVA, Victoria JANSEN-AKU.	
Competency-based Approach to FL Teacher Education in Russia	166
Natalia YAZYKOVA	
A Corpus-based Developmental Study of Syntactic Complexity in	Chinese English Majors'
Argumentative Writings	171
Yurong ZHENG, Chen SHEN	
	4=0
LINGUISTICS	178
An Investigation of Code-mixing in Expanding Circles: Indonesian	s' Tweets 178
Nur Hafiz ABDURAHMAN	404
The Impact of Global English on the Russian System of Values	183
$\Lambda nastasia\ \Lambda RKH\Lambda ROV\Lambda$	

Relevance of Social Factors in Borrowed Words Assimilation	186
Ekaterina BONDAREVA	
Intersemiotic Approach: Comparative Analysis of Original and Translated Dramatic Texts	191
Olga BUKACH	
Nativization of Eastern-Asiatic English Language Journalism	196
Vitaliy FYODOROV	
A Comparison of Shell Nouns Used by Chinese and Swedish	199
Yishan GAO, Yi ZHANG	
Key and Dominant Metaphors in the Economic World Picture	205
Natalia GERDASOVA	
A Study on Cultural Loss in C-E Translation of Address Terms	210
Beijing JU, Yurong ZHENG	
Realization of Intertextual Elements in the Reading of Modernistic Texts	214
Ekaterina KARAVANOVA	
Global English: English of South Africa	220
Irina KHOKHLOVA	
Chinese ELF Pronunciation Strategies: Striving for Excellence	227
Marina KOLESNICHENKO, Marina PIVOVAROVA	
Gender Stereotypes in the American Mass Media: Feminine Aspect	233
Alexandra KOLESNIK	
Semantic Features of Phrasal Verbs in Different Varieties of World Englishes	239
Elena KONDRATENKO	
Metaphor in Classroom: A Different Approach – a Different Result	245
Larissa KOULCHITSKAYA	
Bilingual Literature: A Crossroads of Two Cultures (A Study of Olga Grushin's Novels)	251
Ekaterina LEBEDEVA	
Japanese-English Code-switching and Mixing as a Mirror of Japanese Identity	255
Tatiana LEBEDEVA	
Xenonym as "Insider*Outsider" Concept Formatting in Bilingual Post-colonial Literature	262
Sofia LEVINA	
Asian Accent Identification in Computer-Assisted English Pronunciation Training	266
Ekaterina LUKINA, Viktoriya ZAVYALOVA, Ekaterina SHAINUROVA	
Chinese-English Bilingual Creativity: Some Aspects of Studies	273
Tatyana LUPACHYOVA	
Verbalization of Russia's Image in the Mirror of Ukraine Events	277
Emma MEGRABOVA, Kseniia NIKONOVA	
Grammar in the Context of Culture	283
Alla SHEVELEVA, Nadya ZADOROZHNAYA	
About Adjectives True and Real	288
Irina UHAKOVA	

Discourse Personality of a DotA2 Player	291
Sophya VDOVICHENKO	
English Fever in South Korea	297
Nelli ZAPOROZHSKAYA	
Influence of Personal Names on Settlement Name Formation	302
Yevgenia ZAVYORTKINA	
INDEX	307

References

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EFL Teachers' Reconciliation with Moral Forces Brought into Curriculum

Uswatun QOYYIMAH

University of Pesantren Tinggi Darul Ulum (Unipdu), Indonesia

uswatunqoyyimah@fbs.unipdu.ac.id

Abstract: This paper presents EFL teachers' strategies when reconciling with moral forces underpinning Indonesian curricula: School-based curriculum and character education policy. While School-based curriculum allows teachers to develop more flexible EFL classes, the character education policy promotes such controlled EFL classes that the teachers are required to focus on students' moral behaviour. The moral forces of the school-based curriculum resonate with communicative language teaching regarding the teachers' opportunity for developing teaching materials to meet learners' needs. This paper suggests that the EFL teachers have particular dilemmas as they attempt to embrace the moral forces of two curricula.

Keywords: EFL teachers, character education, curriculum reform, moral forces, pedagogic

practice

Introduction

School curriculum has been quite regularly reformed in Indonesia. At least three curricula were introduced in one decade (2004-2014): competency-based curriculum, school-based curriculum, and character education policy. In 2015, two curricula were operating: school-based curriculum and character education policy. The reform in curriculum requires teachers to work out strategies to implement in classes, English language teachers are not an exception. This paper presents teachers' experiences when they reconciled the values embedded in the two curricula.

Curriculum reforms and EFL teachers' reconciliation with moral forces embedded in the curricula

In 2015 the Indonesian government introduced the character education policy when the school-based curriculum was underway. These two curriculum reforms, school-based curriculum and character education have quite different foci and concerns. Under the school-based curriculum, generic competencies and minimum content outlines are determined by the central education authority, in this case, Badan Nasional Standar Pendidikan (BNSP) or the National Board of Educational Standards (Amirrachman, Syafi'I & Welch 2009). While BNSP develops the basic framework and curriculum structure, school teachers are supposed to develop subject curricula, including formulating learning objectives, selecting content and teaching strategies, and designing learning evaluations. Hence, while the central authority sets the curriculum content standards, schools are given more freedom to develop their educational plans (Parker & Raihani, 2011; UNESCO, 2011). Meanwhile, character education is an effort to instil important ethical values such as honesty, fairness, responsibility, caring, and respect for self and others (Berkowitz and Bier, 2005). The Indonesian MOEC declared that the character education policy is a crucial part of national curricula because it could serve as national character building. With the character education policy, it was intended that values such as peace and harmony could be taught through school activities so that the imbalance in the nation's development evident in inter-ethnic/religious conflict and corruption could be eliminated (Nuh, 2011). More importantly, within character education policy, the government requires teachers to place and prioritize two/three values out of the stipulated eighteen values in their lesson plans. These values include religiosity, patriotism, nationalism, democracy, hard work, honesty, care, cooperativeness, responsibility, respect, politeness, and friendliness.

In terms of English as a subject taught at schools, English Language Teaching in Indonesia has also changed following the national curricular reforms before the reform of character education policy (Bire, 2011). Since Indonesian independence, along with the reforms in the national curriculum, ELT has been reformed four times, particularly regarding its teaching objectives, teaching content, teaching methods, and evaluation. The most striking feature of the reforms has been the change from grammar translation pedagogy to Communicative Approach and Competency-based approach (Bire, 2011: 17). In other words, the reform of EFL teaching and learning in Indonesia has sought to implement contemporary English language teaching pedagogies developed in western

language education. In this way, Indonesian EFT teachers have undergone a broad shift in language pedagogy from grammar-translation to the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach. Communicative language teaching is an approach that embraces a "learner-centred and experience-based view" of second language teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 158).

The communicative language teaching that applies a learner-centred approach has its philosophy whereby the learning is open-ended, flexible and individualized to meet the needs of the student (Green, 2007). The philosophy of the approach leads to teachers' adaptation regarding their roles, their perception of students and their teaching methodology. In terms of teachers' role, communicative language teaching requires EFL teachers to change from a teacher to a facilitator. In the English classroom, the teacher is no longer the subject of learning, but the students. Likewise, teachers have to change their perceptions on what makes a good student. With a learner-centred approach, teachers should give credit to students who are active, creative and communicative, rather than to those who are attentive but passive.

Besides the theory of language teaching, English teachers in Indonesian schools also faced with dilemmas of teaching other people's language (Qoyyimah, 2015). Similarly, Akbari and Tajik (2012) suggest that non-English speaking teachers experienced more difficulties regarding a moral aspect base. On the one hand, they want to model their nation's values; on the other hand, they need to appreciate the values rooted in the language taught. Additionally, teaching a language is inevitably teaching how to speak this language properly and meaningfully. The word "proper" implies that the language taught must be understandable and appropriate following how the language is spoken in the culture from which the language is taken.

In response to the development of the language teaching approach such as from the grammar-translation method to the communicative approach and the reforms in the educational curriculum (school-based curriculum and character education), it is important to see how English teachers in Indonesia implement these policies. This paper reports on my previous study that conducted semi-structured interviews with four English teachers working in state schools. Each teacher was interviewed twice – before and after a set of three classroom observations. Classroom observations provided the reference points for the semi-structured interviews. The participants reported in this study were English teachers who had nine- to ten-year experience working with students and curriculum. More specifically, there are four such teachers as participants in this study.

There are four points to report from the study. First, moral forces embedded in Indonesian curriculum derived from the nation's and religious values. Second, with the school-based curriculum, local community's values were also taken into account. Third, teachers reported having their personal values and beliefs to intrude into EFL pedagogy. Forth, teachers found they needed to introduce the values derived from English speaking culture.

Learning from the list of values stipulated by educational authority, it can be concluded that moral forces embedded in Indonesian curriculum reflect the nation's and religious values. The national values regarded as shared values that mostly derived from the Indonesian five principles or Pancasila. These include belief in the Only one God, humanity, unity, democracy, and social justice (Kemendiknas, 2011). There are also values that aim to foster people's awareness of their national

identities such as nationalism and patriotism. Besides national values, the values stipulated by the educational authority are also influenced by religious values. Not only is religiosity the most important issue for Indonesian society, but this value is reflected in the first principle of Pancasila. In other words, religiosity can be regarded as a way of life of the Indonesians. Likewise, in the *Handbook of Character Education* (2011) issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC), the value of religiosity is always mentioned at the top of the list and it seems to be the most significant value on the list (see Kemendiknas, 2011). People's perspective on religiosity in Indonesia has particular consequences for its schools. In many cases, it is not a coincidence that this value of religiosity is always prioritized by Indonesian schools and is selected as an important value to introduce in schools.

In addition to the values established by the nation and religions, the school-based curriculum has allowed local community's values to be taken into account in school curriculum development. For example, a school can also add more values recognized in their local community to add to their curriculum. Hence, the influence of the community on school curriculum becomes obvious. As the consequence, when a school is located in the area in which the community is religious, the school curriculum – both extra or intra curriculum – is coloured by religiosity values. Based on my previous study, schools and their curriculum in Indonesia are coloured by religious values. This happens not only in Islamic schools but also in state schools (Qoyyimah, 2016). As a result, teachers have more values to select from and prioritize in their lesson plans: national values, religious values, and local community values.

Besides national, religious and local community values, EFL teachers suggested they also had their personal values and beliefs to introduce in their classroom (Qoyyimah, 2015). However, in spite of having their personal values, the teachers did not want to write them in their lesson plans. Although they did not write the values in their lesson plans, it is found that teachers deliberately introduced their personal values into the classroom. The differences between what they planned and what they taught resulted in teachers' dilemmas. They found a particular value was important to teach but at the same time they felt it was not really appropriate with English as a subject.

The values introduced intruded in EFL classes can be illustrated by this figure below:

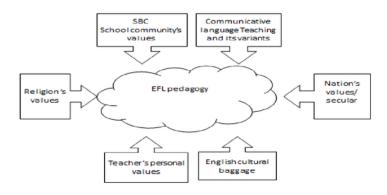


Figure 1. Moral forces in Indonesia EFL pedagogy

Figure 1 shows that the different moral forces intruded into Indonesian EFL classes. These values could be derived from many different moral grounds or sources such as the nation's values, religious values, local context and values derived from the English speaking culture. In addition to those moral forces, there is the philosophy of communicative language teaching approach. This required teachers to modify their EFL classes in accordance with current communicative language teaching approaches while incorporating aspects of the character education reforms and instilling local community values as well as teachers' professional priority of "religiosity".

Hence, a wide opportunity to select values promoted by both school-based curriculum and communicative language teaching enabled teachers to teach and model different values including "religiosity" in their EFL classes. Therefore, regarding the values and moral forces in classes, the atmosphere of EFL classes in Indonesian schools can be associated with the battle of values since EFL teachers attempt to prioritise their own values. At the same time, they have to introduce those values that are more appropriate with English as a subject.

Conclusion

To summarise, the moral forces of each curriculum reshaped English language teaching in Indonesia. School-based curriculum and communicative language teaching that allow teachers to develop curriculum content and design teaching materials to meet students' needs have contributed to the "individualized" pedagogic practice of EFL classes. With the individualised EFL classes, teachers take into account the specific behaviour of learners and school context. In addition to these curricula, teachers prioritised and selected values as intended by the character education policy. As a result, EFL classes were coloured by different moral forces since teachers wanted to embrace all values. Interestingly, the teachers introduced religious values into EFL classes.

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