

## EFL Students' Understanding of Moral Values in Reading English Narrative Text

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### Abstract

*This research deals with students' understanding of moral values in English narrative texts. This research was conducted by students' of SMP IT Nurul Ikhwan Pantai Cermin. This research focused on "what moral values are understood by students after reading the narrative text and analyzing the moral values contained in the narrative text. This research aimed to analyzed what moral values understood by students that were consisted of patience, kindness, helpful and humbleness. The method used in this research is qualitative method. The subjects of the research were 9 students and they divided into 3 groups: students with higher reading comprehension, students with moderate reading comprehension and students with lower reading comprehension. Technique of collecting the data was done by providing narrative texts that have moral values to students, researchers provided questions related to moral values and then researchers determine students' understanding of moral values. From the results of data collection it was concluded that there are still many students who did not understand the moral values in narrative texts due to lacked of English vocabulary and lacked of understanding of information contained in English texts.*

**Keyword:** Moral Values, Narrative Text, Reading

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini berkaitan dengan pemahaman siswa tentang nilai moral dalam teks naratif bahasa inggris. Penelitian ini dilakukan pada siswa SMP IT Nurul Ikhwan Pantai Cermin. Penelitian ini terfokus pada "apa nilai moral yang dipahami oleh siswa setelah membaca teks naratif dan menganalisis nilai moral yang terdapat didalam teks naratif. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menginvestigasi atau menganalisis apa nilai moral yang dipahami oleh siswa tentang kesabaran, kebaikan, suka menolong dan rendah hati. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode kualitatif. Subjek penelitian ini adalah 9 siswa dan dibagi menjadi 3 kelompok yaitu siswa yang memiliki pemahaman membaca tinggi, pemahaman membaca sedang dan pemahaman membaca rendah. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan cara memberikan teks naratif yang memiliki nilai moral kepada siswa, peneliti memberikan pertanyaan yang berhubungan dengan nilai moral kemudian peneliti menentukan pemahaman siswa terhadap nilai moral. Dari hasil pengumpulan data dapat disimpulkan bahwa masih banyak siswa yang kurang memahami nilai moral dalam teks naratif karena kurangnya kosakata bahasa inggris dan kurangnya memahami informasi yang terdapat dalam teks berbahasa inggris.

**Kata kunci:** Nilai Moral, Membaca, Teks Naratif

## **1. Introduction**

Understanding moral values in ELT context could be very interesting since it can be taken from reading narrative text (Abrar, 2016). Reading is to understand written texts covering complex activity that involves both perception and thought". Reading consists of two related processes, namely; word recognition and skill. Word recognition refers to the process of perceiving how written symbols correspond to one spoken language. Reading is one of the language skills that play an important role in foreign languages acquisition. To be a good reader, students must learn, how to understand and comprehend part, so that he can excel, the purpose of reading is done, reading deeply important for English language learners, because reading can increase knowledge, vocabulary, and information from reading, can get a complete understanding of the text.

In the process of teaching and learning to read text, students are expected to not only pay attention to the information contained in the reading text, but also understand the meaning and moral messages contained in the reading text, this will encourage students to think more critically. Many students ignore the moral message in a story, here the teacher must be more creative in teaching and learning in order to motivate students' interest in reading. Moral is a character. In social life, morals are very necessary to behave, morals are also the teachings of good living behavior based on certain worldviews or religions. Moral values are not only taught in schools or courses, but morals are formed from the environment in which he lives where the environment is good the child will grow up with good morals. According to Ouska and Whellan (Kurnia, 2015), "Moral is the principle of good-bad existing and inherent in self individual or person. Although its moral is in the individual, but moral is in a tangible system the rules".

Reading materials which are proposed by teacher to the student at senior high school are many kind of text such as : narrative, descriptive, report, recount, anecdote, spoof, etc that are called genre text, however the dominant text that is used by teacher in teaching reading is narrative text, because narrative text is interesting for students. Narrative text is one kind of genre text that is popular for the students, because this genre is very interesting that tells a lot of story like : fables, fairy tale, and legend. As well as myth of Indonesia, the plot of the story can encourage the students to be more interested in reading. And the moral value of the story allows the reader to preserve memories, educate the new generation and honor who those who have engaged in the story. In short, moral value is quality of being useful that concern to principal right and wrong in behavior.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Description of Reading**

According to Supono (2009), "Reading comprehension is an interactive process as a transaction between the reader and the author through the text". Moreover, comprehension is not something that happens after reading. It is the thinking done before, during, and after reading. The reader's capabilities, abilities, knowledge, and experiences affect the act of reading. Reading as interpreting means reacting to a written text as a piece of communication. Reading is the art of transmitting the ideas, facts and feeling from the mind and soul of an author to the mind and soul of reader. Reading is process to obtain meaning from a written text, by reading it allows one to be able to identify the basic form and meaning of these words and sentences. Lems et al. (2010) states that reading comprehension is not a static competency; it varies according to the purposes for reading and the text that is involved. When the prerequisite skills are in place, reading becomes an evolving interaction between the text and the background knowledge of the reader. Reading comprehension is an understanding of the meaning of the results of interacting with the material being read. Reading comprehension has been defined as an interpretation of written symbols, the apprehending of meaning, the assimilation of ideas presented by the written, and the process of thinking while deciphering symbols. Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that reading is the process of interaction between a reader and a text to get information from the text and to form an interpretation and to draw a conclusion/ meaning from the information. Reading can increase the range of students' vocabulary, listening and language skills, attention and curiosity, in addition to their ability to recognize letters, pictures and numbers. Development of reading skills increases the brain's capacity for language and reading skills. According to Shoebottom (2015), "Reading helps students to perceive ideas and understand sentences and arguments – a supposition he supports by the claim that educational researchers have found a strong relationship between reading, vocabulary levels, and academic success. Reading can help students improve their skills, while reading also allows students to develop their student knowledge base. The benefits of reading are also to increase knowledge and provide unknown information. Through reading sekill, EFL students have the multiple benefit to imporve their communication skill (Lubis, 2020).

## **2.2 Narrative Text in ELT Context**

Narrative is a kind of text learns at senior high school. Narrative text can say as tells a story have happened in a past time. According to Pardiyono (2007:9), "Narrative text is a kind of text to tell past activities which focus on problematic experience and resolution to amuse and give lesson moral to the reader". Daryanto (2014) states that narrative is a piece of the text which tells a story to amuse and entertain the reader or listener.

Narrative is the text which very exact to tell of activity of past event, which project problematic experience and resolution with purpose to amuse and to give moral study to reader. In Junior high school, narrative text is one of the text should be learnt by the students. In narrative text students are expected to understand about the context and to find the moral value of the story. Based on theories above, narrative text is text that tells a story which raises the problematic experience in the past and resolution which consist of some characters, plot, setting and action in order to amuse the reader. Hornby (2004) divides narrative text into four basic elements as follows:

1. Characters.  
In every story, there must have characters that play in it. There are main characters and secondary characters. Characters is the most important element in narrative text. It describes physical of the characters such as age, personality, strenghtness and weakness.
2. Setting  
Setting are what author writes to describe the reader where and when the story takes place. The setting address the location and period of the story whether the story tells a reader among realistic, historical fiction or fantasy.
3. Plot  
The plot includes a series of episodes or events written by the author to hold the reader attention and to build excitement as the story progress. The plot contains an initiating event, starting the main characters or the series of events toward problem solving.
4. Conclusion  
The writer ends up the story by summarizing and telling the solution of the problem in the story. The generic structures of narrative texts are orientation, complication, sequence of events, resolution and coda.

A more detailed generic structure of a narrative text has been proposed by Anderson (2003:8) argue that a narrative text includes:

1. Orientation  
This is the beginning of the story in which the writer tells the audience about who the characters in the story are, where the story is taking place, and when the action happens (can be a paragraph, a picture or opening chapter).
2. Complication  
The complication is pushed along by a serious of events, during which we usually expect some sort of complication or problem to arise. It just would not be so interesting if something unexpected did not happen. This complication will involve the main characters and often serves toward them from reaching their goal.
3. Sequence of event.  
This is where the narrator tells how the character reacts to the complication. It includes their feeling and what they do. The event can be told in chronological order (the order in which they happen) or with flashback. The audience is given the narrator's point of view.
4. Resolution  
In this part, the implication may be resolved for better or worse, but it is rarely left completely unresolved (although this is of course possible in certain toes of narrative which leaves us wondering 'How did it end"?).
5. Coda  
A closing remark to the story and it is optional. It is consisted of a moral lesson, advice or teaching from the writers.

The main purpose of narrative text is to make a point by telling the audience a story. The purpose of narrative, in not only proving entertainment but also making the audience think about an issue, teach them a lesson, or excite their emotions. Feez and Joyce (2000 cited in Suharti 2006) state that narrative text is aimed to tell stories which are about a person or a group of people overcoming problems, show how people react and experiences, explore social and cultural value, and entertain an audience.

### 2.3 The Indicators of Students' Moral Values

Moral is a character. In social life, morals are very necessary to behave, because there are still many areas in Indonesia that uphold moral values. In addition, morals are also the teachings of good living behavior based on certain worldviews or religions. Moral has the meaning of teachings about the good and bad actions and behavior, morals, roles, and so on Purwadarminta (in Zuldafrial, 2014: 30). Moral values are values that must be separated with other values. Every value will get quality if it has relations with other values. Moral value derived from two different words, namely 'moral' and 'value'. Nurgiyantoro (2014:320-321) states that in general moral leads to the understanding or teachings about good and bad that is generally accepted about deeds, attitudes, obligations, morals, manners and immorality. Students are not only taught morals in the school environment, but the environment of residence and family is the main key for children to learn about moral values. According to Sjarkawi (2014: 102), "Put forward moral or morality is a view of good and bad, right and wrong, what can and can't be done". Besides that, moral too is a set of beliefs in a society concerning with character or behavior and what should be done by humans. Moral is pertaining to intentions and actions of which right and wrong, virtue and vice, are predicate, or to the rules by which such intentions and actions ought to be directed, directing to the practice, manners, or conduct of men as social beings in relation to each other. According to Bertens (2011), "Every values will get quality if it has relation with other values". Some indicators of moral values that can be learned by the students after reading narrative text, such as:

1. Patience.  
Patience is an attitude of self-control, patience has meaning related to the concept of psychology, where patience has 5 categories namely self control, resiliency, persistence, accepting reality, and staying calm.
2. Kindness.  
Kindness is a behavior marked by ethical characteristics, a pleasant disposition, and concern and consideration for others. It is considered a virtue, and is recognized as a value in many cultures and religions (see ethics in religion).
3. Helpful  
Helpful is the attitude of mutual help to ease the burden on others or provide useful advice.
4. Humbleness  
Humble is the ability to admit self-errors, imperfections, self gap / limitations and openness to accept ideas new, information and advice.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that moral value is a piece of information about what is right behavior, what is wrong behavior, and what is important in life that is sent by the author to the readers through the text he wrote, through the topic and theme declared.

### 3. Method

This research used qualitative research. According to Sugiyono (2016:14) qualitative research is a descriptive research in which the data are collected in the form of words or pictures, not a number. The qualitative research gave more information in various ways the research subjects. The researcher used qualitative research to present the result of the research and to describe the students' understanding in analysis moral value in English narrative text. The researcher was conducted students of SMP IT NURUL IKHWAN consisted of 9 students. The reason of selecting the subject of the research is the reading comprehension level based on English teacher information in which 9 students were divided into 3 categories, namely 3 students with higher reading comprehension (90), 3 students with moderate reading comprehension (70), 3 students with lower reading comprehension (60). These students were expected not only understand the text, but only understand the moral values contained in narrative text.

The instrument of this research was the test with higher order thinking questions consisted of 4 questions based on the indicators of moral values.

**Table 3.1 Indicator of Moral Values of Students Through Hots Questions**

Indicators	Characteristics
1. Patience	1. Self-control 2. Resiliency 3. Persistence 4. Staying calm 5. Accepting reality

2. Kindness	1. Empathy 2. Generous 3. Caring 4. Charitable 5. Courteous
3. Helpful	1. Sincere 2. Specific 3. Balance 4. Constructive 5. Sensitive
4. Humble	1. Patient 2. Forgiving 3. Respect 4. Grateful 5. Polite

The researcher starts this research by doing a direct method. Sugiyono (2016:14) states that the data collecting technique is the first main step in a research because the main purpose of research is to get data. In this research, the researcher used qualitative method. In collecting data, the researcher used reading comprehension test.

1. The researcher decided a narrative text used in this research, titled Snow-White
2. The researcher asked the students what is meant by moral values.
3. The researcher designed HOTS questions that each questions relates with the indicator moral values.
4. The researcher asked to the students to answer HOTS question.
5. The students collect the students' answer sheet.

The researcher analyzed the students' difficulties in understanding the moral values contained in the narrative text. Therefore, the researcher conducted the data analysis process, the following were the steps that the researcher will carry out in analyzing the data:

1. The researcher provided narrative texts to students so students read and understand stories, meanings and moral values contained in the text.
2. The researcher analyzed narrative texts based on text that students had read and students had found information and moral values contained in the text in accordance with predetermined indicators.
3. Then, the researcher determined whether the students' understood the text and understood the moral values in the text or not.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Result

At the beginning, observations were made by observing 9 students who were selected as research subjects. They were 3 students with higher reading comprehension, 3 students with moderate reading comprehension and 3 students with lower reading comprehension.

#### - Patience

##### Data 1.

- Q: If you experience the events as told in the text above, will you be patience in facing difficulties as experienced by the snow-white character in the story?	
Category	Students' answers
Higher Level	After I learned the moral values in the narrative text and the moral values contained in the text, I became more anxious to be patience in dealing with problems and more willing to control my emotions in dealing with something.

Moderate Level	If I experience difficulties, I will deal with them according to my ability, with the difficulties can make us to always think positive. But if I am not able to deal with it myself, I will ask for help to those closest to me so that they still lead me not to do bad things.
Lower Level	When I experience difficulties, I will still live the difficulties and not complain about the situation. With difficulties I can practice patience and I can improve myself to become better

Based on the data above, the student with higher level reading skill really understands about moral values, it can be seen from statement *I became more anxious to be patient in dealing with problems*. The student with moderate level understands the moral values of patience contained in the story, but student does not apply moral values in everyday life because he still asked for help from those around him, this is evidenced by the sentence *I will deal with them according to my ability, but if I am not able to deal with it myself I will ask for help to those closest to me*. While, the student with lower level just simply answer the question by the sentence *with difficulties I can practice patience and I can improve myself to become better*.

- **Kindness**

**Data 2.**

- Q: If you experience the events as told in the text above, will you be patience in facing difficulties as experienced by the snow-white character in the story?	
Category	Students' answers
Higher Level	In the text a lot of good that we can model for everyday life. For example, in everyday life we must dispose of garbage in its place, if we dispose of waste in its place then we give examples to other people to do the same thing. Then it's also a kindness that we can give to others
Moderate Level	The kindness that we can take in the story is that we can help others who need our help. In addition we also have to be more concerned with the environment around us that they might have difficulty but we do not know.
Lower Level	The good that we can apply in life is to continue serving our parents, teachers and respecting older people and peers. You can't be selfish and only think about yourself.

Based on the answers above, the researcher concluded that students who have lower reading comprehension are able to understand narrative texts and moral values contained in narrative texts but they cannot convey examples of moral values of kindness in detail.

- **Helpful**

**Data 3.**

Q: Imagine if you found out around you that someone was having a hard time. What will you do for him? Please describe your actions.	
Category	Students' answers
Higher Level	If I found other people who have difficulties then I will try to help as much as I can, if the difficulties they face are difficulties that I think I can still help, I will help, but if the difficulties I think are great difficulties and I unable to help them then I will ask for help from others.
Moderate Level	If people around are having difficulties, I will find out first what kind of difficulties it is, if the difficulty experienced is large, then I will ask for help from others as well to overcome it.
Lower Level	When I find friends around me who have difficulty doing the task, I will try to tell how to do the task according with my understanding so that the task is quickly completed.

The answers above show students understand moral values but it is still difficult to apply them in daily activities. From the two above showed that students understand the moral values contained in the text but they cannot explain



in more detail in accordance with the understanding of these students and cannot provide detailed examples of moral values that have been learned.

**- Humbleness**

**Data 4.**

	Q: If you are ostracized in your school or living environment, humble with these people? Give the reason.	will you be
<b>Category</b>	<b>Students' answers</b>	
Higher Level	When there are people who ostracize me or bully me, I will remain silent and humble to them, because if I reciprocate their actions, it will actually make me stressed and thought that cause me not to focus on learning and not passion for school. Then it is better the power remains silent when they ostracize me.	
Moderate Level	I once felt ostracized in the school environment, but I kept quiet without fighting them, I still helped them if they needed help. I did not want to repay their actions because I was sure they could change their attitude, and it turns out after that they changed and did not isolate me anymore then they became my good friends.	
Lower Level	If my friends ostracize me, I will act normal to them but I don't stay away from them because maybe someday they can change their attitude.	

**- Humbleness**

**Data 4.**

	Q: If you are ostracized in your school or living environment, humble with these people? Give the reason.	will you be
<b>Category</b>	<b>Students' answers</b>	
Higher Level	When there are people who ostracize me or bully me, I will remain silent and humble to them, because if I reciprocate their actions, it will actually make me stressed and thought that cause me not to focus on learning and not passion for school. Then it is better the power remains silent when they ostracize me.	
Moderate Level	I once felt ostracized in the school environment, but I kept quiet without fighting them, I still helped them if they needed help. I did not want to repay their actions because I was sure they could change their attitude, and it turns out after that they changed and did not isolate me anymore then they became my good friends.	
Lower Level	If my friends ostracize me, I will act normal to them but I don't stay away from them because maybe someday they can change their attitude.	

From this statement it can be concluded that students who have low reading ability do not understand what is meant by humble moral values based on what has been learned previously so that they cannot explain in detail the questions given and cannot provide examples or reasons as requested by researchers. Based on the table above, the questions designed to investigate students moral values four indicators of moral values namely: patient, humble, kindness, helpful (Bertens, 2011).

**4.2 Discussion**

Moral has the meaning of teachings about the good and bad actions and behavior, morals, roles, and so on Purwadarminata (in Zuldafrial, 2014: 30). Besides, Indonesian stories (e.g. its folklores or fables) should be given more proportion since the current trend in TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) that further emphasized using the local stories as the media to learn the target language. By presenting the authentic and meaningful materials, the students therefore while learning the foreign language could also effectively express their identities and culture in the target language and all of these are comprehensively assessed by the teachers (Torun & Yildirim, 2014; Lubis et al, 2020). Subsequently, having discussed the presentation of the types of narrative text, this study also tried to elaborate the moral values in those narrative texts. In this analysis, four main moral values were analyzed to categorize all moral values which came up in the narrative texts, patience, kindness, helpful, humbleness. Though, this value is indeed an important value as well to be learned and exemplified by the students through reading narrative texts implied with it. Moreover, in terms of citizenship, this value is a

crucial one since the society that lacks it would not succeed (Tay & Yildirim, 2009; Welsh, 2014). In conclusion, all these key moral values and narrative texts which present them should be taken into account considerably by the textbook writers, users, teachers, and students, and, at best, be provided with a balanced proportion as well. Reading habit can be very influential to the students (Spann&Wagner, 2023).

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the data analysis in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that students who do not understand the moral values contained in narrative texts are caused by a lack of reading English texts, lack of vocabulary in English so students find it difficult to determine moral values and find information contained in narrative texts. From the data obtained by researchers, most students are fluent in Indonesian so that researchers are not too difficult when collecting data from the teaching and learning process. Most students find it difficult to understand narrative text is mainly to determine moral values if the text is not translated in Indonesian. And then, they must summarize the narrative text to determine and understand the moral values contained in the text, because they find it difficult to understand moral values if they do not summarize the text.

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