

CHARACTER EDUCATION FOR EFL LEARNERS ON THE MAIN CHARACTER OF “*MEN BRAYUT*” DRAMA PERFORMANCE

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Abstrak: This study explores how the character values embedded in the Balinese drama *The Story of Men Brayut: Legacy of Love for Children* can be utilized as a medium for character education in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. The aim is to examine how local cultural narratives can foster not only linguistic competence but also students' moral and emotional development. Employing a qualitative research design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and classroom observations involving EFL teachers and students. The findings reveal that the transformation of the main character—from an impatient and ungrateful mother into a loving and spiritually enlightened figure—represents core values such as empathy, responsibility, respect, perseverance, and cultural awareness. When critically reflected upon within the classroom context, these values offer a meaningful framework for character education. The analysis underscores the importance of culturally rooted learning materials in promoting holistic education that connects language acquisition with moral development. This study contributes to the growing discourse on the integration of character education in EFL instruction by highlighting the pedagogical power of local drama performances in shaping both linguistic and ethical competencies among learners.

Keywords: character education, EFL Learners, Drama based learning

Introduction

In recent years, drama has gained increasing recognition as an effective method for language teaching and learning. Its use in educational settings not only enhances students' language abilities but also supports the development of creativity, critical thinking, and cultural awareness. By engaging learners in interactive and collaborative activities, drama provides authentic and meaningful contexts that promote language acquisition. Additionally, drama-based approaches foster a lively and motivating classroom atmosphere that encourages active student participation (Wessels, 2014; Kao & O'Neill, 1998). Several studies have highlighted the pedagogical benefits of drama in language education. For instance, Ghani and Muhammad (2019) found that role-playing activities significantly improved EFL learners' speaking and listening skills, while also increasing their confidence in using English. Likewise, Muhammad and Shah (2018) reported that

teachers viewed drama-based instruction more favorably than traditional methods, noting its positive impact on student engagement and learning outcomes.

Furthermore, Jati and Romadhan (2020) focused on the cultural dimension of drama-based language teaching. Their research demonstrated that drama activities offer learners a unique opportunity to explore cultural diversity, fostering empathy and a deeper understanding of different cultural perspectives. Despite the growing evidence supporting the benefits of drama in language learning, there remains a need for more empirical research to evaluate its effectiveness across various contexts and language skills. Additionally, further studies are necessary to develop practical guidelines for designing and implementing drama-based activities that maximize learning benefits.

In conclusion, drama-based language teaching not only supports linguistic development but also cultivates creativity, critical thinking, and cultural awareness among learners. By fostering an engaging and dynamic classroom atmosphere, drama encourages active participation and motivation, which are essential for successful language learning. As such, educators are encouraged to consider drama as a valuable component of their instructional toolkit, while researchers continue to explore its diverse applications and impacts in language education. This research aims to explore the ways in which the values embodied by the main character in the *Men Brayut* drama performance can be utilized as a medium to promote character education for EFL learners.

The three studies reviewed highlight the effectiveness of integrating literature and drama into EFL instruction to promote character education. Putri et al. (2021) demonstrate that children's literature, when paired with strategies like value clarification and perspective-taking, fosters values such as empathy, responsibility, and respect. Similarly, Wahya et al. (2023) show that using drama activities like role-playing enhances both linguistic competence and character development, particularly in terms of cooperation and perseverance. Pike et al. (2019) further support the role of literature in nurturing virtues such as honesty and courage through structured discussions of moral narratives in *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Collectively, these studies affirm that literary and dramatic texts are powerful tools for cultivating moral values in EFL classrooms.

These three studies collectively reinforce the idea that literary and dramatic texts—such as *The Story of Men Brayut: Legacy of Love for Children*—are valuable tools in teaching both language and character. The cultural richness and moral dilemmas presented in such narratives provide EFL learners with meaningful contexts to explore personal and social values, which is aligned with the purpose of the present res

While drama has been widely recognized as an effective tool for language acquisition, there is comparatively less research that explicitly investigates its role in *character education* within EFL (English as a Foreign Language) settings. Most existing studies emphasize linguistic skills such as speaking, listening, and cultural awareness, but the integration of moral and character development through drama remains underexplored. This gap highlights the need for focused qualitative research that examines how drama-based activities can foster values, ethics, and social-emotional learning alongside language proficiency. Then, many drama-based language learning studies utilize generic or Western-centric drama materials. There is a noticeable lack of research on the use of localized or culturally specific drama content, such as "The Story of Men Brayut," which is rooted in local narratives and cultural contexts. This gap is significant because culturally relevant drama can enhance learners' engagement and provide deeper connections to both language and character education, yet empirical evidence on this approach is limited.

This research uniquely combines character education with English language learning through drama, specifically focusing on how moral and ethical values can be cultivated alongside language skills. By doing so, it expands the scope of drama-based language teaching beyond linguistic and cultural dimensions to include holistic learner development. The study's focus on "The Story of Men Brayut," a culturally significant English drama show, introduces a novel context that bridges local cultural heritage with global language learning. By employing qualitative methods, this research offers in-depth insights into how learners perceive and internalize character education through drama. This approach allows for a nuanced understanding of the emotional, social, and cognitive processes involved, which quantitative studies may overlook.

Method

This study adopts a qualitative research design to explore how the values embodied by the main character in the *Men Brayut* drama performance can be utilized as a medium to promote character education among EFL learners. A qualitative approach is deemed appropriate as it allows for an in-depth exploration of cultural, moral, and educational dimensions embedded within the drama, and how these can be interpreted and applied in the context of English language teaching (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data will be collected through a combination of semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and classroom observations, which are common methods for qualitative inquiry aimed at understanding participants' lived experiences and perspectives (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Interviews will be conducted with EFL teachers and students to gather their perceptions of the main character's values and how these might support character education. Document analysis will focus on the *Men Brayut* script and related instructional materials to identify core values such as compassion, self-sacrifice, responsibility, and maternal devotion such as video recording after the performance, which align with key components of character education (Lickona, 1991). Classroom observations were also conducted to examine how students engage with the drama and how character values are received and discussed in EFL learning environments, as recommended by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) for triangulating qualitative data sources.

Finding and Discussion

The drama performance entitled "*The Story of Men Brayut: Legacy of Love for Children*" was presented by fourth-semester EFL learners enrolled in the English Drama course within the English Language Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Mahasaraswati Denpasar University. This performance was part of the annual event known as the English Drama Fiesta. The main focus of the story centers on the character of Men Brayut, who plays a dominant role throughout the narrative.

The *Men Brayut* drama offers a culturally rich narrative that embodies important character values through its main character's transformation. Initially portrayed as a harsh and ungrateful mother, Men Brayut displays negative traits

such as blaming her children for their actions—whether playing, studying, or working—and showing a lack of appreciation for her hardworking husband. However, her character undergoes a significant transformation after an encounter with a wise spiritual advisor. This turning point illustrates values such as self-reflection, personal growth, and the pursuit of spiritual and moral improvement, making the drama a meaningful medium for promoting character education.

The research is designed to qualitatively explore how the character values within this drama can be effectively integrated into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning contexts. Through methods such as semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and classroom observations, the study aims to gather diverse perspectives from teachers and students on how the moral journey of Men Brayut can contribute to developing virtues like compassion, responsibility, and respect in EFL learners. The drama's storyline reflects the internal conflict and eventual resolution that are not only relatable but also pedagogically powerful in shaping students' character when approached critically and reflectively in classroom discussions.

By focusing on the transformation of Men Brayut's personality—from a negative, blaming figure to a spiritually awakened and morally aware individual—the study highlights the potential of using local cultural narratives to teach universal values. These values, once identified and discussed in the EFL classroom, may encourage students to reflect on their own behaviors, strengthen emotional intelligence, and improve interpersonal relationships. This is particularly relevant in character education, which aims to nurture traits such as empathy, respect, and responsibility—key competencies that can be cultivated through language learning that is value-based. The integration of Men Brayut's story into EFL settings not only supports language acquisition but also reinforces culturally grounded moral development, aligning with the broader goals of holistic education.

Men Brayut's personality embodies a complex transformation that offers rich material for character education in EFL classrooms. Initially, her behavior—marked by blaming and verbal harshness towards her children and husband—illustrates traits that are generally considered negative, such as impatience, lack of empathy, and disrespect within family dynamics. According to Lickona (1991),

character education involves teaching moral values such as respect, responsibility, and empathy, which are essential for social harmony and personal development. Men Brayut's early behavior can serve as an example of what these values look like when absent, providing learners with a clear contrast to reflect upon.

The turning point in Men Brayut's story, where she gains awareness through the guidance of a spiritual advisor and embarks on a sacred journey with her husband, highlights the values of self-reflection, humility, and spiritual growth. These values align closely with what character education aims to foster—especially in collectivist cultures where harmony and respect for family and community are highly prized (Nucci, 2001). This transformation can encourage EFL learners to understand that character development is a dynamic and ongoing process, which involves recognizing one's flaws, seeking guidance, and committing to positive change.

In the context of EFL learning, integrating Men Brayut's story allows educators to embed character education within language instruction in a culturally relevant way. According to Lee (2014), using culturally meaningful texts in language classrooms not only enhances learners' linguistic competence but also deepens their intercultural understanding and ethical awareness. Through classroom discussions, role-plays, and reflective writing based on Men Brayut's experiences, learners can develop empathy and moral reasoning skills, which are critical components of holistic education (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2009).

Moreover, Men Brayut's story provides a narrative framework for learners to explore universal human values through the lens of their own cultural background. This relevance increases learner engagement and facilitates deeper internalization of character education messages (Banks, 2015). For example, discussing Men Brayut's initial failures and eventual growth can prompt learners to critically evaluate their own attitudes and behaviors in relation to family and community, thereby promoting social-emotional learning alongside language skills.

The character of Men Brayut offers a multidimensional resource for EFL educators aiming to promote character education. By leveraging her narrative, teachers can foster learners' moral development, cultural identity, and language proficiency simultaneously. This approach aligns with the growing emphasis on

values education in language teaching, which recognizes the role of education in shaping not only competent communicators but also responsible global citizens (Lamb & Reinders, 2012).

The Story of Men Brayut: Legacy of Love for Children delivers a profound message about legacy as the transmission of love, values, and cultural wisdom across generations. Through Men Brayut's transformation from a harsh mother to a compassionate and spiritually awakened figure, the drama imparts key lessons on unconditional love, empathy, self-reflection, respect, cultural awareness, and perseverance. These themes not only promote emotional and moral growth but also align closely with the goals of character education. The story emphasizes the importance of parental love and ongoing personal development as foundations for shaping children's ethical and emotional well-being.

Conclusions

The analysis of *The Story of Men Brayut: Legacy of Love for Children* highlights its potential as a powerful tool for character education in EFL learning, offering lessons on love, self-reflection, respect, and spiritual growth. By integrating these culturally rooted values into language instruction, educators can support learners' holistic development alongside linguistic competence. The study encourages lecturers to utilize traditional dramas like *Men Brayut* through interactive methods such as role-plays and reflective discussions, fostering emotional and moral engagement. EFL learners are urged to actively engage with these narratives and apply the values to their own lives. Future research is recommended to explore the broader impact of cultural dramas in character education across varied EFL contexts, using mixed-method approaches to assess both moral and language development outcomes.

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