



EDUCATIONAL VALUES IN RAYA AND THE LAST DRAGON: A CHARACTER EDUCATION APPROACH TO TEACHING ENGLISH

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Abstract

Formulating the research objectives is essential to guide the study toward its intended outcomes. Therefore, the study aims to analyze the educational values contained in the film *Raya and the Last Dragon* and their relevance to character education in English language learning for children. This study uses John Dewey's theory of educational values as the main framework, which is linked to Thomas Lickona's theory of character education. The method employed in this study is a descriptive-qualitative approach that utilizes documentary analysis techniques. The research data were collected from dialogues, narratives, and scenes in the film. The researcher analyzed data containing educational values, as outlined by John Dewey (1994), and then categorized these values into four groups: moral, social, intellectual, and aesthetic values. The analysis results indicate that the film contains various educational values, with the following results: moral values (32.06%), social values (26.67%), intellectual values (24.76%), and aesthetic values (16.51%). Of all these educational values, there is a significant relationship with Thomas Lickona's (1996) theory of character education, which divides character values into five main points: caring, fairness, responsibility, respect, and honesty. These educational values are presented both explicitly and implicitly through characters, conflicts, and problem-solving in films. Based on the results of this research, it is hoped that animated films can contribute to English teachers, especially in teaching character values in a contextual and attractive manner to students through an English learning approach at the elementary school level.

Keywords: Character education, Educational Values, Films, Teaching English



Introduction

In today's modern era, not only is technology developing rapidly, but human thinking and learning are also evolving, especially in the field of education. In this era, education is essential to keep pace with the times and avoid being left behind. Education is not only about academic knowledge, but also plays an important role in shaping the moral character of students. In the current era of globalization, film has become an effective medium for conveying educational values and moral messages to students, especially children. Aunon et al (2023) explain that films are now considered a beneficial medium for teaching English. The method of screening films has become the most engaging and preferred method for EFL students to enhance their language proficiency.

Educational values can be understood from multiple perspectives, each highlighting different aspects of how education fosters personal growth and moral development. According to John Dewey (1944), in Iskandar (2015) In the book *Democracy and Education*, Dewey states that education is a social process designed to shape individuals so that they can participate in society democratically. According to Benereznicka (2020) another definition of the value of education is the principles that shape the personality and behavior of students through the learning process, both formal and informal. In this research, the researcher combines other views on educational values with educational values that focus more on character, such as in Thomas Lickona's (1996) story in Kurniawan & Fitriani (2023) which explains that character education is a process that aims to foster understanding, concern, and actions based on values, norms, and morals. Lickona explains that effective character education must involve values such as honesty, responsibility, respect, and social concern, which are the foundations of social life. As time passes, character values continue to disappear from each generation, prompting researchers to utilize animated films, which are often used for entertainment in everyday life, as they also have great potential to serve as a medium for instilling character education.

According to Gagne, as cited in Romadon et al. (2022) animation is a key foundation for the learning process, which integrates text with carefully designed, moving visuals or visually appealing transitions. Therefore, analyzing the educational value in films is crucial, especially in utilizing films as a medium for character education for children who are still in the process of moral development. Previous studies have explored educational values and character education values in films, as seen in research by Kurniati & Maisarah (2024) on character values in the film Up and their relevance to character education in elementary school children. Their research results show that the film Up contains eight central character values, one of which is hard work. This value aligns with the principles outlined in Presidential Regulation No. 87 of 2017, which aims to strengthen character education. The results of this research indicate that the film Up can be an effective learning medium for character education in elementary school children. The difference between this study and the previous study by Kurniati and Maisarah lies in their focus on moral values as a means of strengthening character education.



In contrast, this article employs the five principles of character education values, as outlined by Thomas Lickona (1996).

This study aims to analyze the educational values in the film *Raya and the Last Dragon* and to explore its role as an approach to character education through English language teaching. By identifying these values, this research is expected to serve as a learning material for language development and also instill character education values in the classroom through English language teaching. Australian Council on Children and the Media (2021) States that this film is suitable for primary school pupils due to its excellent educational content, which includes themes of unity, values, and trust. It is anticipated that this study will provide educators with a comprehensive understanding of how to utilize film media to help children develop moral principles. Therefore, this research aims to answer two main questions: first, what educational values are presented in the film *Raya and the Last Dragon*; and second, how can a character education approach be effectively integrated into English language teaching for children. By addressing these questions, the study not only highlights the significance of educational values in film but also demonstrates their practical relevance for fostering character development through language education.

Theoretical Framework

This research is grounded in two primary theories. The first is the theory of educational values based on John Dewey's views, and the second is Thomas Lickona's theory of character education principles. These two values form the basis of this research in analyzing the educational values in the film *Raya and the Last Dragon*.

According to John Dewey's theory (1944) as presented in Iskandar (2015) Education is a social process that plays a crucial role in shaping individuals who can actively participate in society. Dewey emphasizes that education is not only academic but also encompasses the development of social and moral responsibility in students. Dewey argues that life experiences are a crucial factor in character formation; therefore, education must guide students in implementing these experiences in a meaningful way to encourage social growth and awareness. In this sense, the role of education extends beyond the classroom, as it incorporates daily interactions and real-life situations into the learning process. Such an approach enables students to connect knowledge with practice, thereby fostering not only intellectual competence but also empathy, teamwork, and social values.

In addition to focusing on educational values, this research also draws on Thomas Lickona's (1996) character education theory as presented in Asri et al.(2025) as a basis for analyzing the character values depicted in the film, in his article titled "Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education," Lickona explains that character education is a conscious and planned effort to shape students into individuals who understand, care about, and behave according to life values.



Lickona emphasizes in his principles that character education must be carried out comprehensively, encompassing both cognitive and affective aspects, and provide opportunities for students to behave morally in their daily lives. He also underlines that schools and educators play a central role in creating an environment that consistently models positive behavior and reinforces moral actions. Furthermore, effective character education should integrate values into the curriculum, school culture, and community involvement, ensuring that students experience these principles in meaningful contexts. This holistic approach helps learners internalize values not only as abstract knowledge but as guiding principles for their interactions and decisions.

Based on these two theories, this research focuses on the educational values in the film *Raya and the Last Dragon* and their relevance to character education through English language teaching. Faradita et al. (2022) indicate that character education values in English language teaching can be implemented through thematic and authentic approaches. They also argue that creativity and curiosity can be instilled through songs and discussions. This research not only examines language as the primary objective of learning but also focuses on instilling character values that can shape students into better individuals. Thus, films are an effective medium not only for developing language but also for teaching educational values and instilling character values in children.

Method

This research uses a descriptive-qualitative approach to analyze the educational values in the film *Raya and the Last Dragon*. According to Arif Rachman et al. (2024), qualitative research is descriptive and uses inductive analysis, focusing more on the meaning, process, and understanding of an event or problem. This approach is used to describe and interpret the educational values in the film, relating them to the character education instilled through English language learning.

This research employed data collection techniques that included documentation methods, such as repeatedly watching films and analyzing film scripts. It then analyzed every event in the film that contained educational values, categorizing these values according to John Dewey's theory (1944), which encompasses moral, social, intellectual, and aesthetic values. After the data was collected, the researcher narrated the findings and then linked the discovery of educational values to Thomas Lickona's character education values. The researcher analyzed the data using the opinions of Miles and Huberman, as presented in Arif Rachman et al. (2024) who explained that the data analysis technique involves several steps, namely: data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification. The results of the educational values in this film were then analyzed through a character education approach to see their relevance to teaching English to children. Thus, this research not only focuses on the language aspect but also instills character in students through the use of film as an educational medium.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

1. Educational Values

Based on the table analysis of the film Raya and the Last Dragon, researchers identified various educational values and subsequently grouped these values according to John Dewey's theory of values (1944). These values include four types: moral, social, intellectual, and aesthetic values. Each value has a different frequency in the film. The value with the highest frequency is moral values (32.06%), followed by social values (26.67%), intellectual values (24.76%), and finally aesthetic values (16.51%) in the film.

Table 1. Education Values of Raya and The Last Dragon

No	Types Of Educational Values	Frequency	Percentage %
1	Moral	101	32.06 %
2	Social	84	26.67 %
3	Intellectual	78	24.76 %
4	Aesthetic	52	16.51 %
Total		315	100%

The following is an explanation of each type of value:

a) Moral values

Moral values, according to Dewey, are associated with behaviors that follow social norms. The moment when Raya first encounters Sisu in the form of a dragon and then recounts all of her past experiences, including her deadly deeds that caused the dragon's jewel to shatter and ultimately led to Sisu's demise, reveals these ideals.

b) Social values

According to Dewey, social values are those that encourage collaboration, dialogue, and involvement in social activities. When Raya and her companions from various tribes work together to restore the kingdom of Kumandra, these ideals are demonstrated.

c) Intellectual values

Dewey believed that learning experiences that encourage critical thinking, observation, and reflection is the source of intellectual values. To reclaim the



kingdom of Kumandra, Raya must face opponents from various tribes, embodying these values throughout the movie.

d) Aesthetic values

According to Dewey, the film's depiction of Southeast Asian culture is visualized through its setting, culture, and spirituality.

2. Character Education

Based on the results of these educational values, they are then linked to Thomas Lickona's (1996) theory, as outlined in his article entitled "Eleven Principles of Character Education," which posits that character formation is achieved through five core values: respect, responsibility, caring, honesty, and fairness. Based on the research results, these five types of values are related to the educational values described from John Dewey's perspective. Examples of the relationship between these two values include:

- a) Moral values with the value of **honesty**, which is related to the value of **honesty** according to Thomas Lickona, in the scene where Sisu tells Raya that he is not the only dragon who made the gem.
- b) Social values with the value of **social awareness**, which is related to the value of **caring**, according to Lickona, as reflected when Raya helps a crying toddler alone in the market.
- c) Social values of the **Peace** type, which are related to **fairness** according to Lickona, are evident in the scene where Chief Benja encourages everyone from different tribes to forgive each other and act reasonably in order to establish peace between the tribes.
- d) Moral values of the **politeness** type, which fall under the category of **respect** according to Lickona, are reflected when Raya's friends pay their respects to Sisu upon learning that Sisu is the last dragon in their legend.
- e) Intellectual values with the type of value **learning from mistakes**, which falls under the category of **responsibility**, in the scene where Raya admits her mistake to Sisu, then she takes responsibility for returning and reuniting all the dragon gems as a form of accountability.

Discussion

1. What educational values are found in the film Raya and the Last Dragon?

The results of the research indicate that the film Raya and the Last Dragon possess various types of educational values, which can be classified into four categories based on John Dewey's theory (1944): moral, social, intellectual, and aesthetic

values. The interpretation of these values reveals that the educational content presented in the film serves not only as entertainment but also as a learning experience for students, especially children. For example, the moral value of honesty is evident in the scene where Raya recounts her entire past and acknowledges that her actions caused the dragon gem to shatter into pieces. This scene serves as a lesson for children to be honest in all matters, especially when they make a mistake.

The second is social values, which are reflected in the film through the cooperation between Raya and all her friends from various tribes as they work together to restore their country. This scene teaches students that cooperation is important in social life. The third is intellectual values, namely critical thinking, which is reflected when Raya and her friends face enemies while trying to collect dragon gem fragments. This scene teaches students to think before acting and that a positive mindset is essential for finding solutions to problems. Lastly, there is the aesthetic value of the film's visual representation of culture, which is reflected in the setting and atmosphere, as well as when Raya performs a tribute to Sisu, the dragon from the legend of the land of Kumandra. This scene teaches students the importance of preserving and maintaining culture, as well as respecting the customs and traditions of a particular region.

2. How can a character education approach be integrated into English language teaching for children?

In addition to focusing on educational values, as outlined by John Dewey, this study also relates the research results on these values to the principles of character education proposed by Thomas Lickona (1996), which include five core values: respect, honesty, fairness, responsibility, and caring. Based on the research results, a relationship exists between Dewey's educational values and the principles stated by Lickona. Each of Lickona's values connected to Dewey is as follows: the value of honesty, according to Lickona, aligns with Dewey's view of honesty in moral values, which is demonstrated through Sisu's honesty towards Raya, teaching the importance of building trust in social relationships. Furthermore, the value of responsibility is related to the intellectual value of learning from mistakes, as demonstrated by Raya's courage to admit her mistakes and take responsibility for correcting them.

Then there is the value of fairness, which is related to the social value of peace, as demonstrated when Chief Benja, as leader of the Heart tribe, gave a speech calling on all tribes to make peace and forgive one another, because peace will only come about through justice and tolerance in society. Next is the value of respect, which is related to the social value of politeness, as seen when young Raya pays respect to all the tribal chiefs from other regions in Kumandra before she begins speaking to express her opinions before them all. Lastly, there is the value of caring, which is related to the social value of social awareness, as seen when Raya helps a crying toddler left alone in the market.



The results of the above study align with previous studies by Lestari & Irmayanti Harahap (2020) who found that students' motivation to learn English was relatively low before using animated media. However, after using animated films as teaching media, students' motivation in the learning process increased. Overall, the use of animated films had a positive impact on students' motivation to learn English. Another study by Erlidawati & Rahmah (2022) discusses the educational values contained in fairy tale cartoons. The results of this research demonstrate that cartoons serve not only as entertainment but also have significant potential in conveying educational values, including moral, social, and family values. These films can be an effective means of character building and learning for both children and adults. The difference between this study and previous studies lies in the researchers' combination of two theories: John Dewey's educational values and Thomas Lickona's character education, which they directly linked to the context of the English learning approach for children.

The character education approach, utilizing films, has proven effective in teaching English. Educational values such as responsibility, cooperation, and honesty in the film Raya and the Last Dragon are not only educational but also engaging and motivating, allowing teachers to incorporate character values into every lesson. This aligns with Sugiono (2022) Perspective, which emphasizes that language learning can serve as a means of instilling educational character values when linked to relevant and contextual teaching materials. Another aligned perspective is the finding by Dewi et al. (2023) explains the importance of developing English teaching materials based on multiculturalism, tolerance, cooperation, and responsibility as formative elements of students' character values in the current digital age.

The implications in the school environment are that teachers can utilize the character values in the film, such as **responsibility**, by assigning students simple drama roles to play in class or by giving students tasks that must be completed within a specified time. For the value of **respect**, teachers can teach students about the importance of respecting others and things that are considered sacred, such as respecting parents, teachers, friends, national symbols, places of worship, or local culture and customs. For the value of **caring**, teachers can teach students how to show concern for their surroundings by helping others and assisting friends who are in difficulty. The value of **fairness** can be taught through decision-making in the classroom, such as voting for class officers, respecting differences, and valuing fairness in competitions and group work. Through these methods, students can understand that fairness is the basis of a harmonious life. As for the value of **honesty**, teachers can teach the importance of speaking and acting honestly in any situation. This value is instilled through the habit of not cheating during exams, acknowledging mistakes when they are made, taking responsibility, and encouraging students to express their opinions honestly to the teacher. This helps students understand that honesty is the foundation of trust in society.



Conclusion

This research article concludes that the film *Raya and the Last Dragon* possess various educational values that can be classified into four types of educational values, as outlined by John Dewey: moral, social, intellectual, and aesthetic values. Each value is actualized through scenes and dialogues between characters that have meaning and serve as both entertainment and a means of learning character values, especially when teaching English to children. This research employs a character education approach to analyze and apply values within the context of learning. This research also relates educational values to Thomas Lickona's character values, which encompass five types of values: honesty, responsibility, fairness, respect, and caring. These values are reflected in the film's storyline and have the potential to be applied in character-based English learning activities. The combination of these values is not only to develop language skills but also to shape the emotional and social aspects of students.

The results of this study indicate that the use of film as a learning medium is considered adequate because it provides an authentic context and supports the development of language skills. Pervan (2024) It was stated that film can improve vocabulary, listening skills, and students' motivation in learning a foreign language. Therefore, a film-based character education approach can be an effective and educational learning strategy in instilling character values in students, especially children.

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