Building Academic Honesty in Scientific Writing

by Rita Erlinda

BUILDING ACADEMIC HONESTY IN SCIENTIFIC WRITING

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Abstract

Character has become a central aspect of education. It has given much more influences on the success of education in the nation. The term of character is defined as an individual's set of psychological trait that affect person's capability and inclination to function morally. It is encompassed of those traits that lead an individual to do or not to do the appropriate thing. There are numerous character values in education which have been discussed and proposed by experts. One of them is honesty which significantly affects learners' attitudes and behavior to do and act properly. Building character of honesty in language learning can be done in many ways. One of them is through scientific writing. Writing is not only about *what* and *how* to write. Further, it deals with academic honesty which requires students to behave in accordance with character values. At this point, the issue of plagiarism should come into attention in order to build student's characters. This paper aim to discuss how scientific writing promotes character building especially in language learning.

Key words: *academic honesty*, *plagiarism* and *scientific writing*

INTRODUCTION

Character is a fundamental part in education. It is urgently required since human need to have good and strong characteristic which determine them with other creature. Character is regarded as someone's act which is the result of their thought and actions. People' character are those who have attitude, moral and behavior. They would have profound awareness about his potential and would act properly based on that potential. Someone with good and positive character would do the best in every step of all the way.

Character refers to an individual's set of psychological traits that affect person's ability and preference to function morally (Damon, 2002:48). Philips in Muslich (2011:70) defines character as a set of values which is oriented to a system based on thought, attitude and behavior performed. In addition, Musfiroh in Aunillah (2011:19) argues that character can be defined as a set of attitudes, behaviors, motivations and skills. The character also refers to the term of

personality, behavior, attitude and nature. Generally, it can be clarified that character is individual reflection covering mentality, attitude and behavior.

Furthermore, Zubaedi (2012:10) explains that character covers attitude to do the best, intellectual capacity, behavior, maintaining moral principles, interpersonal and emotional skills which allow someone to interact effectively in any situation and commitment of contributing for society. Character is based on religion norms, law, politeness, customs and culture. Aunillah (2011:20) adds that someone is said to have good character if he/she has knowledge about her/his own potential which is reflected in behaving.

The issue of character is commonly related to the phenomena of people's character and moral problems which are increasing rapidly.The daily news reported in television and printed media tells us that there are many problems around us which are basically relate to unethical behavior and moral degradation. Corruption, criminalization, racism and many other countless problems among high functionary in this nation are regarded as common sense. Not only that, problems among our young generation are also increasing rapidly. These problems cover the increasing of free sex, bullying among students, plagiarism, cheating, pornography, stealing and many others social problems (Zubaedi, 2011:1-4). These phenomena absolutely indicate that how this nation needs character.

Educational institutions basically have responsibility to handle this case. They should be clean from those problems as they are pioneer of change and central of any movement. Sadly, today's problems emerge our doubt. Educational institutions which should be clear from those problems regard it as a common. Tremendously, plagiarism including cheatingcommonly happened especially in academic setting. Academic society seems to be familiar by way of this issue. These problems are observed to be more complex recently than before. It highlights that honesty is rare, not only for the high functionaries but also among the academic societies. As the result, this issue became a major problem to be solved.

Plagiarism is commonly regarded as academic stealing and crime. It is defined as taking someone else's ideas, thought, and work and presenting it as your own without giving proper acknowledgement (Roberts, 2008:2, Southerland-Smith, 2008:37 & Girard, 2004:13). It is categorized as a serious problem and should be penalized heavily. Almost all of educational institutions all around the world have set their policy to prevent this problem. Each of them describes plagiarism depend upon how it is defined. In fact, plagiarism still happens.

There are some factors causing plagiarism. Firstly, it is resulted from the failure of building students' academic honesty. An honest person does not commit plagiarism. She/he beliefs that stealing other's and lying are wrong things and should be avoided (Koelhoffer, 2009:29). Secondly, it happens because students are lack of awareness. Nowadays is easily for students to access and use any sources especially from the internet. Mostly, they forget to reference and take it as their own while those sources are copyrighted (Girard, 2004:13). Thirdly, plagiarism happens because students are lack of knowledge concerning writing skill. The ability of paraphrasing, note-taking, and referencing are important for

students as they are effective to avoid plagiarism (Roberts, 2008:2 & Assessment Committee of the Faculty of Education, University of Malta, 2007:6).

Regarding the factors causing plagiarism above, it is clear that academic honesty is urgently needed in order to avoid plagiarism. Every component of education should be involved, together with subject matter which potentially promotes academic honesty. One of them is through scientific writing where the issue of plagiarism commonly takes place. The writer attempts to discuss briefly about building academic honesty in scientific writing and deliberate way to avoid plagiarism.

DISCUSSION
Character & Character Education [1]

Character refers to person's inner make up as a deep-rooted structural whole as resulted in the area of individual's emotion like actions, habits and thoughts (Adi, 2011:401). While, Samani and Harianto (2012:41) define character as the means of thought and action which is distinctively belongs to someone for living, working together within family, humanity , and state . Wynne in Huitt (2004) claims that generally bad or good character is considered to be recognizable in one's behaviour.

Furthermore, Tadzikoratun Musfiroh in Aunillah (2011:19) claims that character is the collection of behaviors, attitudes, motivations and skills. In other word, character perceived as someone's act which is the product of their thought and action. Someone who has good character would have good awareness about his potency and would act properly based on that strength and someone with positive character would do the best in every single step of action he is doing. Someone's character can not be enhanced instantly but it needs a step-by-step process of building daily by the way one thinks and acts, thought by thought, actions by action.

Furthermore, there is no way to separate character and education. Character is a must and essential as it becomes the meaning of education itself. Accrording to Aunillah, 2011:18), Character education refers to the process of deriving the moral values into students' daily life that contains knowledge, individualconsciousness , self-control and actions to be implemented into their life, for God, themselves, other people, environment and nation. Moreover, Samani and Harianto (2011:43) state that character education is good thing done by the teachers that gives effect to their students' character. In addition, Elkind & Sweet in Zubaedi (2012:15) state that character education is the purposeful attempt to help people know, respect , and carry out the core ethical value.

In line to the character and character education implementation, there are some pillars to be considered when incorporating characters into classroom activities. According to Smith in Meladina and Amir (2013:188), there are many characters that will be developed in character education. Firstly is *responsibility* which is, of course,there is mutual agreement between people that this prinsiple is a very basic character to carry out the duty and receive the impact of the action..Secondly is *honesty*, which refers to telling the fact or making the same between words and the fact .Thirdly is *integrity* which is about making the same

3

between our intentions the words or keeping dreams and complete expectancy . Then, the next is *respect* which is based on how to live together in the social groups, have faith in religion and believe in culture such as venerate to self and others.The last is *caring* which means showing sympathy of other by treating them withthoughtfulness , care , kindness and merciful soul. At least these five pillars of character can be applied by incorporating them into classroom activities as included in any courses. Basically, any substance of learning and teaching activities should be done through character.

The Importance of Character Building

Including character in education is a must regarding to the problems faced by this nation. Character is an essential element in developing human capital in a nation(Muslich, 2011:35). The quality of citizens relies on people traits. Building people character in a nation is crucially needed to encounter problems come out especially among young generation. There are five key reasons why character education use as basis in education (Tantra in Saputra, Nitiasih & Putra, 2013). First, education is related to a process of how internalize values to pupils and this internalization will be very effective only through character education. Second, education is prolonged process. Third, education can function to prevent people from doing wrong or negative behaviors. Forth, through the ministry of education and culture of republic Indonesia, students' character are developed through building people's potential in character education. Fifth, character education is an asset which will give benefits to everyone.

Regarding the goals of character education, Sahrudin in Aunillah (2011:105) explains thethree important reasons for building character in Indonesia through character education . First it used to build students' basic potency in order to young generation to grow up with good personality, smart and right manners..Second it is used to build multicultural society habits.The last is character education can increase the nation civilizationin competitive world. . Moreover, Schwartz in Samani and Harianto (2011:16) claims that in relation to school community, character education has five functions.First, it facilitates students to be successful in life and school   Second, it prepare students to be ready to face any tasks in their lifetime. Third, it develop noble attitude and diminish the possibility of conducting negative behavior. Fourth, it makes everybody at school behaves based on the moral values. Lastly, it improve the learning process become more simple and effective.

There is no doubt that character education plays an key role in developing civilization in a nation. It gives a lot of impacts for almost the entirely human life.So building students' character means helping and preparing them to encounter the big constraints in their future life.

Honesty: A Fundamental Character in Academic

Honesty is one of the urgent characters in education which should be developed. It becomes fundamental because every single aspect in this life should be based on honesty. The problems arise in social context basically relate to dishonesty. It can be analyzed through people lying to themselves which make

them behave unethically. Then it comes to broader context. Simply, corruption, criminalization, and many other problems are done because of dishonesty.

It is uneasy to define honesty. Koelhoffer (2009:27) explains that honesty means telling the truth, behaving honorably and not lying, cheating or stealing. An truthful person is honest not only to other people but also to him or herself. Lying about things on a regular basis with the intent to deceive is a sign of dishonest character. Honesty exists not only in the things to say, but also in the things to do (JIST Editor, 2006:154). Moreover, Koelhoffer (2009:27) says that being honest also means understanding that the truth is the foundation on which our society and everything in itare based. Without honesty, most people can never have peace of mind or achieve true success. As the old saying goes, "Honesty is the best policy."

Koelhoffer (2009:27-33) explains that there are seventh different forms of honesty. Each of form has its own framework. The first form is *academic honesty*. It means being honest in an educational setting. Someone who is academically honest does not commit plagiarism. Other form of academic dishonesty include doing someone else's work, changing grades or academic record through forgery, stealing or ruining property that belongs to the school, lying about or exaggerating data to make the results from your work seem more believable, and cheating on a test or other assignment by using notes or other resources that are not supposed to be using. It is no doubt that academic honesty is very important to have especially for students and academicians.

The second form is *integrity*. Honesty and integrity are often used interchangeably. Although they have similar meanings, integrity is a broader term. Whereas honesty means telling the truth, integrity means being yourself and not putting on an act or pretending you are something you are not around others or even when you are by yourself. The third form is *sincerity*. It means behaving in an open and honest way that you are genuine or being sincere on what is saying and doing. The fourth form is *scientific honesty*. Someone who is honest in the scientific arena is careful to be accurate in collecting and reporting data that result from research and experiment. It also means not faking the experiment results just to confirm a hypothesis or to look good.

The fifth form is *honor*. Having honor means having a sense of fairness and always striving to do the right thing, no matter what the situation is. An honorable person can be relied on to be truthful in both words and actions. Someone who has honor will go out of his or her way to stand up for the truth, even when it would be easier just to keep silent.The sixth form is *trustworthiness*. Being trustworthy means that people can depend on you to do what you are supposed to do. One of the examples is being on time. The last form is *sportsmanship.*It means showing honesty and honor when you participate in athletic activities and other games. Someone who is a "good sport" behaves in a dignified way and threats other with respect, whether he or she wins or loses.

Scientific Writing & Plagiarism

Writing is difficult and being a good writer involves countless skill. Besides spelling and grammar, which seem like enough to worry about, good writing involves finding writing voice, expressing our own idas, and in many

cases incorporating other people's ideas into the mix (Williams, 2008:5). It is getting more difficult when supporting opinion with the ideas and expertise of others are required because writing invoves both individual and collaborative activity.

Scientific writing is one of the fundamental form of writing in academic setting. This writing is a kind of communicating science and research result to public. Grossman et al. (2009) explain that there are some kinds of scientific writing. They are scientific article and journal, reports, conferences paper, research proposal, thesis and dissertation.Scientific writing requires complex skills. A writer need tohave goodwriting and research skills, ability to work with sources, and presenting research result to the public. The writing skills such as paraphrasing, summarizing, quoting and even note-taking are actually needed. The lack of these abilities push writers to work such in 'instant' way. That is what is called plagiarism.

Plagiarism is defined in a broader area. Generally, it is defined as taking and using another person's ideas, throughts, and works and presenting it as our own without appropriate acknovldgment (Roberts, 2008:2, Southerland-Smith, 2008:37 & Girard, 2004:13). This 'work' is usually something that has beed produced by another person, 'published' in some tangible ways, and presented formally into the public domain. Extremely, plagiarism is also regarded as academic stealing which sould be heavily penalized.

The term of "plagiarism" itself is derived from the Latin term for plundering. In fact, the idea of kidnapping the word of others is appropriate to explain the way which plagiarism is defined. There was acceptance in eighteennth-century england of the concept that words could be kidnapped or misappropriated by someone with legal recrimination. The basis of this acceptance was also embodied in the laws of former British colnies such as Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, India, New Zealand and the United States. The birth of the idea that a person could "own" words and exercise ownership or authorial rights over their creation was unleashed in varios copyright laws around the world. Plagiarism is closely aligned with legal rights of copyright and pursued in court today (Southerland-Smith, 2008:37).

In general, plagiarism is one of a number of practices deemed by universities to constitute cheating, or the university-term is 'a lack of academic integrity'. The type of plagiarism itself is clasified in different point but still in the same framework. Girard (2004:13) says that the most common types are submitting someone else's written, copying information precisely fro the internet, using incorrect paraphrashing, not documenting references, and copying from yourself (autoplagiarism).

Furthermore, Neville (2010:29) esplains plagiarism is more detail. She says thatthere are there main forms of plagiarism. They are: 1) copying another person's work, including the work of another student and claiming or pretending it to be your own. 2) presenting arguments that use a blend of your own and a significant percentage or copied words of the original another without acknowledging the source. 3) parapashing another person's work, but not giving due acknowledgement to the original writer or organization publishing the

writing, including internet sites. The exceptions to this would be in relation to common knowledge.

Scientific writing has its own way in order to produce a writing product or even presenting research result to the public. It requires a complex skills and gradual processes. If the process of writing are followed well along with the required skills, plagiarism totally can be avoided by anyone. Students need to acquire more skills and knowledge while the policy of plagiarism itself should be clearly built up.

Effective *Note-Taking*: A Tremendous Way to Avoid Plagiarism

Plagiarism mostly happens because students take note as they read, but forget to write down the name of the original author of the words and ideas in their notes. Then, it affects students in writing down what they got in reading sources. To avoid this problem, effective note taking technique clearly shows the difference between your voice and the voice of other writer or researcher. By this techniques, writing skills covering paraphrasing, summarizing, quoting and referencing are integrated.

The followings are some steps on implementing effective note taking as proposed by Spiteri et al.(2007:14):

Step 1

Preparing a list of questions needed to answer from your reading and look for the answer to your questions as you read.

Step 2

Making notes on the information you find. It can be done this through quoting, paraphrasing or summarizing the text.

Step 3

Commenting the notes on whether the writer's ideas support your ideas, you agree or not and why it should be.

Example:

The assignment is: "***Discuss the issue of plagiarism in writing world.***"

As part of student's preparation for this assignment, the student has decided to read the following journal: *'Plagiarism: An ethical problem in the writing world'* written by **Girard** in **AORN JournalVol. 80, No. 1, 2004**.

In order to create an active discussion between students and the writer, the following steps of note taking technique are:

1. Students prepare the questions related to the topic:
    - *What causes plagiarism?*
    - *What is covered into plagiarism?*

2. Students divides note taking into two parts:
    - On the left-hand side there is space for taking notes (quote, paraphrase or summary)

- On the left-hand side there is space for own comments on reading.

Writer's idea	Student's response
The main points/argument/ideas, etc of the writer	*The student's thoughts/ideas/hypothesis/arguments, etc. in response to writer's voice*
Problems causing plagiarism 'many writers use someone else's work, change a few words from the original document, and then do not reference the original document'	**In my opinion**, considering the complex definition of plagiarism, these cases absolutely makes plagiarism arises. **I agree** with this case because not referencing means taking other's as our won which means plagiarism.

CONCLUSION

Educating people does not mean only transmitting knowledge but also building their character. People of character are those who are able to act and behave properly based on the character values. There are many characters which should be had by students. One of them is honesty which becomes a fundamental character among others. In academic setting, honesty is urgently required. The general term used is academic honesty which means not committing plagiarism. Plagiarism is defined as as taking and using another person's ideas, throughts, and works and presenting it as our own without appropriate acknowldgment. This is commonly takes place in scientific writing where other's idea and expertise are needed.Plagiarism is regarded as academic stealing and crime and should be penalized heavily. Plagiarism among students are the reflection of the failure of building academic honesty. Thus, building academic honesty can be effectively done if the writing processes are followed well along with the skills required.

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Appendix 1

BOOKNOTE

Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	
Author (S)			
Date			
Book Title /		**Publisher**	**Place**
Chapter Title /		**Number**	**Page Range**
Source Book Title /		**Publisher**	**Place**
Article Title			
Journal	**Volume**	**Number**	**Page range** .....
Electronic Document Title		**Internet Address**	**Other ID** ......
Key Words			
Main points/arguments/ideas			

Your Comments

Exact quotations		**Page number**
Related author and ideas		
Name	**Date**	**Point of agreement or dispute**

Adopted from: Spiteri et al. - Assessment Committee of the Faculty of Education of Malta University(2007:21-22).

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