

**MORAL VALUES PORTRAYED IN THE MOVIE ENTITLED
“THE RON CLARK STORY” DIRECTED BY RANDA HAINES****Aulia Afifah¹, Aswadi Jaya^{2*}, Mulyadi³**^{1,2,3} Universitas PGRI PalembangE-mail: ^{1,3} asyifaaulialisnadi123@gmail.com, ² aswadijaya@univpgri-palembang.ac.idAccepted :
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21 September 2026Corresponding Author:
Aswadi JayaEmail Corresponding :
aswadijaya@univpgri-palembang.ac.id**ABSTRACT**

This study investigated the moral values portrayed in *The Ron Clark Story*, directed by Randa Haines, with particular attention to its intrinsic elements and pedagogical implications for English Language Teaching (ELT). Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation and were derived primarily from the film's dialogues, scenes, and characters' actions. The findings identified several intrinsic elements, including theme, plot, characterization, setting, and point of view, with education, perseverance, and belief in students' potential emerging as the predominant themes. The analysis further revealed a range of moral values, including perseverance, responsibility, self-confidence, discipline, empathy, love and affection, leadership, and communicativeness. These values were classified according to individuals' relationships with themselves and with others, with perseverance and responsibility emerging as the most prominent. From an ELT perspective, the film offers pedagogical potential for developing students' language skills, enhancing motivation and critical thinking, and promoting character education. These findings suggest that films can serve as meaningful instructional resources that integrate language development with moral and character learning in ELT contexts.

Keywords: *Moral values, movie analysis, ELT, The Ron Clark Story.***1. INTRODUCTION**

Language plays a fundamental role in human communication while simultaneously transmitting cultural, social, and moral values across generations. In educational contexts, language learning therefore extends beyond linguistic competence to support learners' ethical awareness and character development. Recent studies have demonstrated that moral values can be embedded in EFL materials and classroom practices, highlighting the potential of English education to integrate language development with moral learning (Arwanto et al., 2024; Yonalia et al., 2024).

Literature provides a meaningful medium through which language, human experience, and moral understanding

intersect. By portraying conflicts, relationships, and ethical dilemmas, literary works encourage audiences to reflect critically on human behavior and moral choices. Among literary forms, film offers distinctive educational potential by combining spoken language, visual representation, characterization, and narrative development. Studies have shown that films effectively represent moral and character values such as responsibility, perseverance, empathy, respect, and cooperation (Ridhani et al., 2024; Widyahening et al., 2023; Wulandari et al., 2023; Zega et al., 2023). More recent research further confirms the potential of cinematic narratives to communicate character development and moral meaning through characters' experiences and conflicts (Della &

Tawarik, 2025; Sundari & Giovani, 2025).

The integration of moral values is particularly relevant in education because learning contributes not only to academic achievement but also to students' personal and social development. Within foreign-language education, moral dimensions can be incorporated into instructional materials and classroom practices rather than being separated from language development (Nirwanto et al., 2024). This perspective is supported by evidence that EFL materials can communicate moral principles through linguistic and contextual representations (Arwanto et al., 2024; Yonalia et al., 2024).

One educational film particularly relevant to this perspective is *The Ron Clark Story*, directed by Randa Haines. The film portrays Ron Clark's efforts to support students facing academic, behavioral, and motivational challenges. Throughout the narrative, Clark demonstrates perseverance, responsibility, discipline, creativity, empathy, and commitment while developing meaningful relationships with his students. Previous research has similarly identified important educational and moral dimensions in the film, particularly responsibility, discipline, perseverance, care, and hard work (Andini, 2021; Apriani, 2019).

The film also offers meaningful implications for English Language Teaching (ELT) because it provides contextualized language alongside social interactions and moral dilemmas that can stimulate classroom discussion and critical reflection. Film-based activities can therefore extend beyond language practice to facilitate character education and moral awareness. Previous studies have demonstrated the potential of films to integrate language-learning activities with character education and ethical reflection in EFL contexts (Ridhani et al.,

2024; Safitri et al., 2023; Zega et al., 2023).

Despite increasing scholarly attention to moral values in films, previous studies have largely examined moral or character values in individual cinematic works, while research on *The Ron Clark Story* has primarily addressed educational values or characteristics of its main character. Limited attention has been devoted to simultaneously examining its moral values, intrinsic literary elements, and implications for ELT. Addressing this gap, the present study investigates the moral values portrayed in *The Ron Clark Story*, analyzes the intrinsic elements through which these values are constructed, and explores their pedagogical implications for ELT. By integrating literary, moral, and pedagogical perspectives, the study seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the educational potential of film in English language learning.

2. METHODS

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to analyze the moral values portrayed in *The Ron Clark Story* directed by Randa Haines. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the objective of this study was to interpret and describe moral values embedded in the movie through characters, dialogues, actions, conflicts, and events rather than to quantify the findings. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), qualitative research is an approach used to explore and understand the meanings individuals or groups attribute to social or human problems. Similarly, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated that qualitative research focuses on understanding and interpreting phenomena from the participants' or researchers' perspectives within their natural contexts. Therefore, this research

applied qualitative descriptive analysis to identify, classify, interpret, and explain the moral values portrayed in the movie.

2.2 Object of the Research

The object of this research was *The Ron Clark Story*, a drama film directed by Randa Haines and released in 2006. The movie was selected because it is based on a true story and portrays various educational challenges together with numerous moral values demonstrated by the main character. The researcher focused on analyzing intrinsic elements, including characterization, plot, setting, conflict, and theme, as well as the moral values reflected through the characters' dialogues, actions, and interactions throughout the story. As explained by Nurgiyantoro (2019), intrinsic elements are essential components that construct literary works and determine the unity of the story.

2.3 Source of the Data

The data in this study consisted of primary and secondary data. The primary data were obtained from *The Ron Clark Story* movie and its official transcript, particularly the dialogues, scenes, and actions reflecting moral values. Meanwhile, the secondary data were collected from books, journal articles, previous research, and other relevant academic sources discussing literature, moral values, film analysis, and English Language Teaching (ELT). According to Sugiyono (2022), primary data are collected directly by the researcher from the main source of the study, whereas secondary data are obtained from supporting documents and relevant literature.

2.4 Technique of Data Collection

The data were collected using the documentation technique. Documentation is an appropriate method for collecting qualitative data because it allows researchers to examine written and visual

materials systematically (Ary et al., 2019). The procedures of data collection were conducted through several stages. First, the researcher watched *The Ron Clark Story* repeatedly to gain a comprehensive understanding of the storyline, characters, and educational context. Second, the researcher read the movie transcript carefully while comparing it with the film scenes to ensure the accuracy of the dialogues. Third, the researcher identified dialogues, actions, and events that contained moral values. Fourth, the researcher classified the collected data according to the categories of moral values and intrinsic elements. Finally, all relevant data were organized into a data classification table to facilitate further analysis.

2.5 Technique of Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2019), which consists of four interrelated activities: data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification.

The first stage was data collection, in which the researcher gathered relevant dialogues, scenes, actions, and events from the movie and its transcript that represented moral values and intrinsic elements.

The second stage was data condensation. At this stage, the researcher selected, focused, simplified, categorized, and organized the data based on the objectives of the research. Dialogues and scenes that reflected similar moral values were grouped together to facilitate interpretation.

The third stage was data display, where the classified data were presented systematically in tables and descriptive explanations. Organizing the data in this way enabled the researcher to recognize patterns, relationships, and recurring moral values throughout the movie.

The final stage was conclusion drawing and verification. In this stage, the researcher interpreted the findings by relating them to the theoretical framework and previous studies. The conclusions were continuously verified throughout the analysis to ensure that they were supported by sufficient evidence and remained consistent with the collected data (Miles et al., 2019).

2.6 Trustworthiness of the Data

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, this study applied credibility techniques through theoretical triangulation. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), credibility is one of the essential criteria for establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research. The researcher compared the findings with relevant theories of moral values, literary criticism, and previous studies to strengthen the interpretation. In addition, prolonged engagement with the data was conducted by repeatedly watching the movie and examining the transcript to ensure consistency and accuracy in identifying the moral values portrayed. The researcher also maintained careful documentation of the analysis process to enhance the dependability and confirmability of the research findings.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Intrinsic Elements of The Ron Clark Story

The analysis revealed that *The Ron Clark Story* is constructed through five intrinsic elements: theme, plot, characterization, setting, and point of view. These elements work together to build the narrative and strengthen the moral messages presented in the film (Nurgiyantoro, 2019).

1) Theme

The dominant theme of *The Ron Clark Story* is perseverance in education. The film portrays Ron Clark's determination to improve the academic

achievement and character of students from disadvantaged backgrounds despite facing numerous challenges. Other supporting themes include leadership, dedication, inspiration, and social responsibility. Through Ron Clark's commitment and innovative teaching strategies, the film emphasizes that perseverance and hard work can create meaningful educational and personal transformation.

2) Plot

The movie follows a progressive plot consisting of four stages: orientation, conflict, climax, and resolution. The orientation introduces Ron Clark, who moves from North Carolina to Harlem to teach at an underprivileged school. The conflict arises from students' disruptive behavior, limited educational resources, and resistance from colleagues and parents. The climax occurs when Ron's teaching strategies successfully improve students' academic performance and self-confidence. Finally, the resolution highlights the students' achievements and recognizes Ron Clark's dedication as an inspirational teacher.

3) Character and Characterization

Ron Clark is portrayed as the protagonist, characterized by perseverance, responsibility, creativity, leadership, empathy, and dedication. Throughout the story, he consistently motivates and supports his students despite numerous obstacles. The students initially appear undisciplined and unmotivated but gradually develop confidence, responsibility, and respect through Ron's guidance. Supporting characters, including the principal, fellow teachers, and parents, reinforce the educational challenges and contribute to the development of the story.

4) Setting

The story is primarily set in Harlem, New York, during the early

2000s. Most events take place in an underprivileged school where students face academic, social, and economic difficulties. Additional settings, such as students' homes and neighborhoods, illustrate poverty, limited parental support, and social inequality. These settings strengthen the realism of the story and emphasize the importance of education in transforming students' lives.

5) Point of View

The movie employs a third-person point of view, allowing audiences to observe both Ron Clark's experiences and the students' personal development

objectively. This perspective highlights the struggles, dedication, and leadership of the main character while reinforcing the film's central message that perseverance, moral guidance, and quality education can positively influence individuals and society.

3.2 Moral Values Portrayed in The Ron Clark Story

The analysis revealed that *The Ron Clark Story* portrays nineteen moral values through the characters' dialogues and actions. These values are summarized below.

Table 1. Moral Values Portrayed in The Ron Clark Story

Moral Value	Figure and Dialogue	Time
Honesty	 Mr. Clark : “You hold up for a minute. Wanted to ask a favor of you. Could you up to your pockets, please?” Student : “I believe this constitutes an illegal search sir.” Mr. Clark : “Right! On the desk. That morning at your house, your mother’s purse?” Student : “No no you see you got it all wrong. Me and her have this deal, you know! I take care of her and she takes care of me, you see?” Mr. Clark : “No, I don’t” Student : “But you about to tell me that crime doesn’t pay.” Mr.Clark : “Sometimes it costs and in this case three 1 hour study sessions with me.”	[51.34 – 28.39]

Self-confidence	 Ron Clark: <i>“Well if I was your teacher, you would have loved.”</i>  Tn. Turner : <i>“All I ask is that your students to pass.”</i> Ron Clark : <i>“Oh, everyone of my students will pass.”</i>  Mrs. Wallace : <i>“You’re giving her big ideas, and the world will only crush her.”</i> Ron Clark : <i>“I don’t believe that. I know she is a great student, a true leader creative and intelligent.”</i> Mrs. Wallace : <i>“Schmika?”</i> Mr. Clark : <i>“Yes, if she gets good grades in May, I think we might be able to get her into Manhattan West for middle school. It’s for gifted children.”</i>	[21:14 – 21:30] - [45:12 – 45:14] -[59:33 –59:51]
Responsibility	 Ron Clark: <i>“Every year I tell my students to go</i>	[3:13 – 3:19]

		<i>after what they want in life, dream big, and take risks. It's time for me to start practicing what I preach."</i>	
Independence	 chocolate milk if you can't do it you may get to see me Mr. Clark : <i>"Since I got here you haven't listened to me. So here's the deal, today we are going to learn grammar. If you're quiet an you listen, every 15 seconds I will drink a chocolate milk. If you can do it, you may get to see me puke."</i>  [Classroom improvement scenes]	[39.45 – 40.13]	
Moral Courage	 to go for what they want in life dream big take risks Ron Clark : <i>"Every year I tell my students to go after what they want in life, dream big, and take risks. It's time for me to start practicing what I preach."</i>	[3:13 – 3:19]	
Humility	 are going to be my family and that means that i am not leaving and you are not	[17.16 – 18.20]	

	Mr. Clark : <i>“We are going to be my family and that means, I am not leaving and you are not leaving.”</i>	
Critical Attitude	 problems the problem isn't the kids it's not even what they can achieve Ron Clark: <i>“The problem isn't the kids. It's not even what they can achieve the problem is what you expect them to achieve.”</i>	[45:19 – 44:05]
Perseverance	 losers Ron Clark: <i>“You are not losers. I know this is hard, but if you don't try, you will never know how great you really are. I will not give up on you, and you should not give up on yourselves.”</i>	[1:09:51 – 1:11:46]
Love and Affection	 every day we are climbing up and up and up and we are there and now Ron Clark: <i>“In this class, every day we are climbing. Up and up and up and we are there. And now it's time to jump. I know you're scared, but I want you to try.”</i>	[46:45 – 47:12]

Respect	 Mr. Clark : <i>"Its up to you, whether we eat or not. Schmika! This is a family and families treat each other with respect they never ever lie to one another. Did you cut in line? We are all just waiting on you."</i>	[56:06 – 56:19]
Unselfishness & Sensitivity	 Schmika : <i>"Mr. Clark, I can't do my paper now. I have to go cook dinner."</i> Ron Clark : <i>"I'll do it."</i> Schmika : <i>"You'll do what?"</i> Ron Clark : <i>"I'll cook dinner, and you work on your paper. Start with the third paragraph"</i>	[56:44 – 56:49]
Kindness & Friendliness	 Ron Clark : <i>"Hey, what's going on with you?"</i> Hadley Creg : <i>"The teacher said I can't learn, so I have to take out the trash."</i> Ron Clark : <i>"I'm Mr. Clark. What's your name?"</i> Hadley Creg : <i>"Hadley Creg."</i> Ron Clark : <i>"Nice to meet you. I'm sorry, I'm forgetful what's my name again?"</i> Hadley Creg : <i>"Mr. Clark."</i> Ron Clark : <i>"See? You just learned something. Let's get you out of"</i>	[00:43 – 01:27]

	<i>there.”</i>	
Strong Belief	 <i>Ron Clark : “If you believe me, you can learn more than you ever dreamed of. That’s my promise.”</i>	[47:23 – 47:40]
Loyalty	 <i>Sean : “Where am I going to go now, Mr?</i> <i>Ron Clark : “I will help you. I’m not going anywhere.”</i>	[1:23:06–1:23:15]
Religious Value	 <i>Schmika : “Mr. Clark, I can’t do my paper now. I have to go cook dinner.”</i> <i>Ron Clark : “I’ll do it. I’ll cook dinner, and you work on your paper.”</i>	[56:44–56:49]
Hard Work		[57:04 – 57:14]

		Schmika : <i>"I'm trying to concentrate. I did what you said I moved the third paragraph, and it sounds much better."</i>	
Leadership		Ron Clark : <i>"If we want to change, we must start with ourselves. I will lead, but you must also participate."</i>	[25:20–25:55]
Friendly/Communicative		Mr. Clark : <i>"Hy, What you reading?"</i> Student : <i>"Nothing"</i> Mr. Clark : <i>"I didn't read that book till high school."</i>	[24:25–24:36]
Discipline		Ron Clark : <i>"Rule number three we all line up to go to lunch room. Because we are all a family, if one of us doesn't get line for the lunchroom, the none of us gets lunch"</i>	[25.54 – 26.12]

3.3 Theoretical Implications for English Language Teaching

The findings indicate that *The Ron Clark Story* has strong potential as an instructional medium in English Language Teaching (ELT). The movie

not only provides authentic language input but also promotes character education through moral values such as honesty, perseverance, leadership, responsibility, and respect. These findings support the view that literature

and films can enhance students' language proficiency while simultaneously developing their critical thinking and moral awareness (Simaibang, 2017).

Teachers can integrate the movie into classroom activities by asking students to identify intrinsic elements, analyze characters and moral values, discuss important scenes, perform role-plays, and write reflective essays. Such activities encourage the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in a meaningful context. Therefore, movie-based learning can create a more interactive, student-centered, and engaging learning environment while strengthening both language competence and character education.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that *The Ron Clark Story* incorporates five interconnected intrinsic elements theme, plot, characterization, setting, and point of view which collectively construct a coherent narrative and reinforce its educational message (Abrams, 2018; Nurgiyantoro, 2019). The film predominantly emphasizes perseverance, dedication, leadership, and belief in students' potential, while its structured plot portrays Ron Clark's efforts to transform students facing academic and behavioral challenges (Perrine, 2017; Andini, 2021). His characterization reflects leadership, responsibility, empathy, and persistence, whereas the students' development illustrates meaningful personal and behavioral transformation (Bennet & Royle, 2023; Apriani, 2019). The Harlem setting further contextualizes the narrative within broader educational and social challenges, strengthening the film's moral and educational significance (Abrams, 2018; Duhan, 2015).

The analysis further identified a wide range of moral values conveyed through the characters, dialogues, and narrative events, including honesty, self-

confidence, responsibility, independence, moral courage, humility, perseverance, love and affection, respect, kindness, loyalty, hard work, leadership, communicativeness, and discipline. Following Novita's (2020) classification, these values primarily concern individuals' relationships with themselves and with others, reflecting broader principles of moral and social development (Gibbs, 2019; Tanrikulu, 2016). Among these values, perseverance and responsibility emerged as particularly prominent through Ron Clark's sustained commitment to his students' academic and personal development. This finding is consistent with previous studies emphasizing his dedication, responsibility, discipline, and persistence as central dimensions of the film's educational message (Andini, 2021; Apriani, 2019; Kahar, 2018).

Beyond its literary and moral dimensions, *The Ron Clark Story* demonstrates meaningful pedagogical potential for English Language Teaching (ELT). Films provide contextualized language input and visual support while creating opportunities for learners to develop communicative competence and engage critically with social and moral issues (Buckingham, 2013; Lightbown & Spada, 2021). Through activities such as discussions, role-plays, presentations, and reflective writing, the film can support the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills while promoting active participation and critical thinking (Garcia & Lin, 2019; Gomes & McCauley, 2020). Moreover, its representation of perseverance, responsibility, discipline, leadership, and empathy provides opportunities to integrate language learning with character education (Chowdhury, 2018; Helmawati, 2018). Thus, *The Ron Clark Story* can function as an engaging audiovisual resource for simultaneously supporting English language

development, moral awareness, and character formation.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that *The Ron Clark Story* contains well-developed intrinsic elements, including theme, plot, characterization, setting, and point of view, which collectively convey messages of perseverance, dedication, and the transformative role of education. The film also portrays various moral values, with perseverance and responsibility emerging as the most prominent through Ron Clark's commitment to his students' academic and personal development. Furthermore, the film has meaningful implications for English Language Teaching (ELT). It can support the development of language skills while fostering critical thinking, moral awareness, and character education. Thus, *The Ron Clark Story* can serve as an engaging instructional resource that integrates language learning with character development.

Ethical Considerations

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design using *The Ron Clark Story* and its transcript as the primary sources of data. The research did not involve human participants, interviews, surveys, experiments, or the collection of personal or sensitive information; therefore, informed consent and participant-related ethical approval were not applicable. Ethical research practices were maintained by accurately representing the analyzed dialogues, scenes, actions, and events, appropriately acknowledging all sources, and ensuring that interpretations were grounded in the data and relevant theoretical frameworks.

Statement on the Use of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used only for limited language editing and manuscript refinement. AI was not used to generate, fabricate, manipulate, or

replace the research data or the researchers' analytical and interpretive processes. The identification and classification of moral values, analysis of intrinsic elements, interpretation of dialogues and scenes, and formulation of the findings and conclusions were conducted by the researchers based on the movie, its transcript, and relevant academic sources.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest related to the research, authorship, or publication of this study.

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