# THE USE OF MULTICULTURAL BOOKS IN FOSTERING DIVERSITY AWARENESS AMONG JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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# DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGE AND ARTS EDUCATION FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY

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#### **DECLARATION**

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Certify that thesis entitled "The Use of Multicultural Books in Fostering Diversity Awareness among Junior High School Students" is my own work and I did not do any plagiarism or inappropriate quotation against the ethics and rules commended by the Ministry of Education of Republic Indonesia Number 19, 2010 regarding plagiarism in higher education. Therefore, I deserve to face court if I am found to have plagiarized this work.

Palembang July, 2023 The undersigned

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#### **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my first love and to the woman I love the most, to the woman who continually prays for and realizes all my desires and teaches the meaning of patience and striving for a better future. I dedicate this thesis to you, Mom.

I also sincerely dedicate this thesis to my hero, the man who always taught me to try, never give up, be strong, and be independent. This is for you, Dad.

Finally, I dedicate this thesis to my sister and brother, who constantly remind me to fight and support every step I take. Because thanks to them, I am motivated to be successful.

#### **MOTO**

"Karena sesungguhnya sesudah kesulitan itu ada kemudahan." (QS Al Inshirah: 5)

"Every happiness you give to others will return to you even more beautiful" – Unknown.

"saya datang, saya bimbingan, saya ujian, saya menang" – Unknown.

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#### **ABSTRACT**

This study focused how diversity awareness is fostered through multicultural book discussion and as part of literacy activities. Researcher also explore how picture books can support students' sense of diversity. This research used qualitative methods to find out how literacy activities using multicultural picture books can help foster a sense of diversity in students and how students respond to the diversity around them. The data were collected through interviews with students, teachers, and students drawing. The researcher analyzed the data based on all these activities all the data obtained has answered the researcher's questions, especially in the interviews and documentation on the results of student drawings all data in the form of observations, interviews, and documentations are put together in order to find out whether all the data has answered the researcher's questions. Fostering a sense of diversity is done by using diversity picture books with the theme of gender, culture, and disability. The findings also showed that students gave a positive side of mutual respect and not mocking each other towards diversity through picture books during literacy, as well as their responses that showed they aware of diversity is very important to grow from within themselves. In addition, students also preferred to read picture books during literacy.

Keywords: literacy, multicultural, diversity, picture books

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## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, the problems of the study, the objectives of the study, and the significance of the study.

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

In education, many ways can be done to achieve educational goals, including fostering an interest in literacy in students. Literacy can be defined as the ability to read and write, known as 'Melek' aksara/keberaksaraan' (Cooper, 1993; Alwasilah, 2001). There are so many ways teachers can increase students' literacy interest, such as using Picture Book because, in Picturebooks, there is an illustration on each page or one page of each Kennedy page pair (2019). So with this, we can use it to grab our students' attention. In addition, picture books can convey messages through illustrated illustrations that are easy for students to understand.

This literacy activity can also be a foundation to increase students' sense of tolerance because since Indonesia is a multicultural country with many tribes and cultures, it is unsurprising that the purpose of tolerance between diverse-owned students must be instilled. Therefore, this idea illustrates the importance of building harmony and tolerance in literacy activities under "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika," Mulyana (2012, p. 47) argues that to be part of the civilized world, understanding and harmony between religious people and humans can still be said to be very lacking because in reality in Indonesia itself there are still problems of intolerance and hostility between ethnicities. Looking at these opinions requires that English teachers have a deeper understanding of intercultural conflicts that often occur (Jin, 2014). Therefore, socio-cultural and cross-cultural can help increase a deeper understanding of learning the communicative aspects of English as a second language efficiently (Nurutdinova et al., 2017, p.69).

Continuing from Mulyana's opinion above, in the current era of globalisation, the critical difference between nations is not ideology and economy

but culture. From this, the concept of culture is very influential and makes us striking and a differentiator between countries; Culture is an integral part of all human societies (Browaeys & Price, 2015). One way to increase teachers' tolerance in schools is to habituate student character values by applying literacy through a tolerant picture book with norm values.

Looking at Indonesia, a multicultural country, teaching about tolerance and applying norm values can be found in schools in all lessons and English lessons. In general, textbooks have a function as the primary source that students use in the learning process, such as opinions (Sjamsuddin, 2004; Saripudin & Komalasari, 2016a), that they (Books) are prepared and written for students by people who master the subject to facilitate the learning process.

Many researchers focus their research on the development of cross-cultural understanding (CCU) in a variety of regulations and activities (some of which are: Raymond & Hall, 2008; Niles, 1999; Elfenbein, 2006; Finney & Orr, 1995; Evers, 1998; and Citron, 2913). This understanding will be exciting and centred on an everyday conversation among people of diverse ethnicities in a multicultural society. Therefore, cross-cultural understanding must be introduced and applied to schools in Indonesia, ranging from elementary schools to universities. This is very useful because understanding different cultures from each other can increase harmony and mutual respect in social life.

Moreover, according to Mulyana (2012, p.43), that misunderstanding occurs in people of the same and different cultures because they do not understand or respect each other's cultures. To overcome this misunderstanding, Lau (2016, p. 1-2) explained that the understanding of intercultural affairs could be seen at least from the following aspects, one of which is that in the 21st century, the intensification of conflicts between civilisations and cultures goes quickly with the passage of time and the pace of globalization that continues to advance.

The emergence of conflict in Indonesia itself is very potential; this usually occurs because of the heterogeneity that almost all parts of Indonesia have

(Agung, 2017). This situation is very troubling and worries people from all walks of life about the lack of awareness of mutual respect and respect for each other. Therefore, we must teach education about multiculturalism from an early age; multicultural visions and missions consisting of pluralism, democracy, and humanism are the primary capital of the moral attitudes of quality students.

Returning to the previous understanding by Lau (2016, p. 1-2), literacy is a skill or ability that must be mastered to survive 21st-century learning. This activity is essential in realising character-building education to increase productivity and competitiveness. According to Kiron (2019), The development and strengthening of literacy are crucial elements in the progress of a nation today; in other words, literacy can help students in increasing interest in reading and gaining knowledge that has not been obtained through these activities, especially by using picture book media, which has direct illustrations contained in it through images.

Since 2016 the Ministry of Education and Culture has implemented the National Literacy Movement (Gerakan Literasi Nasional-"GLN"). GLN itself is the implementation of the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 23 of 2015 concerning the Growth of Character and Ethics. Basic literacy found in GLN includes reading and writing, numerical, science, financial, digital, and cultural and civic (Kahveci & entürk, 2021).

In reading activities, students and teachers can get new knowledge and information that will be useful. Literacy requires students to have high concentration and focus, high thinking, and concentration power to clearly understand the text (Pujiono, 2012). We are involved in a series of complex cognitive processes when reading texts. They simultaneously use their awareness and understanding of phenomena, phonics (the relationship between letters and sounds and the relationship between sounds, notes, and words), and the ability to understand the construction of meanings from texts (Prianggita, 2018).

This education for multicultural literacy should help students achieve valuable skills, norms, and commitments to become citizens who will work for social justice. Due to the increasing ethnic, cultural, racial, linguistic, and religious diversity worldwide, civic education must be substantially changed to prepare students to work effectively in the 21st century (Banks, 2004).

In this case, the teacher is a central and very crucial element in the implementation of Multicultural Education Literacy (MCEI); the teacher is central to the educational process and the primary determinant of the quality and success of the results of playing a role in achieving the educational goals. It can be seen that teachers show the development and change of a new generation by teaching tolerance, respect, and mutual understanding and respect between students by the norms of democratic culture and good citizens (Banks, 2010).

From one of the case studies from Banks's, Literacy in Indonesia has not been seen as an essential agenda in almost all levels of education in Indonesia; this can be seen in the 2003 Education Decree the term multicultural education is not even mentioned (Tilaar, HAR, 2004: 182-184). Many countries are already using literature for children as an effective medium for spreading the seeds of multicultural consciousness (Mitchell, Diana, 2002). Stories like Duke Erllington, Sweet Color, and the Freedom Quilts are some examples of multicultural stories that are popular and deliberately used in some schools in America; above all, multicultural literature has an essential role in such an influence. Students must be able to connect literature and their daily lives (Colby & Lyon, 2004). Reading about the world's diversity will give readers perspective and setting, allowing them to imagine and consider the broader world beyond their own. Not much different from Indonesia, multicultural books are also widely used, but what is an obstacle is the way of understanding and application, about the importance of mutual respect between ethnicities, be it race, religion, and culture that still needs to be improved. Although Indonesia is one of the largest multicultural countries in the world, in reality, these conditions do not guarantee the creation of harmony. There are many irregularities in social life in Indonesia today, such as conflicts

and social tensions arising due to a lack of understanding of mutual respect's importance. This research was conducted in one of the private schools in Palembang, namely SMP Global Islamic School & Studio, because this school is one of the schools that accepts students with special needs. In addition, this research was also conducted to see whether students are aware of the diversity around them after doing literacy with picture books. Therefore, the author wants to learn more about The Use of Multicultural Books in Fostering Diversity Awareness among Junior High School Students.

#### 1.2 Problems of the Study

The research questions were formulated in the following questions:

- 1. How is the sense of diversity fostered through Multicultural books?
- 2. What is the response of junior high school students after reading Multicultural books?

#### 1.3 Research Objectives

Based on the research questions, the objectives of the study were:

- 1. To find out how the sense of diversity fostered through Multicultural books.
- 2. To find out the responses of junior high school students after reading Multicultural books.

#### 1.4 Significance of the Study

Researcher hope to benefit lecturers, students, future researchers or teachers, and parents by conducting this research.

#### a. Lecturers

Hopefully, this research can provide additional information about students' awareness of the diversity in the world and even around them through literacy activities using multicultural books with pictures.

#### b. Student

Through literacy activities using picture books, students can know and learn new things about diversity. They can improve their English skills through the picture book and become a reference for students about how important it is to grow and apply the sense of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika to the school environment to create harmony with each other.

#### c. Future researchers or teachers

This research, hopefully, can be an inspiration to create literacy activities that are more useful in the future and can be used as a reference to introduce English through literacy activities using picture books and can be a reference for them to be aware of the culture that exists in this world, especially in Indonesia. Hopefully, the results of this research can help in developing research that will be carried out related to the importance of growing and feeling Bhinneka Tunggal Ika among students or young people.

#### d. Parents

Hopefully, it can help or make introducing diversity meaningful in this world, especially in Indonesia, to avoid unwanted behaviors or attitudes such as discrimination.

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