

## **Building Reading Literacy Culture Through Multiculturalism Approach on Grade VII Students of State Secondary School 5 Padang Panjang**

Novelti

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**Abstract:** In this qualitative research, I aimed at describing the approach of multiculturalism can provide traction to the process of building a culture of reading literacy, understanding of Indonesian language (Bahasa) teachers on the culture of reading literacy and multiculturalism approach and techniques used by teachers to build a culture of reading literacy through the multiculturalism approach in Grade VII of State Secondary School 5 Padang Panjang. From the interviews conducted to the Indonesian language teachers of the Grade VII of the school, it can be concluded that, first as the Indonesian language teachers in any school at any levels ranging from elementary school to high school and even higher education should support and assist to promote the culture of reading literacy to become an important thing to do. Second, building a culture of reading literacy in schools should be able to give a positive value for students and educators. Third, globally the development of reading literacy culture only thrives in big cities like Jakarta. Fourth, the school's response to the literacy movement is quite good but the materials outside textbooks in the school library are still lacking and inadequate. Fifth, there is a relationship between reading literacy culture and multiculturalism approach.

**Key words:** Reading literacy culture, multiculturalism approach, secondary school, Padang Panjang, Jakarta, multiculturalism

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The community has diversified cultures. Culture is derived from the word "buddhi" which means "sense". The existing culture formed by habit (intelligence) and natural amenities provided as a source of life. Culture is a hereditary civilization that can not be separated from science. Culture is a thought process which is influenced by religion (belief), politics (rules), language (communication), clothing (self-protection), construction (research), art (taste). Avruach argues the culture is complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (Mayana and Tisni, 2017). Culture is also the result of the research, creativity and sense of human beings. Storey (2015) states that culture actually made by the people for themselves (Nabila and Tamara, 2017). Culture is the way of living that the members learn and transfer by teaching both directly and indirectly through the social instruction, so that, it can say that it is the results from the past research and be the conditions for the future study (Jermsttiparsert, 2016).

Lately, the phenomenon of juvenile delinquency is increasingly being presented in the media which later becomes one of the most 'headline' discussion topics

among parents and the community. Many parents have been frustrated by their children's deeds such as brawl, sexual abuse, smoking, alcohol, sex and even drug addiction. The more controlled, the more truant and the angrier, the more ferocious. At this point, parents usually start to surrender. The dreams to make their children intellectually, emotionally and spiritually intelligent can be only expressed in the prayers before bed.

Social trends seem to be more readily accepted than parental advice who already considered "old-fashioned" among teenagers. Educating children on a global era is quite complicated. Parents are required to be able to raise their children in a world which is increasingly open to the flow of information and technological advances. Every day, we are at the vortex flow of information packaged in a variety of sources such as the media, smart phones, soap operas, movies, internet and social media. This situation requires anyone to be critical. Critical awareness becomes a strong point in order not to get carried away and drowned in the vortex of a global culture channeled through modern communication devices. However can the children receive critical consciousness in the middle of an increasingly unstoppable social trend.

Literacy is literacy, the ability to write and read. Cultural literacy is intended to make a habit of thinking followed by a process of reading and writing. In the end,

what things done in a process of these activities will create a masterpiece. Civilizing or getting used to read and write requires continuously processes if these habits does not exist or has not been formed in a given society.

Literacy culture is a habit of thinking followed by a process of reading and writing to produce research. These habits should be cultivated as early as possible, so that, a child and a teenager have “thought sharpness” through the process of reading and writing. He will be eventually able to take advantage of “awareness” to counter the infiltration of hedonism and pragmatism cultures developed in the social trend.

However, the facts prove otherwise. During this time, we have experienced significant changes. The family and the state as tools of social control have not been able to form a critical awareness among children and adolescents. We should have been matured in a literacy culture leading to critical consciousness prior to the freedom of information and communication faucet widely opened. As the result in the real life a teenager may translate, imitate and straightly practice violent and hedonistic behaviours displayed through the Internet, movies, soap operas and news.

The changes get bigger and ‘wilder’. The family and the state as the forms of social institutions, lose their power to dampen negative influences that are already frozen in the environment and the children’s personality. State makes ‘irrelevant’ policies to the root of the problem. As a result, the amount of teens that is under sentence of castration of sexual violence increases significantly. But one question remains is the gelding punishment of sexual violence can be stopped. It can’t say for sure. The longer the critical consciousness has not yet formed, the longer the chances of crime can happen (even with new patterns and ways).

In a broad context, multicultural education tries to assist the unity among nations in terms of a democratic way with emphasis on the plurality of people’s perspectives from different nations, ethnics and cultural groups. One the ways to develop literacy culture in a family is by applying local culture approach such as sitting around with other people. Thus, schools are conditioned to reflect the practice of democratic values. Curriculum reveals various different cultural groups in society, languages and dialects, i.e., students are encouraged to speak with respect between them and carry on the head the values of cooperation, rather than to talk about competition and prejudice among them who differ in race, ethnicity, culture and social status groups.

Through this approach, the community, especially, children and adolescents can develop literacy culture outside of the school time. This approach would require

the assistance of parents, teachers and if necessary together with the village government. Please remember that one source of the village Law is the “local wisdom” which needs to be explored and taken. Through the village meetings, village literacy program (litdes) can be used as a decision together into a village regulation (perdes). For children, the read-write activity could be also collaborated with endangered traditional games. Not only to form a critical consciousness, this approach could also revive the culture of mutual cooperation between families. This will be evident in the process of supervision and assistance to the children. Each family who gathered in indigenous communities must have a common concept that the responsibility for educating children is not just a burden on the biological parent but also a shared responsibility of indigenous communities. Therefore, there is a kind of mutual cooperation in educating children. Every family should look at children and adolescents in the community as an integral part of their own child. Thus, educating children is a shared responsibility among those stake holders. This approach of local-based literacy culture can be carried out simultaneously if there is the facility to read, easy to access reading materials, cheap, fun and sustainable. If this activity is used as a scalable and sustained program, the literacy culture will be gradually internalized in the life of families and community. Strengthening literacy culture will also assist families in search of alternative solutions against hedonism culture among experienced by many children and adolescents.

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan pendekatan multikulturalisme dapat memberikan daya tarik terhadap proses membangun budaya literasi membaca. Kemudian pemahaman guru mata pelajaran bahasa Indonesia di SMP negeri 5 Padangpanjang terhadap budaya literasi membaca dan pendekatan multikulturalisme. Terakhir untuk mengungkap teknik guru untuk membangun budaya literasi membaca melalui pendekatan multikulturalisme pada siswa kelas VII SMP Negeri 5 Padang Panjang.

The purpose of this study was to describe the multiculturalism approach which is able to influence the building process of reading literacy culture, the Bahasa teachers’ understanding on the culture and multiculturalism approach in State Secondary School (SMP Negeri) 5 Padang Panjang. Finally, this study is reveal teachers’ techniques to build literacy culture through multiculturalism approach in the Grade VII of the school.

**The nature of literacy:** According to the 7th Edition Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, the word

“literacy” means “the ability to read and write”. On the contrary, it is rarely used in the context of school learning in Indonesia. It can be seen from the absence of the word “literacy” within Indonesian language dictionary. Schooling in Indonesia seems preferably to use the term “language teaching” or “learning the language” rather than “literacy”. At that time, reading and writing may be considered sufficient as a basis for human education to face the challenges of the times and the harshness of life.

The word then develops as “the process of reading, writing, speaking, listening, imagining and seeing” (Kuder and Hasit, 2002). Reading process involves some complicated operations such as cognitive, linguistic and social activities. Readers should actively involve the previous experience, the process of thinking, attitudes, emotions and interest in reading comprehension.

According to Snow in Cartney and Philipis (2008) the concept of literacy and literacy development vary in a number of aspects and this variation is implicit when discussing literacy. These variants then raise controversial outlook.

Wagner and Lang (2000) asserts that the low level of literacy that is closely related to the high school drop-out rates, poverty and unemployment. The third criterion is part of the low indicators of human development index. Creating literated generation is a bridge towards a prosperous and critical care. Critical of all information received that do not react emotionally and care for the environment.

**The nature of reading literacy:** A wide variety of definitions of reading in the world of language easier are easy to find. Linguists often provide different limitations on the emphasis but the core remains similar. In general, they agree reading materials contain thoughts or ideas. Reading is a process demanded the unity of words which is viewed as one and that the meaning of individual words will be known. If this can not be met, then the role of the expressed or implied meaning will not be captured and understood. In other words, this reading procedure will not be functioning well. Literacy competence is the ability to solve the problem or achieve a goal in the real world by using text as the main tool. In the context of language education in Indonesia, the concept of literacy can be associated not only with daily communicative competence but also with oral communicative competency.

**Building literacy culture in schools:** Research shows clearly that the basic literacy skills can be used either to help learners to more easily understand what is around them and can increase the success story of children in

schools. Maman (2007) stated that there is a requirement that must be followed in order to realize such condition, namely the emergence of literacy culture in the given community. Literacy culture will be the foundation for the development of reading community, learning community and community knowledge. In such society, there are always changes towards increased prosperity, justice, humanitarian, religious and spiritual aspects. At this time, books are urgently needed. In other words, the changes will occur if the community is intelligent.

Indonesian learning paradigm changes contained in the Minister of National Education Regulation (Permendiknas) Number 22 of 2006 on the Content Standards and Number 23 of 2006 on Graduates Competency Standards (SKL). In this regulation, it is expressed that the Indonesian language learning in schools or madrassas aimed at improving the ability of learners to communicate in Indonesian language well and correctly both oral and in written as well as developing an appreciation of the Indonesian human literary research. This change is a realization of Government Regulation number 19 of 2005 on National Education Standards as a declaration of the quality of education which are more fully set out in the Strategic Plan of 2005-2025 in the form of a strategy of “Policy on Quality, Relevance and Competitiveness”.

The above changes are consequential on the changes in learning strategies conducted by Indonesian educators. Educators should change their positions as helping learners to speak and compose. They are different from other subject’s teachers who only transfer knowledge to students they train the ability to speak or compose. Indonesian language teaching in schools is not about the science of language or humanities but rather an increase in the ability to communicate in both oral and written forms. Thus, learning Indonesian language (Bahasa) is currently focused on efforts to build a literacy culture.

**Multiculturalism approach in education:** In a simple sense, education is often interpreted as a human attempt to build personality in accordance with the values of society and culture. The education process itself is a combination of efforts, influence, protection and assistance provided to the children of the nation directed at children’s maturation, precisely to help children to have capabilities in carrying out the task his own life. The influence comes from adults around them and addressed to minors.

On the other hand, Indonesia anthropologist Koentjaraningrat describes that “education as an attempt to divert the customs and the whole culture of the old generation to the new generation”. Definition with the

philosophical nuances formulated by sudarminta who interpret broadly and generally that “education as a conscious effort made through the guidance of educators, teaching and exercises to help students experience the process of humanizing themselves towards reaching a mature and noble person.” The word “education” contains at least four terms, namely as a form of activities, processes, products produced by the process and science.

Historical roots of multiculturalism in Indonesia, according by Muhaemin can be tracked at least during the three decades of centralized policy and tight security on the issue of differences that have eliminated people’s ability to think, discuss and solve the problems that arise from differences in open, rational and peaceful conditions. The sectarian violence that erupted sporadically in the late 1990s in various areas of Indonesia has showed how vulnerable the sense of community that is built into the nation-state how dense the prejudice between groups and how low the mutual understanding between groups.

Multiculturalism is not easy to understand. It contains two very complex notions of “multi” meaning plural (or many) and “culturalism” containing the notion of cultures. The term “plural” connotes the meaning of “diversified” because pluralism does not mean not only the recognition of manifold things but also the recognition of political, social and economic implications. Therefore, pluralism correlates with democratic principles (Tilaar, 2004). Furthermore, Suparlan explains that multiculturalism is an ideology that emphasizes the equality of recognition and respect of cultural differences.

Multiculturalism education is an education strategy applied on all kinds of subjects by using student’s different existing cultures in ethnicity, religion, language, gender, social class, race, ability and age, so that, the learning process will be effective and easy. Multiculturalism education is also aimed at training and building student’s character to be able to be democratic, humanist and pluralist in their own environmental (Yaqin, 2005).

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The method used was descriptive method. Descriptive method is a method in researching the status of a group of people, an object, a set of conditions, a system of thought or a class of events in the present. The purpose of this descriptive study was to create a description, view and portrait in a systematic, factual and accurate manners on the facts, properties and relationships between investigated phenomenon.

According to Sugiyono (2012), research method “is basically a scientific way to get data with a specific purpose and usefulness”.

Data collection techniques in this study use the instrument interview. The interview is one of the most important parts of any survey. Without an interview researchers will lose information that can only be obtained by asking directly to the respondent. Such data is the backbone of a research survey.

This study used a qualitative approach. Data obtained from books, journals and other mass media. Furthermore, the data described and analyzed to answer the research questions systematically and purposefully.

In analyzing the data, we summarizes the data in the form that is easily to understand and interpret (Sukardi, 2004). Moleong (2007) noted that the activities in qualitative data analysis are performed interactively and continuously at every stage of research until it is completed and saturated. Bogdan and Biklen mentions that “analysis involves working with data organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what to be learned and deciding what you will tell the others” (Kristiawan and Tobari, 2017).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Based on interviews with an Indonesian language (Bahasa) teacher of Grade VII of the state secondary school 5 Padangpanjang named Dra. Sasmita Ely, there are some views on the relationship between building a reading literacy culture and the multiculturalism approach. In simple manner, literacy can be defined as an ability to read and write. However, literacy has a broader meaning, so that, literacy no longer contains a single but various meanings (multiple literacies). It consists of computer literacy, media literacy, technology literacy, economy literacy, information literacy, even moral literacy. A literated person is a person who is able to understand something by reading the right information and do something based on his understanding of the content of the reading.

Literacy mastery in all aspects of life has become the backbone of the progress of civilization of a nation. It is impossible to be a great nation if only relies on oral culture characterizing the learning in schools and universities. In fact, the level of literacy in schools nowadays is getting lower and lower. In other terms, it demonstrates the inability to manage the education system to create the intellectual life of the nation. Tha’s why literacy culture must be instilled from an early age, so that, children can know the reading and master the world of writing.

From the above description, it can be obtained several important conclusions. First as an Indonesian language (Bahasa) teacher in any schools and at levels ranging from elementary to higher education), teachers should support and assist to build the literacy culture as the most important thing to do. In other words, students and educators should be able to cultivate the reading literacy movement. Reading literacy will greatly assist learners and educators in adding science and knowledge wherever and whenever. In this IT era, the object should be used as a useful reading material and easily obtained. Second, building a reading literacy culture in schools should be able to give a positive value for students and educators. But not all people in the school understand this. It can be seen on subjects related to science teachers in these subjects require only the student's high level of cognitive ability by providing exercises or home research in the form of tests (objective questions). If it is associated with reading literacy, student's insight and knowledge will further increase if those exercises and home research are given in the form of reading literacy, so that, students can write down what they have read. Benefits to administration of reading literacy tasks will be seen simultaneously between teachers and students. In addition, students will love reading books, far from merely read their "Facebook status" or compulsion of their taskss.

Third, globally the development of literacy culture can only be seen in big cities like Jakarta. In small ones like Padang Panjang, the culture needs to be fully supported and implemented. It can be proven by the role of the parent's of students who still do not support the reading literacy movement. Fourth, the school's response to the literacy movement was quite good but for reading materials, non-text books sources are still quite limited and inadequate.

Fifth, reading literacy culture is associated with multiculturalism approach. In this era, technological developments greatly affect a person's life. Students tend use technology products such as mobile phones, computers and other gadgets to more useless goals. Multiculturalism looked at various kinds of aspects of life. Through technology, literature and other media, learners can be given the task to make portfolios in collecting information related to multiculturalism such as politics, culture, growing issues, economy and other subject matters relating to the aspects of life. Each week, students are given a different theme to gather information from various sources in the form portfolios.

From the above description, it can be seen that building a community reading literacy culture, especially in the State Secondary School (SMP Negeri) 5 Padang

Panjang is very important. Not only on Indonesian language (Bahasa) subject but also all subjects were given in schools should also develop the reading literacy culture, so that, students do not just read a book because the tasks assigned by the teacher but because of their love of reading. Through reading literacy culture, students will have better intelligence levels. Through the application of multiculturalism approach in reading literacy, students can see what is happening around them. They will be very sensitive to their own environments if they know the aspects of life.

## **CONCLUSION**

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that building reading literacy culture in the student's environment and higher education is still far from what is called "a good literacy culture". Reading books for increasing knowledge and views among younger generations is still not yet embedded. They merely read their "social media status" or task compulsion. Worse, most of the teachers 'suffer from' this kind of 'disease. It is easy to identify in a more real term that our society does not have a good literacy tradition.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

There are several approaches to develop a literacy culture. One of them is multiculturalism approach which can be done by giving assignments to students to make portfolios on all aspects of life in Indonesia. In short, building a reading literacy culture can be conducted by using multiculturalism approach.

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