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# INTEGRATING MULTICULCURAL VALUES IN TECHING INDONESIAN LANGUAGE AT IAIN TULUNGAGUNG

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## Abstract

Indonesian language teaching plays an important role in developing mutual understanding, making agreements for common values and goals, overcoming disputes, and keeping dialogue among multicultural Indonesian people. This article explains the integration of multicultural values trough teaching of Indonesian language. This study is qualitatively approached. The data are collected using documentation technique. This article discusses six main issues, namely (1) Indonesia as a multicultural country, (2) integrating multicultural values in instructional design, (3) integrating multicultural values in teaching material, (4) integrating multicultural values in teaching strategy, (5) integrating multicultural values in teaching media, and (6) integrating multicultural values in classroom atmosphere. Indonesia has about 500 ethnic groups and each group has a particular language and culture. In addition, Indonesian people live with six different religions. It means that Indonesia is a multicultural country. In term of multicultural country, teacher as a designer, one who designs instructional in a classroom, should prepare an instruction based on multicultural values. This instructional design, then becomes a tool of internalizing multicultural values. In term of teaching materials, they are taken from some sources representing a multicultural nation. The teaching strategy makes multicultural values easily internalized. In the same way, the media used in teaching Indonesian language also palys an importan role in internalizing multicultural values. Then, classroom atmosphere makes students easily understand and practice multicultural values. The main goal is preparing multiculturalist generations of Indonesian people who are tolerant, open-minded, understanding, moderate, and democratic.

**Key words:** multicultural values, teaching of Indonesian language, open-minded, tollerant.

## Indonesia as a Multiculcural Country

Indonesia is a big country. It has around 17.000 islands, 500 ethnic groups, 706 languages, 6 religions, and 250 million people. Indonesia is spread from Sabang to Merauke consisting of five big islands and thousands of small islands. They make Indonesia as Nusantara (archipelago). The five big islands include Java, Sumatera, Sulawesi, Kalimantan, and Papua. The population of Indonesia is the fourth of world population after China, India, and America. There are about 500 ethnic groups such as Javanese, Sundanese, Madurese, Malay, Minang, Batak, Bugis, Sasak, Ambon, Banjar, and some others. Every ethnic group has their own language. Even, in one ethnic group there are more than one local language. Based on the data from

*Ethnologue* (2014), Collins, a Professor of Ethnic Study from Institut Kajian Etnik of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, states that in Indonesia there are 706 languages or about 10% of the number of world languages, that is, 7.106 languages.<sup>1</sup> Thus, Indonesia is a multicultural country.

### **Multiculturality of Indonesia**

Multiculturality of Indonesia begins when genom Negrito from Africa migrated to Nusantara for the first time. Based on the study of Indonesian ancestor, thousands years ago, genom Negrito from Africa migrated to Nusantara through Persia gulf, India, Samudera Indonesia and came to Alor dan Papua islands. Therefore, the population of eastern part of Indonesia has a black skin and curly hair. Thousands years later, genom Malay migrated to Nusantara through Sumatera, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Maluku, Vietnam, China, Korea, and Japan. Because they came from different areas, they have different language and culture.<sup>2</sup> To integrate these different ethnic groups, Indonesian people made an agreement to use Malay language as Bahasa Indonesia.

Indonesian language originates from Malay language. Badudu states that Indonesian language is a Malay language with some local languages and foreign languages.<sup>3</sup> It is supported by Anton Mulyono statement, “Pola umum dan intisari bahasa Indonesia masih sama dengan bahasa Melayu. Kita tidak jujur jika mengatakan bahwa bahasa Indonesia bukan bahasa Melayu lagi”.<sup>4</sup>

### **Indonesian Language and Nationalism**

Language has an important role to develop nationalism of a nation. Some ethnic groups will unify as a big nation when they have the same language. Indonesia, for instance, has become a big nation since they have agreed to use Malay language as national language, Bahasa Indonesia. Why does language unify different ethnic groups? It is because of the four powers of language; *first*, language enables people to make an agreement for common values and goals. *Second*, language enables people to communicate each other. *Third*, through language people can overcome disputes among themselves. *Fourth*, through language people are able to have dialogue. In short, language makes people share common values and ambitions.

The main function of language is a communication tool to share ideas, feelings, ideologies, values, and so forth. It is difficult to live without language since we only understand someone's ideas, feelings, and values when it is expressed in language. In other words, what we understand about the realities is what we know through a language.

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<sup>1</sup> James T. Collins, Keragaman Bahasa dan Kesepakatan Masyarakat: Pluralitas dan Komunikasi. Makalah. *Seminar Internasional Pendidikan Berbasis Keragaman Budaya: Sumbangan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia*. Jakarta: UIN Syarif Hidayatullah 4-6 November 2014.

<sup>2</sup> H.A.R. Tilaar, *Multikulturalisme, bahasa Indonesia, dan Nasionalisme dalam Sistem Pendidikan Nasional*. Seminar Internasional Pendidikan Berbasis Keragaman Budaya. Jakarta: UIN Syarif Hidayatullah. 4-6 November 2014.

<sup>3</sup> J.S. Badudu. *Cakrawala Bahasa Indonesia*. Jakarta: Gramedia, 1988. Hlm. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Anton M. Moeliono, *Kembara Bahasa: Kumpulan Karangan Tersebar*. Jakarta: Gramedia, 1989, hlm. 45.

It is hard to imagine living with other people whose language is different from ours. We do not understand them and they do not understand us. Such a situation happens to Indonesian people who have about 500 ethnic groups with more than 706 different languages.<sup>5</sup> To enable them to communicate to each other, Indonesian people, through “Sumpah Pemuda 1928” have agreed to use Malay language as a national language (Bahasa Indonesia) so that they are able to share common values and ambition towards a civilized and independent nation.

Over centuries, Malay language has been a *lingua franca* among people of Nusantara. Therefore, the people of Indonesia agree to use it as a language of unification or national language. It is not because of the number of Malay people in Indonesia, in fact Javanese people are the largest number of Indonesian people. The use of Malay language is rather a language of trading or language of vernacular among people of Indonesia. According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, “A *lingua franca*/lɪŋgwə 'fræŋkə/ (plural *lingue franche* or *lingua francas*) is a language that is used among people who speak various different languages.<sup>6</sup> It is a language that is adopted as a common language between speakers whose native languages are different. In other words, *Lingua franca* is a bridging language, trading language, or vernacular language.

There are various reasons why Malay language has become a *lingua franca*. *First*, it has a simple system of language. The system makes Malay language easily learned compared to Javanese Language with complicated system such as *ngoko*, *ngoko alus*, *krama*, *krama madya*, *krama inggil*. *Second*, Malay language potentially becomes a language of civilization in a broad sense. *Third*, most ethnic groups of Nusantara accept Malay language as vernacular language.<sup>7</sup> Another reason is that Malay language is a language of the world or international language. It is stated by a linguist James T. Collins that Malay language is an international language since it is spoken by a large number of people from Kalimantan, Sumatera, Semenanjung Malaya, Java, Filipina, Brunei Darussalam, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia.<sup>8</sup>

In short, Indonesian language makes some ethnic groups unify a big nation. In some countries, nationalism makes them separated into more than one country, such as India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. However, in Indonesia nationalism integrates hundreds of small kingdoms to become a big country, Indonesia.

### Religious Plurality

Indonesia is a multicultural country. It has different ethnic groups, languages, cultures, and religions. This plurality is a dignity, therefore we should be grateful for this blessing. On one hand, plurality is a wealth and strength of Indonesian country if it is managed well. However, on the other hand, it brings about some horizontal

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<sup>5</sup> Quoted *Ethnologue* (2014). Collins, a Professor of Institute Kajian Etnik Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, stated that in Indonesia there are 706 languages, about 10% of world languages, 7.106 languages. James T. Collins. Keragaman Bahasa dan Kesepakatan Masyarakat: Pluralitas dan Komunikasi. Makalah. *Seminar Internasional Pendidikan Berbasis Keragaman Budaya: Sumbangan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia*. Jakarta: UIN Syarif Hidayatullah 4-6 November 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Kamus Merriam-Webster.

<sup>7</sup> Arifin dan Tasai, *Cermat Berbahasa Indonesia*, Jakarta: Mediatama Sarana, 1991. Hlm. 6.

<sup>8</sup> James T. Collins, *Bahasa Melayu Bahasa Dunia. Sejarah Singkat*. Jakarta: Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2011.

conflicts. So far, Indonesian people have experienced some conflicts causing disadvantages, loss of property, and social disharmony. Therefore, we should internalize multicultural values as early as possible through teaching and learning process at schools or universities.

Voelkl, Campbell, and Masseno, cited in Endah, state that there are five problems in teaching multicultural class: (1) how to motivate students of different ethnic group, language, social class, intellectuality, and religions, (2) how to effectively teach students of different ethnic group, language, social class, intellectuality, and religions, (3) how to teach responsive behavior to students of different ethnic group, language, social class, intellectuality, and religions, (4) how to deal with students of different ethnic group, language, social class, intellectuality, and religions, and (5) how to evaluate the improvement of students of different ethnic group, language, social class, intellectuality, and religions.<sup>9</sup>

The main goal of internalizing multicultural values is disseminating tollerant life among different people and cultures. It is not only a cognitive dimension, but also affective and pshycomotoric as well.<sup>10</sup>

To make students of multicultural easily mingle and coloborate to solve a social problems, – regardless of their gender; sexual orientation; social class; and ethnic, racial, or cultural characteristics – teachers need to apply some teaching strategies which enable them to work together. Some suggested strategies are discussion, cooperative learning, problem solving, and demonstration. In discussion, students are given a particular topic to discuss, and teachers observe the classroom to know whether students actively or inactively participate. Cooperative learning is a good strategy to make students of different background work together. In problem solving, teachers give the students some real social problems such as discrimination and injustice treatment based on ethnics, cultures, languages, and religions. Meanwhile, in demonstration, each student demonstrates his/her differences so the other students will develop positive perception that they are different and that they live together in diversity.

Religion is a sensitive thing. We can unify people using religion, yet on the other hand, religion can also separate people. Religion not only can make people love to each other, but also can make people hate and even hurt or kill without any regret. Theoretically, religions are tought to make people live in peace, happy, and harmony. However, practically, we often experience some conflicts based on religious differences. These are what we call religions paradox. Therefore, Indonesian language teachers ough to be careful to use religion as a media of internalizing multicultural values. Multicultural values are found in every religion, since they are universal truths.

That is why teacher or lecturer should integrate this multicultural values in teaching Indonesian language, especially in (1) instructional design, (2) in teaching material, (3) in teaching strategy, (4) in teaching media, and (5) in classroom atmosphere.

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<sup>9</sup> Endah Tri Priyatni dan Asmawi Susilo Wahono. *Model Penyusunan Bahan Ajar Membaca Berbasis Pendidikan Multikultural dan E-Learning*. Litera, Vol 11, Nomor 1, April 2012.

<sup>10</sup> Kompas.com, Jum'at, 9 April 2010.

## Conclusion

Based on above description and explanation, it is clear that Indonesia is a multicultural country. On one hand, multiculturalism is a wealth and strength, but on the other hand, it brings about some horizontal conflicts. Therefore, we should internalize multicultural values to create multiculturalist citizens who are open-minded, considerate, moderate, and tolerant.

We do believe that Indonesia is a big multicultural country and will remain as a big multicultural country. By internalizing multicultural values to students, we prepare them for good democratic, moderate, and tolerant citizens who will make Indonesia happy, peaceful, and harmonious country.

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