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AN ANALYSIS OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION VALUES IN ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS OF MERDEKA CURRICULUM AT JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan nilai-nilai pendidikan multikultural dalam buku teks bahasa Inggris jenjang SMP. Data dalam penelitian ini berupa teks yang mengandung nilai pendidikan multikultural. Sumber data dalam penelitian ini adalah buku teks Bahasa Inggris SMP kelas 7 dan kelas 8 Kurikulum Merdeka. Teknik pengumpulan data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini ada dua, yaitu teknik membaca dan teknik mencatat. Teknik analisis data dalam penelitian ini melalui tiga tahapan yaitu (1) reduksi, (2) penyajian, dan (3) penarikan kesimpulan. Selain itu juga dilakukan teknik pengecekan keabsahan data yaitu berdiskusi dengan para ahli dalam menilai hasil analisis data sehingga semua temuan dalam penelitian ini dapat dipertanggungjawabkan. Hasil penelitian ini menemukan bahwa terdapat 7 nilai pendidikan multikultural yaitu nilai toleransi, keadilan atau kesetaraan, menghargai keberagaman, dialog dan kerja sama, persfektif global, pemberdayaan, dan pemahaman antarbudaya.

Kata kunci: Nilai, pendidikan multikultural, kurikulum merdeka, dan buku teks

Abstract

This research aims to describe the values of multicultural education in English textbooks at junior high school level. The data in this research is in the form of text that contains the value of multicultural education. The data source in this research is the English textbook for grade 7 and grade 8 of the Merdeka Curriculum. There are two data collection techniques used in this research, namely reading techniques and note-taking techniques. The data analysis technique in this research goes through three stages, namely (1) reduction, (2) presentation, and (3) drawing conclusions. Apart from that, data validity checking techniques were also carried out, namely discussions with experts in assessing the results of data analysis so that all findings in this research could be accounted for. The results of this research found that there are 7 values of multicultural education, namely the values of tolerance, justice or equality, respect for diversity, dialogue and cooperation, global perspective, empowerment, and intercultural understanding.

Keywords: Values, multicultural education, merdeka curriculum, and textbook

INTRODUCTION

Multicultural education is an important educational approach in an increasingly heterogeneous and globalized society. The goal of multicultural education is to foster understanding, tolerance and respect for the diversity of cultures, religions and ethnic backgrounds in the context of education. With the help of multicultural education, it is hoped that each learner can develop awareness and maturity in the face of pluralism. societal and social conflicts in Indonesia. As a country with different ethnicities, religions, languages and cultures, multicultural education is a very important and essential aspect to be introduced in the education system. This is in accordance with Bloom's opinion that divides educational goals into three areas, namely affective, cognitive, and psychomotor (Astra, 2018). This view is also expressed in the Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 57 of 2014, that there needs to be a balance of spiritual, social, affective, cognitive, and psychomotor aspects in education (Marini, 2017).

One way to implement multicultural education is through the English language. In the context of the Junior High School (SMP) curriculum, English textbooks play an important role in delivering materials related to multicultural education values. Recently introduced as a more flexible teaching method, Merdeka program provides opportunities for teachers and textbook publishers to integrate multicultural education values into teaching materials. However, it is important to assess the extent to which the representation of multicultural education values is reflected in secondary school English independent curriculum textbooks. This evaluation should be done to ensure that the textbooks used by students contain sufficient content and accurately reflect the diversity of cultures and ethnic backgrounds in Indonesia. If this representation is insufficient, opportunities for multicultural education in English language learning may become difficult.

Multicultural education is important not only to increase intercultural understanding, but also to overcome stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination and conflict between social groups. In the Indonesian educational context, it is important to ensure that students receive an inclusive educational experience and appreciate the cultural diversity of the country. English textbooks are an important tool in achieving the goals of multicultural education. A good textbook should be able to reflect Indonesia's diverse cultures and ethnic backgrounds and present relevant and inspiring content to students. In the Merdeka Curriculum, English language teaching in primary schools is given freedom and flexibility in choosing materials according to the context and needs of students. Therefore, it is important to assess whether the English textbooks used in the Merdeka curriculum truly reflect the values of multicultural education. However, it should be noted that despite its importance, the implementation of multicultural education in English textbooks still faces challenges. Some of these challenges include a lack of understanding of the concept of multicultural education, stereotypical tendencies in the presentation of cultures, unequal representation of certain ethnic groups, and a lack of global perspectives conveyed in textbooks. Therefore, this study is important to find out how many high school independent curriculum English textbooks are able to overcome these challenges and provide a balanced and inclusive presentation. By conducting research on the representation of multicultural education values in high school standalone curriculum English textbooks, it is hoped that there will be innovations and improvements in the preparation of textbooks that are more flexible, inclusive and reflective of multicultural education values. The diversity of cultural and ethnic backgrounds in Indonesia. The results of this study are expected to make a positive contribution to the development of multicultural education in Indonesia and strengthen awareness of the importance of multicultural values in English language learning.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Value of Multicultural Educational

Multicultural education is a relatively new phenomenon in education. The values of multicultural education cannot be separated from the diversity of Indonesia. This cultural diversity affects the behavior, attitudes and ways of thinking of the community so that people have different customs, habits, rules, and even habits (customs) (Hanum & Rahmadona, 2020). Multicultural education has the same goal as character education, because character education teaches how to be responsible as a moral and hardworking human being (Astra, 2018). Banks (2015) states that multicultural education has five interrelated dimensions, namely (1) content integration, namely integrating cultural values, (2) the knowledge construction process, namely bringing students to understand the implications of culture in subjects, (3) an equity pedagogy, namely adjusting learning methods, (4) prejudice reduction, namely identifying student characteristics, (5) empowering school culture and social culture, namely constructing school culture and social structures. These dimensions can be described through the following values.

- a) Respect for diversity: multicultural education promotes respect for the diversity of cultures, religions, languages and ethnic backgrounds that exist in society.
- b) Equality and justice: Multicultural education emphasizes the importance of equality and justice for all people, regardless of cultural, ethnic or religious background. This entails paying attention to social inequalities that may exist in society and addressing them.
- c) Intercultural understanding: Multicultural education aims to create deep intercultural understanding. This requires knowledge of different cultures, values, traditions and customs, as well as the ability to communicate and interact with people from different cultural backgrounds.
- d) Tolerance and respect: multicultural education promotes tolerance of differences and respect for the beliefs, values and identities of other cultures. This includes the ability to listen, understand and accept different points of view without judgment or imposing your own.
- e) Empowerment: The goal of multicultural education is to equip people with the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to actively participate in a diverse society. This includes providing equal opportunities for all people to develop and participate.
- f) Global perspective: multicultural education develops an understanding of global relations and the impact of cultural interactions at the global level. This requires awareness of global issues such as peace, social justice, environmental sustainability and human rights.
- g) Dialogue and Cooperation: Multicultural education encourages open dialog, cooperation and collaboration between people from different cultural backgrounds. It requires the ability to communicate effectively, build positive relationships and collaborate in a variety of contexts.

RESEARCH METHOD

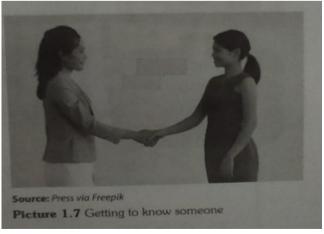
This type of research is qualitative research. The purpose of qualitative research is to find patterns of interactive relationships, discover theories, describe complex realities and gain an understanding of meaning (Sugiyono, 2013). The subject of this research is the researcher her self as an individual who has an important role in describing the text. This research method goes through some basic steps that must be done correctly. This research has two stages, namely (1) the research stage; includes the process of collecting data using reading and note-taking techniques to identify textbooks as sources of information, and (2) the completion stage; includes steps to create a complete report. Based on the information found, it will be analyzed for the thesis. Research instruments are an important part of obtaining the main data or information needed in research. Research instruments can be tools for collecting data to answer research problem formulations. The data analysis technique of this study went through three stages, namely (1) reduction, (2) presentation, and (3) conclusion drawing (Miles & Huberman, 2014).

DISCUSSION

The value of multicultural education is an important aspect that needs to be applied in learning at school. The value of multicultural education has an important role in shaping the character and morals of students. In general, the value of multicultural education can be integrated in student and teacher textbooks. This is in accordance with the results of this study that there are seven values of multicultural education contained in the English textbooks of grade 7 and grade 8 junior high school/MTs. These values are conveyed through grammatical texts/sentences and visual texts (pictures). The following is a description of the discussion of these values.

Tolerance

Tolerance is an attitude that can be represented through an attitude of harmony that respects racial, ethnic, tribal, cultural and religious differences. This attitude shows a person's ability to accept other people's differences, views or beliefs without any intention of demeaning them. The value of tolerance encourages respect for equality, enabling cooperation and harmony between individuals or groups who have different backgrounds, beliefs or values. This is in accordance with the image material found in the following textbook.



(Figure 1)

Figure 1 shows two people of different races and skin colors shaking hands with each other. This situation shows mutual respect and acceptance of other individuals or groups regardless of their race or skin color. This concept is in accordance with the aim of multicultural education to respect cultural diversity, or differences in skin color (Yeni; et al., 2014). The context in Figure 1 has a message to readers or students about the principles of equality and respect for racial or ethnic differences. So far, differences in race and skin color have often been discussed, but the integration of the value of tolerance in English textbooks can underlie the formation of an ideology of equal rights among students or readers in general. This concept is in line with the opinion of Derderian-Aghajanian (2010) that multicultural education is a conscious effort to be sensitive to the diversity of culture, religion, language, ethnicity and race in our national life, in order to produce an educational environment that is responsive to the needs of students from various backgrounds, and instilling in students an attitude of mutual understanding and respect. This opinion is in line with Reed and Black (2006) who say that respecting diversity can encourage the development of culturally responsive curricula and cross-cultural understanding to help students build tolerance (Derderian-Aghajanian, 2010b). (Derderian-Aghajanian, 2010a)

Justice or Equality

The value of justice emphasizes fair and equal treatment of all individuals, without regard to differences or discrimination based on factors such as race, gender, religion, or social background. The value of justice is also found in English textbooks as evidenced by the following data.

Data 1

A person who makes sure that citizens follow the law and do not harm others

Data 1 reveals a basic principle of justice and equality in the context of law enforcement, where a person is responsible for ensuring that each individual is treated fairly and equally before the law. Data 2 represents the importance of justice being upheld by providing equal treatment to all citizens. The phrase "a person" (an individual) without specifications of gender, race, or other background emphasizes the principle of equality. There is no discrimination based on certain personal characteristics. This is in line with the opinion of Sutton & Sutton (2005) that every individual or group needs to obtain equality from the state in various things, including education.

From a social and legal perspective, the value of justice is the main pillar for building a just and equal society. This is what the textbook tries to convey through data 1 that every person who values — justice needs to ensure that every individual is treated fairly, regardless of differences in their background or social status. The principle of equality highlights the importance of providing the same rights and obligations to all individuals, without discrimination based on race, gender, or other factors. This is in line with the main goal of multicultural education, namely restructuring schools so that all students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to function in an ethnically and racially diverse country and world (Banks, 2015).

Appreciate Diversity

Respect for diversity is implemented through acceptance of culture, religion, language and ethnic backgrounds in society. The English textbook also reflects the form of implementing diversity awards through the following picture.



(Figure 2)

Figure 2 shows the application of the value of diversity appreciation because it is clear that the three students in the picture are able to have different races or skin colors, but can learn together without awkwardness. Figure 2 shows that there are children have a white and black skin. They look close without questioning the differences between the two. In figure 2 there is a social message that every student has the same and equal rights. All students have the same social responsibility, so they need to build good relationships among students. This concept is in line with the opinion of Nieto (2002) who explains that multicultural education as anti-racist education which is closely related to learning is very important for students and permeates all areas of the school. In fact, Zirkel (2008) stated that multicultural education improves students' academic achievement (Nieto, 2002). Figure 2 also emphasizes that there is no discrimination against students who have skin, physical or ethnic colors because of the principle of equality. The student was fully engaged in the shared experience, demonstrating that his or her skin color or race was not a barrier to full participation in social activities such as eating together.

Dialogue and Cooperation

Dialogue and cooperation are an integral part of the value of multicultural education because they describe an attitude of working together, understanding and respecting cultural differences in a diverse society. This value is also found in the Independent Curriculum English textbook as proven by the following data.

Data 2

Someone who searches the information about crimes and find out who does the crimes

Data 2 reflects elements of the value of multicultural education such as inclusiveness, respect for cultural diversity, intercultural cooperation, and awareness of differences. The process of dialogue and cooperation are values that support an

inclusive and fair approach in carrying out activities such as seeking information about crime. The data in text 2 means that the process of seeking information highlights the importance of open communication and cooperation between the parties involved. Collaboration between information seekers and sources becomes a reference for uncovering a crime. Cooperation between various parties, such as law enforcement agencies, detectives, and investigative groups, is key in collecting evidence, analyzing information, and finding criminals. In addition, these actors also participate in the crime prevention process by sharing information that can increase public awareness of potential threats. Overall, the value of dialogue and cooperation is reflected in the complex dynamics of seeking information about crime, which emphasizes the importance of collaboration to achieve the common goal of keeping society safe.

Global Perspective

A global perspective is an important component in implementing the value of multicultural education because it involves a broader and more inclusive understanding of a culturally and geographically diverse world. The concept of value is also found in English textbooks as proven by the following data.

Data 3

A person who makes and appears in videos on YouTube

Data 3 above illustrates a global perspective as an integral part of the value of multicultural education because the activity of creating and appearing in videos on YouTube can be an effective means of promoting inclusivity, respect for diversity, and understanding of diverse cultures. Data 3 reflects that YouTube has now become a means of accessing information more widely. In addition, it can be said that YouTube has become a global window that opens the door to various perspectives, ideas and cultures. Global perspective values or attitudes have become a means of viewing a problem globally (Sugiharti & Machdar, 2023). A YouTube creator, with his courage and creativity, can penetrate geographical boundaries and reach audiences from all corners of the world. Through the diversity of content they present, from tutorials to personal vlogs, these creators are not only transmitters of information but also agents of cultural exchange.

Within each video, there is the potential for intercultural interaction, where viewers can respond, share and comment, forming a global community that gathers around the content. The choice of topics and issues presented by creators can reflect interest in global issues, trigger discussion and reflection about the realities faced by various communities in various parts of the world. Thus, the value of a global perspective is reflected in the dynamics of sharing and interaction generated by the activity of creating and appearing in videos on YouTube.

The value of a global perspective can also be reflected through an introductory discussion about the development of social media. This can be seen through the following data.

Data 4

Social media emerged in 2000s. Since then, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and many other social media have offered real-time instanst messages. However, do you ever wonder how people exchanged messages before the 2000s?

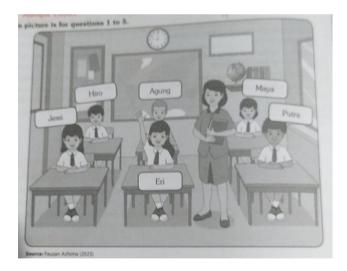
The data in text 4 discusses the social media phenomenon that emerged in the 2000s, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, presenting a global view of the

development of information technology. The introductory discussion of "real-time instant messages" reflects the ability of social media to provide instant communication without time and space limits, creating a world without geographic barriers to interaction. The question asked, "do you ever wonder how people exchanged messages before the 2000s?" invites readers to reflect on the evolution of global communications, stimulating thought about changes in the way we communicate and share information as technology advances. It can be said that currently social media is proof of progress in access to information that has gone global. Use of social media access, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram as media that can connect its users to access throughout the world. Therefore, the analysis of this text highlights the value of a global perspective through understanding the transformation of communication and technology at the global level.

Meaning in data 4 also promotes multicultural values by stimulating reflection on differences and similarities in the way we communicate. By engaging the reader in contemplation of these historical changes, the text helps form a deeper understanding of the global context and cultural diversity that involves each individual. Social media has created an increasingly wider cyberspace and has had a globalization impact. Through social media, cultural transfer is accelerating due to advances in information technology. Therefore, this text is not only a mirror of technological developments, but also a source of multicultural educational value through reflection, understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity in this digital era.

Empowerment

The value of empowerment is an integral part of the value of multicultural education because empowerment brings the concept of recognition, appreciation and giving strength to every individual, regardless of their cultural, ethnic or social group background. The value of empowerment is also found in the Merdeka Curriculum English textbook as proven by the following data.



(Figure 3)

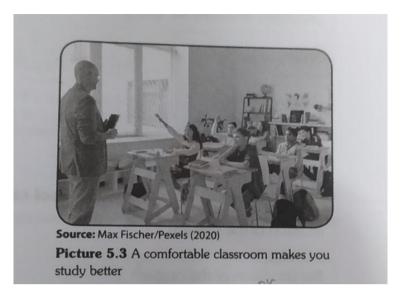
Figure 3 shows efforts to implement empowerment as demonstrated through the process of teaching and learning activities carried out by teachers and students. It can be seen in picture 3 that students raise their hands which is considered a form of interaction to ask questions. This process is a form of empowerment effort for each individual to grow and develop in an inclusive and supportive environment. The names of the

students in Figure 3 very clearly show the diversity of the students' social backgrounds. In classroom dynamics that reflect diversity, relationships between students and teachers from different backgrounds create an educational space that is rich in perspectives and experiences. In line with the view of Nafisah et al., (2024) that English language teaching must include more than just grammar by providing a comprehensive understanding of how the language is used in a social context that requires awareness of cultural diversity. Students representing various ethnic, cultural and social groups, together with teachers who also have diverse backgrounds, form interactions full of diversity. Therefore, empowerment by applying the principles of equality when teaching which teachers apply as teaching techniques and methods can help the academic achievement of students from various racial and ethnic groups from all social classes (Banks, 2015).

In data 3, the presence of students and teachers from different social backgrounds has provided a unique color and nuance to the learning process. In this context, the value of empowerment is reflected in the acceptance and appreciation of diversity. Students feel recognized and valued for their unique contributions, while teachers are not only sources of knowledge but also learners who are open to a variety of views. Balance of power and equality is realized in a classroom atmosphere where each individual has an equally important role. Interactions between students and teachers create opportunities for the exchange of knowledge and experience, resulting in mutually empowering learning. Thus, this relationship is not just about one-way education, but also about mutually beneficial exchange and collaboration.

This inclusive relationship between teachers and students also forms a model of positive behavior. Teachers as authoritative figures open space for students to be themselves without fear of being judged or ostracized. Multicultural education emphasizes equality over the diversity of cultures, languages, customs, social systems, differences in gender, ethnicity, race, politics, religion, and equality of opportunity in education (Marzuki et al., 2021). This creates an environment that supports students' personal growth and mental well-being. On a deeper level, these relationships develop intercultural understanding and empathy skills. Students are invited to see the world from different perspectives, understand and appreciate differences, and develop the ability to communicate effectively in a multicultural society. Therefore, applying the value of empowerment in multicultural education, the relationship between students and teachers from different backgrounds not only implies diversity, but also creates an inclusive and meaningful learning environment.

The role of a teacher in school is apart from teaching, and also being a learning facilitator. Teachers must be able to empower and develop students' knowledge. Empowering students through learning is considered to be able to build students' sense of responsibility, so that they have sensitivity in their social life. This is also reflected through the following image material.



(Figure 4)

Figure 4 shows a teacher who is facilitating a learning process involving cultural diversity. Teachers are intercultural mediators and facilitators who function as intermediaries between diverse student cultures ((Nafisah et al., 2024). Teacher empowerment can be seen from various teaching methods that stimulate active student participation. The teacher in Figure 6 uses approaches that involve students interacting actively as indicated by students raising their hands to ask questions. This is what makes teachers have a major role in empowering diversity in learning styles, language and ways of understanding information. Likewise, the view of Arslan & Rata (2015) is that teachers should use a combination of various teaching styles when dealing with different groups and modify them to suit the cultural class groups and social realities of their students.

Teacher empowerment in teaching and learning activities is also reflected in their ability to create an inclusive and culturally friendly classroom environment. The teacher in Figure 4 appears to be building an interaction with the students. This is considered to motivate students to appreciate differences, encourage mutual respect, and build positive relationships between students with different cultural backgrounds. Teacher empowerment in multicultural education is not only about teaching cultural material, but also about rewarding students for their every effort and participation in the classroom. This can encourage student enthusiasm and motivation thereby creating an inclusive learning process in the classroom. Therefore, figure 4 teacher empowerment in learning as part of the value of multicultural education highlights the central role of teachers in creating a learning environment that is inclusive, supportive, and facilitates the academic and social growth of students from various cultural backgrounds.

Intercultural Understanding

Intercultural understanding is awareness of the differences in traditions, norms and values of various social groups in society. As a value of multicultural education, intercultural understanding also contributes to the development of positive attitudes towards diversity, helps prevent prejudice, and strengthens relationships

between individuals from different cultural backgrounds. This value concept is also found in English textbooks as proven by the following data.

Data 5

In Spain, before midnight on new year's Eve, people will be ready with grapes next to them people will be ready with grapes next to them. Then when the clock hits midnight, they will eat the grapes. There is a tradition in spain to eat 12 grapes when the clock strikes at midnight. By doing so, they hope they will be lucky for 12 months ahead.

The data in text 5 explains the unique New Year traditions in Spain which may be different from the cultural traditions of New Year celebrations in other countries. The data in text 5 invites readers to get to know other traditional celebrations so that readers or students have knowledge about the culture and traditions of people in the world at large. By presenting information about the ritual of eating grapes on New Year's Eve, this text can be a bridge to understanding and appreciating traditions that readers may not be familiar with. In addition, this text highlights the values of optimism and hope contained in this tradition, such as the hope for good luck over the next 12 months.

By getting to know and knowing the culture and traditions of other communities, students or readers will give appreciation and not look down on that culture. This process can stimulate curiosity and openness to cultural practices that may differ from the reader's own experiences. This value is in line with the social reality of Indonesia as a multicultural nation so it is necessary to uphold cultural diversity (Yeni; et al., 2014).

The importance of data 5 text contained in English textbooks studied by students can open students' views of the wider world and offer a deeper learning experience. English textbooks that integrate the value of intercultural understanding will contribute to improving students' good character. Intercultural understanding includes not only cultural and linguistic knowledge, but also affective and behavioral skills (Özturgut, 2011). In the context of multicultural education, students have the opportunity to develop a better understanding of global cultural diversity. Text data 6 is also considered to stimulate students' curiosity and encourage them to ask more questions about other cultures around the world. This can stimulate in-depth class discussions and ask critically about the meaning behind the implementation of these traditions.

CONCLUSION

This research emphasizes on the values of multicultural education in English textbooks at junior high school level. Based on the analysis of 7th and 8th grade English textbooks, 7 values of multicultural education were found, namely tolerance, justice or equality, respect for diversity, dialogue and cooperation, global perspective, empowerment, and intercultural understanding. The form of integration of multicultural education values in English textbooks, namely through text sentences and pictures or photos. This research can help teachers understand the integration of multicultural education values that are abstract and provide input for education agencies and publishers in determining the feasibility of using English textbooks used in schools.

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