

# Literary Works as Literary Learning Media Oriented to the Concept of Multiculturalism Education: A Study of Indonesian Metro Pop Novels

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## ABSTRACT

The introduction of multiculturalism values can be applied through education. One of the models offered is utilising literary works as a medium for instilling the values of multiculturalism education. This study explains how literary works, particularly Indonesian metro pop novels, can be used as literary learning media oriented to multiculturalism education. The method in this study is literary research. Literary research aims to reveal various phenomena by making literary works as research objects. The literary works used as sources of research data in this study were eight Indonesian metropop novels published in the 2000-2020 period, which were selected using a purposive sampling technique. The data were collected using reading and note-taking techniques. Data were analyzed the content analysis method. The study results show that the diversity of culture, ethnicity, language, religion, race, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic class, customs and social traditions in Indonesia places multicultural education as essential. Educational efforts with a multicultural perspective are very necessary to avoid social conflicts because of diversity.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian metro pop novels showcase a range of cultural elements found within metropolitan neighbourhoods, serving as a reflection of Indonesian society as a whole. This research holds the potential for enhancing literature-based education focused on multiculturalism by providing valuable insights into diverse cultural features. Within this particular framework, it is plausible to utilise literary works as a means to imbue multicultural education values. In connection with the notion of multiculturalism, contemporary metropolitan popular novels possess the capacity to serve as a paradigm for a multicultural society in Indonesia.

Literature, being a product of the author's prolonged process of apprehension and thought, is inseparable from the many societal issues that exist in today's globalised world, as argued by Mahayana

(2005), who agrees with the above statement. Books are seen as cultural representations that develop, elevate, and surround a community or ethnic group, and they are also seen as social documents that define the traits of individuals in their relationships with that community or group. Research on multiculturalism in education is a fertile field, and Indonesia, a country noted for its diversity and pluralism, is a prime location to do so.

Multicultural education aims to explain the importance of maintaining diverse values and upholding tolerance. It is a process of developing all human potential that values plurality and heterogeneity due to cultural, ethnic, racial and religious, economic, social and political diversity (Andhani, 2014). Multicultural education is an approach to teaching that makes use of students' varying cultural backgrounds—including their ethnicity, race, religion, socioeconomic status, and gender—to facilitate more inclusive and engaging classroom discussions. Multicultural education relies heavily on the values of equality, democracy, variety, unity, and justice. All existing cultures enjoy the same rights, privileges, resources, and security as the others. This concerted drive promotes familiarity with and appreciation for the world's pluralistic and multicultural realities. It shapes people's personalities so they can participate in community life with democratic, humanistic, and pluralistic attitudes and actions (Yaqin, 2005). It is a social policy that encourages people of different backgrounds to appreciate and understand one another (Banks, 1993).

In multicultural education, literary works can inject multicultural educational values. Mahayana (2005) also argues that literature is part of the culture that lives in society, specifically as a work produced through a long process of apprehension and thought by the author, which cannot be separated from various problems in a multicultural context. Literary works are not only positioned as social documents that describe individual characteristics in their interactions with a community or ethnic group, but it is also interpreted as a cultural representation that creates, raises, and surrounds them. Due to the diversity of cultural aspects represented in literary works, research on multiculturalism education is wide open, especially in Indonesia, a diverse and pluralist society. Thus, literary works can also be used as media in the context of multicultural education.

Education institutions should prioritise multiculturalism. Literary works can serve as a medium for this purpose in multicultural education. This agrees with the findings of studies by Kelvin (2017), Mulyadi (2018), and Najmina (2018). In light of these findings, this study sets out to clarify how Indonesian metro pop novels might be incorporated into multicultural education curricula. The protagonists of Indonesian metro pop novels set between 2000 and 2020 represent the heterogeneous society in and around the world's major cities. Multicultural education aims to create a society where people can get along with one another and accept one other's differences and rights. Creating guidelines and standards for teaching about diversity and tolerance can help.

## 2. METHODS

This research is literary research using literary works as research objects. The objects in this study were Indonesian metropop novels for the period 2000-2020 which were selected using purposive sampling. The object of research is determined based on the following aspects (1) Metropop novels published by PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama; (2) Not a dwilogy and tetralogy (3) Bestseller category novel and (4) written by an author who is already known as a writer of metropop novels. Based on these criteria, 8 metropop novels were determined to be used as research objects. Data collection techniques were carried out in stages, (1) intensive reading and understanding of Indonesian metropop novels that had been designated as research objects; (2) taking an inventory of data by recording and collecting all research data using a data inventory format; (3) identify data through story characters, narrator's narrative, character's speech, and character's actions; (4) analysis data using a predetermined theory; and (5) formulate research results.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study's findings suggest multiple frameworks for multicultural education. The following sections elaborate on the key ideas central to multicultural education.

#### 3.1. Developing a Critical Understanding of Cultural Differences

One of the important concepts in multiculturalism education is how a person has knowledge and understanding of differences and diversity. Indonesian metro pop novels describe how the socio-cultural conditions of urban society live and exist in metropolitan cities with all their problems. These novels describe how urban communities live side by side regardless of various forms of differences. This circumstance is illustrated in the following quote.

*Perkenalkan, ini Nandito Rishaan, cowok, teman sebangkuku waktu SMA. Perawakannya bongosor dengan tinggi 188 cm dan berat 95 kg. Mukanya cakep khas anak baik-baik dengan kulit cokelat muda. Rambutnya dipotong cepak saja. Dia lebih muda satu tahun daripada aku, dan beda "cross currency" alias beda agama denganku. Kami tidak pernah terlibat affair, apalagi cinta-cintaan. (Bastari, 2020). (Introducing everyone, this is Nandito Rishaan, a guy, my high school classmate. He has a large stature with a height of 188 cm and a weight of 95 kg. His face is typical of a good boy with light brown skin. He is one year younger than me and has a different "cross-currency" alias different religion from mine. His hair was cut just short. He is one year younger than me and has a different "cross-currency" alias different religion from me. We never quarrelled, especially regarding love affairs.)*

The quote comes from the novel *Ganjil Genap* (Odd Even) by Almira Bastari. Based on these quotes, it can be seen how urban communities featured in Indonesian metro pop novels can coexist in diversity. Urban society is a heterogeneous society. Urban society is a group of people who differ in various aspects, such as cultural, social, economic, racial, religious and social status. In the context of multiculturalism education, an educator (teacher and lecturer) is not only required and able to professionally teach learning material but is also expected to be able to introduce the values of multicultural education by making literary works one of the media. Thus, the expected outcome is the creation of student profiles that have good academic competence and can apply the values of diversity in understanding and appreciating differences in the context of multiculturalism education.

#### 3.2. Creating an Understanding of Differences in Social Status

In multiculturalism education, the emphasis is on the development of attitudes (affective), which includes how to build awareness and understanding of various social phenomena that are in direct contact with the interests of society, such as social inequality (social stratification), unemployment, poverty, and various other societal phenomena. This aspect is expected to increase student awareness. In the end can build public awareness of the importance of always upholding the public interest, becoming personally and socially responsible individuals and upholding morals and ethics in society (Yaqin, 2005).

In this concept, one of the indicators is how a person can appreciate differences in social status in society. Community labelling based on social status is associated with self-esteem, prestige, and authority in people's lives. This status is generally based on three categories: occupation, ideology, and family heritage. The depiction of urban community life in Indonesian metro pop novels in terms of establishing good relations with all people regardless of their social status can be seen in the following quotations.

*Ibu saya tertawa. Saya tertawa. Barbi tertawa. Seluruh sepupu saya tertawa. Dan, untuk membuat Surti tertawa, saya sudah menyiapkan dompet koin (juga branded). (My mother*

*laughed. I laugh. Barbi laughs. All my cousins laughed. Furthermore, to make Surti laugh, I have prepared a coin purse and also branded).*

*"Apik lo warna kulit ne. Ini asli Tho, kayak di Pasar Beringharjo?" tanyanya polos sambil menimang dompet barunya. ("Nice skin color. Isn't this real, like in Beringharjo market?" she asked innocently as she clutched her new wallet) (Endah, 2004)*

This quote is found in the novel *Cewek Matre* by Alberthiene Endah. Based on the above quotes, it can be seen how the attitude of mutual respect and respect among fellow human beings regardless of socio-cultural background and one's status. Communication practices like this will give birth to a harmonious society. The quote shows how the character Lola as an employer, maintains a good relationship with the character Surti as a household assistant. The importance of respecting the presence of other people in one's life regardless of social status is an important part of multiculturalism education.

### 3.3. Developing Attitude of Anti-Discrimination Ethnic

In multicultural education, strengthening attitudes against ethnic discrimination is an important part. (Yaqin, 2005) suggests that this will be able to build and foster a positive understanding of students towards other ethnic and racial groups. Multicultural education seeks to build students' understanding of certain ethnic characteristics and their awareness of the importance of upholding human values against various forms of discrimination and violence against other ethnic groups.

*Kerutan di kening kakeknya semakin dalam. "Apakah kau dulu pernah menyinggung latar belakang dan etnisnya?" (The frown on his grandfather's forehead deepened. "Have you ever talked about his background and ethnicity?").*

*"Eh, tidak?" Lucas mengucapkan sepatah kata itu dengan suara ditarik dan nada ragu. "Uh, no?" Lucas said those words in a drawn voice and a doubtful tone. ("Baguslah kalau begitu," kata kakeknya sambil mengangguk. "Aku yakin ibumu akan sangat kecewa kalau kau sampai mengolok-olok temanmu hanya gara-gara latar belakang dan etnis.") (Tan, 2015).*

*"Very well then," said his grandfather, nodding. "I am sure your mother will be very disappointed if you make fun of your friends just because of background and ethnicity." (Tan, 2015).*

The quote above appears in the novel *In a Blue Moon* by Ilana Tan. The quote shows efforts to inculcate the values of multicultural education, especially concerning the development of an anti-discriminatory attitude towards other ethnicities. The quote depicts the grandfather advising Lucas not to discriminate and demean other people because of his ethnic background. Concerning multicultural education, the role of educators (teachers and lecturers) is also important in instilling the values of inter-ethnic harmony in the learning process and able to raise awareness of students always to be fair, appreciate, respect, and understand the existence of other ethnicities as part of their lives.

### 3.4. Creating an Attitude of Respect for Gender Equality

In multiculturalism education, education has a very strategic role in building public awareness (students) about the importance of upholding women's rights and building an attitude of anti-discrimination against women (Yaqin, 2005). This implies that a harmonious community life can be realised by building and developing an attitude of respect for gender equality. In the latest Indonesian metro pop novels, female characters have quite strategic roles in their careers and work. Various professions are played by female characters and posit them in a certain social status. The depiction of gender equality in metro pop novels can be seen in the following quotations.

*Banyak orang bilang hidup konsultan itu sangat jetset: frequent flyer-nya platinum saking seringnya terbang ke mana-mana, hidup dari satu hotel berbintang ke hotel berbintang lainnya, dibayar puluhan ribu dolar per assignment. (Natassa, 2015) (Many say that a consultant's life is very jet set: frequent flyer is platinum because they fly everywhere, live from one five-star hotel to another, and are paid tens of thousands of dollars per assignment.)*

*"Tadi Bu Anya titip pesan ke saya buat Bapak, kata Ibu, dia harus ke Singapura dinas pagi ini, Pak, baliknya nanti hari Jumat. Kata Ibu tadi mau pamit langsung ke Bapak tapi Bapak masih tidur. Gitu, Pak," Tini menjelaskan sambil meletakkan sepiring pempek dan cuco di depan gue. (Natassa, 2015) ("This morning, Mrs Anya left a message for me for you, sir. Madam said he has to go to Singapore for work this morning and will be back on Friday. Madam said she wanted to say goodbye directly to you, but you were still sleeping. So that is the message, sir. Tini explained while placing a plate of pempek and cuco in front of me.)*

*Tadi pagi aku terbang ke Medan untuk mengunjungi salah satu pabrik nasabahku, bagian dari tugasku sebagai relationship manager yang intinya menyalurkan fasilitas kredit kepada nasabah korporasi, lantas menjalin hubungan baik dengan para pengusaha yang menjadi nasabahku sambil terus memantau perkembangan bisnis mereka. (Natassa, 2008) (This morning I flew to Medan to visit one of my customer's factories, part of my duties as a relationship manager which essentially distributing credit facilities to corporate customers and then establishing good relations with the entrepreneurs who are my customers while continuing to monitor their business developments.)*

The quotations above show that the female characters in Indonesian metro pop novels have well-established jobs with strategic positions and titles in their respective fields. The quote also illustrates that these female characters can carry out their respective professions well without discriminatory actions from various parties. Mutual respect for gender equality is an important part of multiculturalism education.

### 3.5. Respecting Language Diversity

Indonesia has several languages (regional languages) spread throughout Indonesia. For this reason, various efforts are needed to instil respect for the diversity of languages. (Yaqin, 2005) argues that one important part of multicultural education is building awareness so that students can positively see the diversity of languages. Thus, it is hoped that they will become a generation that can maintain and preserve the diversity of languages as a cultural heritage.

*Adjie bangkit dan membawaku sungkem juga kepada Bapak dan Ibunya. "Pak, Bu, ini Andrea insyaallah calon istri saya." (Adjie got up and took me to shake hands with his father and mother. "Father, mother, this is Andrea, God willing, my future wife.")*

*Aku tersenyum dan mencium tangan orang tuanya. Dan beneran aku kaget banget saat ibunya langsung menunduk untuk mencium pipiku. (I smiled and kissed his parent's hand. Furthermore, I was shocked when his mother immediately bent down to kiss my cheek.)*

*"Aduh, ayu tenan, calon mantuku. Wis suwe durung pacaran? Ibu ra sabar tenan arep nglamar." ("Oh, how beautiful, my future daughter-in-law. Are you two still going out? I cannot wait to propose.)*

*"Yen ngarane Ibu ra sah suwe-suwe. Yen iso taun iki, Ibu wis pengen duwe putu, "kata ibunya lagi. "Nak Andrea setuju, kan? ("Do take a little bit of time. If possible, get married this year; mother said I already want to have grandchildren. Do you agree, Andrea?)*

*Waduh! Setuju apa? Aku bahkan tidak mengerti satu kata pun. (Natassa, 2007)*  
*(Wow! Agree for what? I do not even understand a word.)*

An attitude of respect for language diversity as part of multicultural education is necessary to avoid conflicts caused by language factors. Respect for language diversity is shown by the character Andrea in the novel *A Very Yuppy Wedding* by Ika Natassa, as in the quote above. In this quote, Andrea shows respect and appreciation for the Javanese language, even though she does not fully understand the meaning of the Javanese speech.

### 3.6. *Living Side by Side in Difference*

An important part of multicultural education is imbuing awareness that socio-cultural differences are an intangible wealth to be grateful for and accepted. Differences and diversity are realities that humans must accept. Differences are not used to trigger various social conflicts in society. However, these differences will create a society that understands, protects, and complements one another.

*"Beginilah kami. Keluarga yang hangat. Kata orang, garis keturunan Manado, sedikit Ambon dan Jawa, serta Belanda, memang akan menghasilkan tipikal keluarga semacam ini. Hobi kumpul-kumpul dan akrab. (Endah, 2004: 418).*  
*("That is how we are. Warm family. People say that the lineage of Manado, a small quantity of Ambon and Java, as well as the Netherlands, will produce this type of family. Our hobby is getting together and getting to know each other.) (Endah, 2004)*

The urban communities shown in Indonesian metropolitan popular books are characterised by their diverse composition of individuals from various social, economic, cultural, and professional backgrounds. Despite these differences, these communities are able to cohabit together. Divergences do not serve as impediments to the establishment of a cohesive and tranquil communal existence.

Indonesia is one of the countries with the fastest urbanisation growth in the world. Population projection data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) shows that in 2020, as much as 56.7% of Indonesia's population lived in urban areas, which is predicted to increase to 66.6% in 2035. The World Bank also estimates that by 2045 as many as 220 million people, or 70% of Indonesia's population, will live in urban areas. It is estimated that human civilisation will be located and centred in urban areas. Therefore, multicultural education is highly necessary to address various problems that will occur in urban communities with different cultural backgrounds and maintain a harmonious, peaceful and productive urban life.

### **Discussion**

The essential need for multiculturalism education in Indonesia arises from the country's rich diversity encompassing culture, ethnicity, language, religion, race, gender, socio-economic class, customs, and social traditions. In order to mitigate societal conflict arising from variety, it is imperative to implement educational initiatives that incorporate a multicultural perspective. In light of the significant role that multiculturalism education plays in the process of nation-building, it is imperative to undertake tangible initiatives to facilitate its implementation. One such strategy involves leveraging literary works as a means of cultivating the principles and ideals associated with multiculturalism education. According to Najmina (2020), the process of intercultural learning involves the cultivation of mindsets, attitudes, actions, and habits, which collectively contribute to the development of a national consciousness of character. Multicultural education serves as a vehicle for fostering and cultivating an understanding of multiculturalism. The purpose of this action is to foster tolerance and cultivate the capacity to collaborate amongst diverse circumstances (Sulistiyono, 2019).

The incorporation of multicultural education necessitates the essential inclusion of cultural competency and cultural literacy throughout all facets of the educational system. The involvement of educators, professors, and diverse educational entities and stakeholders is essential in the advancement of intercultural education. Educational practitioners, encompassing both teachers and lecturers, must possess a comprehensive grasp of the principles behind multicultural education in order to effectively implement them within the pedagogical framework. The presence of educators, encompassing both teachers and lecturers, is essential for the purpose of inculcating the principles and ideals of multicultural education within the framework of the learning process. The pedagogical implications of multiculturalism can be extended to the design of instructional materials, teaching strategies, methodologies, and educational resources that incorporate a multicultural lens. Multiculturalism education necessitates not only the involvement of educators, such as teachers and lecturers, but also the support of educational institutions. Educational institutions can provide support by incorporating the principles of multiculturalism education into learning objectives and curriculum creation that are centred around the concept of multiculturalism education.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study highlight the significance of multicultural education in the context of contemporary urban life. The expansion of urban life is to blame for this. The gap between rural and urban areas has shrunk as cities have grown. Experts in education and learning need to be concerned with the behaviour of urban society, which is described in all cultural elements, in order to grasp the notion of multiculturalism education. To achieve this goal, many policies concerning intercultural education might be created.

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