Informal Literature to Prepare Individuals as Citizens of Multicultural Communities

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ABSTRACT
One of the objectives of implementing the National Literacy Movement and the School Literacy Movement is to develop the insight of multiculturalism among students and Indonesian society. However, the development of insight, acceptance, and appreciation of multiculturalism is largely determined by informal literacy, namely literacy that is held in the household. The main informal literacy is literacy for early childhood.

Keywords: Informal Literacy, Multicultural, Multiculturalism, Early childhood

1. INTRODUCTION

In line with the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum revision, known as the 2013 Revised Edition Curriculum, the Government c.q. The Ministry of Education and Culture organizes the Literacy Movement (hereinafter abbreviated as GL). This GL is divided into two, namely the National GL (GLN) and the School GL (GLS). GL is getting more and more popular with the holding of the National Literacy Movement Reading Material Writing Competition (deadline 31 March 2017). The aim of the competition is for the Government to increase the collection of readings for children aged 7-12 years which will be distributed to the public. In addition, since 2017, the Government has also launched and held the National Student Literacy Olympiad (OLSN) on an annual basis. One of the objectives of these activities is to develop insight, acceptance, and appreciation of students and the public on the reality of multicultural Indonesian society.

Observing the seriousness of the Government to develop the literacy skills of the Indonesian people, it is worth reviewing how to synergize GL with the development of the insight of the Indonesian people as a multicultural society. For this reason, this paper discusses two main things, namely the Indonesian people as a multicultural society and informal literacy as a forum for preparing individuals as members of a multicultural society. The problem of formal literacy, namely in school institutions, is not discussed but is used as a rationale for the preparation of this paper.

2. DISCUSSION

1.1. Indonesian Society as a Multicultural Society and School Literacy Movement Program

In simple terms, it is understood that a multicultural society is a society that has a diversity of cultural backgrounds or cultures who are domiciled in a certain territorial area such as a city, district, to the state. In fact, specific areas such as schools can also be labeled as multicultural, for example multicultural schools because the school's residents, especially students, have diverse cultural backgrounds. Therefore, both historically and in reality, it is believed that the Indonesian state is an example of a country inhabited by a multicultural society. Moreover, the reality shows that nowadays in Indonesia, there are more regions (cities, districts/municipalities, and provinces) that are inhabited by multicultural people compared to monocultural societies or people who only come from one culture. Indonesian society as a multicultural society is a reality, not a concept.

The consequences of the existence of a multicultural society have two dimensions: positive and negative. It is revealed that the condition of a multicultural society in a territorial area has a positive impact on four main aspects, namely: education, profession, economy, and labor. Meanwhile, there are four negative impacts on the existence of a multicultural society, namely: education, profession, anxiety over cultural influences, and prone

to the development of social conflict. In this paper, only a brief description of the negative impacts related to anxiety and vulnerability to the development of social conflict is described.[1]

First, let's look at the issue of cultural anxiety. The phrase, "The influence of foreign cultures ..." is an example of an expression of cultural anxiety that can be said to have been commonly heard since the 1970s. In the 1970s, Indonesians were able to watch television programs even though there was only one official station, namely TVRI. Various film shows and Western culture as well as other foreign cultures began to be enjoyed. As a result, the Indonesian people began to be familiar with foreign cultures.

If you look closely, the expression, "The influence of foreign cultures..." is actually an unnatural expression, tends to be pessimistic, and desperate. As an open country society, it is impossible for Indonesian people to say "The influence of foreign culture ..." when familiar with the use of the internet, android, and various social networking tools. Roughly speaking, if you don't want to be influenced by foreign culture, build a wall around you, or live like the Baduy people in Lebak Regency, Banten Province. In fact, the problem faced by the Indonesian people is the lack of clarity about the cultural values that are used as role models. So, if a member of Indonesian society expressly states, "I am Indonesian and have a background and admire Javanese, Minangabau, Sundanese, Batak, and so on culture" it means that person is not appropriate to shout "The influence of foreign culture ..." .

Second, the tendency of social conflict among Indonesia's multicultural society. Cases of inter-ethnic disputes are cases that often occur in Indonesia. Although in the last three years these cases are rare, conflicts with racial backgrounds continue to exist. Lately. SARA cases are more associated with religious and ethnic issues of indigenous vs non-indigenous people.

If we look closely, SARA conflicts with religious and ethnic backgrounds indicate that awareness of ethnic diversity is not yet strong among the Indonesian people. In fact, if you think about it, ethnically no one at birth wants to be a citizen of a certain ethnicity: no fetus has the desire to be born as ethnic Javanese, Minangkabau, Chinese, Sundanese, and so on. Moreover, when discussing the ethnic background of indigenous vs non-indigenous people, who believes that he is a descendant of the original ethnic Indonesians? Don't today's Indonesians (including the Kubu tribe in Jambi, Baduy in Banten) come from Yunan, South China, or other areas in Central China? Major religions in Indonesia such as Islam, Christianity, and so on teach the belief that humans are actually the same in the eyes of God except for their faith and piety. No frills except ethnicity.

By looking at two examples of cases, anxiety about the influence of culture and social conflict, it is evident that awareness of the Indonesian people as a multicultural society needs to be developed and fostered continuously. The Malaysian government, for example. has cleverly produced and released the film Ipin & Upin since 2007 which reflects awareness, acceptance, and appreciation of ethnic diversity in the setting of the Malay ethnic community. The main characters of the film have different ethnic backgrounds: Kak Ros, Ipin and Upin, Ismail, Fizi, and Ehsan of Malay ethnicity, Jarjit Singh of Indian ethnicity, Mei Mei of Chinese ethnicity, and even Susanti, who is from Jakarta, Indonesia.

One of the efforts to develop insight, acceptance, and appreciation of multiculturalism is through GLS. It is stated, "Lerasi is more than just reading and writing, but includes thinking skills using knowledge sources in print, visual, digital, and auditory forms".[2] The GLS program seems to be aligned with similar programs in developed countries. At Edmonton Public School, Canada (Edmonton Public School, 2016:1) for example, the description of the literacy program is "Literacy is more than just knowing how to read and write—it's about making sense of the information you see. For students requiring academic support, literacy programming helps them develop the skills and abilities to achieve in all subject areas". So, identical to the goal of the GLS in Indonesia.

Nowadays, print, visual, digital, and auditory forms of information that tend to be provocative are very easy to obtain. If the individual is not able to absorb, process, and understand wisely, the negative risks will outweigh the positives. Individuals may be influenced, provoked, and take actions that are not commendable and may even violate the law. Therefore, GLS should also be directed to develop students' intelligence and wisdom on the reality that Indonesia is a multicultural country.

1.2. Informal Literacy as a Preparation for Individuals to Become Members of a Multicultural Society

The results of the latest research on reading interest organized by UNESCO really embarrassed the people of Indonesia. [3] It is stated that according to UNESCO data, the reading interest of the Indonesian people is very concerning, only 0.001%. That is, out of 1000 Indonesians, only 1 person is diligent in reading. Based on a different research entitled "Most Littered Nation In the World" conducted by Central Connecticut State University in March 2016, Indonesia was ranked 60th out of 61 countries regarding reading interest. Indonesia is just below Thailand (59) and above Botswana (61). In fact, in terms of infrastructure assessment to support reading, Indonesia's ranking is above European countries.

Various reasons and justifications regarding the condition of the Indonesian people's interest in reading can be stated. However, the logic is simple, everyone who is a member of the community must have the smallest community background, namely family. The family institution is the party most responsible for the embarrassing condition of the Indonesian people's interest in reading. The paradigm of responsibility that should be carried out by family leaders (parents) is: after all, children's behavior in class, on the street, including their interest in reading, originates from their respective homes.

People who have low reading interest, of course their reading ability is also low. Low reading interest and ability in a multicultural society will lead to many problems, especially cultural anxiety and social conflict. On the other hand, to develop an interest in reading, let alone directing children as potential citizens of a multicultural society, a household program called informal literacy is needed.

Informal literacy is literacy in the household. Therefore, of course, the person in charge of this type of literacy program is the parent. If there are adult occupants in the house other than parents, such as older siblings, the adults are also responsible. Because, if people who are adults do not support or show negative attitudes and behaviors towards informal literacy programs, it will also have a negative effect on the sustainability of the junior literacy program.

Informal literacy programs start when children are 0 years old. Therefore, if classified according to the age of the child, informal literacy can be classified into: (1) preschool age children (0 – 6 years), (2) primary school age children (7 – 12 years), (3) pre-adolescent children (13–15 years), and (4) adolescent children (≥ 15 years). To limit the discussion, in this paper only a brief description of the informal literacy program when children are preschool aged (0-6 years). The rationale for these restrictions is: the age range of children 0-6 years (commonly called Early Childhood, abbreviated as AUD) is the golden age of growth. This phase is the most decisive period for the development of individual brain potential. It was stated that 80% of the potential of an individual's brain grows and develops in this phase. So, this phase is also a functional phase for the development of awareness and appreciation of multiculturalism among individuals.[1]

In guides.wpl.winnipeg.ca (2016: 1-3) it is revealed that there are five activities that can be carried out in informal literacy among AUD. These activities are: talking (talk), singing (sing), reading (read), writing (write) and playing (play). The five types of activities, in practice, cannot be separated. For example, in conversation activities, parents can also combine it with

singing or playing. A brief description of the five activities is as follows.

Conversation activities are different from speaking activities. In a conversation, two (or more) parties develop empathy and sympathy for each other. However, when children are not yet good at speaking, parents should develop an active role. At this time, parents can see that in fact their children who are not yet good at speaking respond actively, especially through the eyes, facial expressions, and lip movements. As the child's ability to speak develops, activities begin to be reversed: parents act more as listeners and responders than speakers. An example of this type of conversation when children are not able to speak is put forward by [4] which is called play with hi & bye. For example, parents say dadadah while shaking their palms when they want to move from near their children. To introduce religiosity, parents also commonly say assalamualaikum and walaikumsalam when they want to approach and move away from their children.

In line with the child's ability to speak and converse, the conversation is directed at things that are further away from the reality environment that children face in their daily lives. For example, through storytelling, parents introduce the existence of various types of tribes or ethnicities. In essence, parents develop awareness and acceptance of children about the differences and similarities of humans in the reality of life caused by differences in race, ethnicity, and religion. States examples of types of activities when children are able to speak in terms of play storyteller and listener, storytelling and listening games. In the age range of 3-6 years, children are encouraged to play more roles as storytellers and parents as listeners.[5]

The role of parents in developing awareness, acceptance, and appreciation of multiculturalism in informal literacy is higher if they are able to develop open-ended questions when conversing with AUD. Stated that the activity was an ask your child open-ended questions. The questions used in this activity are probing questions. For example, when or after accompanying AUD to watch Ipin & Upin, parents ask, "Why does Mei Mei have narrower eyes than Jarjit, Ipin, and Upin? Why does Jarjit have a darker skin tone than Ipin, Upin, and Susanti? Does Mei Mei's slanted eyes result in differences in eye function? Why?" etc.[6]

Another type of conversation combined with play is taking regular breaks. States this type of activity is hit pause regularly. For example, when accompanying children to watch the movie Finding Nemo, parents pause the film and ask the children, "What do you think Marlin (Nemo's mother) will do after finding out that Nemo was captured by humans? Why? Why is Dory (Marlin's friend) so forgetful? What's the reason? Pause activities regularly can also be done when parents read story books to their children. For example, when parents

read "The Story of Prophet Yusuf As" then ask, "How did Prophet Ya'qub As feel as a father hearing the story that his son, Prophet Yusuf As, was killed by a wolf?" [7]

The most popular informal literacy activity for AUD is singing (sing). This activity can even be done by parents with AUD when the AUD has not yet reached the age of one year. Children's songs, for example my two eyes, ... are examples of literacy so that individuals know themselves better, one-on-one songs, I love you, ... are examples of literacy to recognize their own family, rainbow songs, rainbow, God's creation is an example of religious literacy, and so on. Regional songs, such as O Ina Ni Keke (North Sulawesi folk song), Apuse (Papua folk song), Gambang Suling (Central Java folk song), Bareh Solok (West Sumatra folk song), and so on are examples of literacy through singing to foster multiculturalism among AUD.

If AUD already has the ability to read, singing activities can be combined with reading. For example, while singing, parents also display the lyrics of the song. So, literacy activities like this can develop the ability to read, recite, by voice, as well as develop awareness of cultural diversity.

The most functional reading activity in the context of informal literacy is dialogic reading. The dialogic reading technique was developed by Grover J. Whitehurst. [8] If it is analogous to the activity of having a conversation (talk,) the dialogic reading technique is identical to hit and pause regularly. Activities can be carried out by means of parents reading books, pausing, then asking AUD questions related to the content of the reading as well as the possible contents of the next reading. In addition, activities can also be carried out by means of oral reading AUD, parents listen and provide corrections for AUD pronunciation or reading errors, after which parents stop AUD reading (pause) and ask questions. Another technique, parents assign AUD to retell the books they have read.

The aspect of developing multicultural insight in dialogical reading activities lies in the material. Stories about Malin Kundang, Joko Tarub, Kabayan, Lebai Malang, are examples of reading material for the development of multicultural insight. Other materials, such as films or comics such as Naruto, The Straw Hat (One Piece), and Avatar, are also examples of more universal multicultural texts. However, parents must be careful in choosing cartoons. Films such as Up, Toy Story, How to Train Your Dragon, are films that deserve to be recommended as informal literacy materials for AUD. However, films such as Sinchan, Marsha and The Bear, and even Apit & Sopo Jarwo need to be considered carefully because they exploit negative aspects such as revealing the stupidity of adults. Indonesian cartoon films that are recommended to be watched for the development of multicultural insight are Songgo Rubuh: Guard Soldier, Super Uso, and the series The Adventures of Wanara: Garuda Riders.

The informal literacy activity for AUD at the age of 3-6 years is writing. Of course, what is meant by writing at this stage is to encode sounds into sound symbols. In [9]–[15] it was revealed that parents must be careful, careful, patient, and communicative when guiding AUD when practicing writing. The thing that most frustrated AUD was understanding the relationship between sound and sound symbols and assembling them into words to sentences. The technique commonly applied is imitating the model: parents display written words whose meanings are understood by AUD, such as mother, mother, papa, and so on, then AUD imitates or copies. Over and over again, parents recite the words so that AUD, in addition to practicing writing, also practice pronouncing them correctly.

Writing exercises are getting more complex until AUD is able to encode increasingly complex sound symbols, such as Minangkabau, Sundanese, Javanese, and so on. At this stage, parents are able to develop understanding, insight, and acceptance of aspects of multiculturalism. Furthermore, AUD can be trained to write sentences based on words that have been understood, for example, "Ucok comes from Batak, Buyung comes from Minang, Ujang comes from Sunda, Thole comes from Java", and so on.

An important factor that must be considered in the implementation of informal literacy is the use of language. In this case, parents have a choice: to use a cultural language (regional language) or a multicultural language (Indonesian). At first glance, the question of choice of language use is easy to answer: use a multicultural language, namely Indonesian. However, awareness of other cultures is impossible if one does not have a clear cultural identity. Cultural identity is formed through cultural awareness. Cultural awareness is formed through the use of cultural language. This concept is also put forward [16]–[22] that culture has an inseparable relationship with consciousness (intertwine).

Based on this conceptual basis, it is undeniable that cultural awareness is formed through the use of cultural language. The relationship between language and culture is like a coin with two surfaces. One surface is culture while the other surface is language. Language is part of culture, but with language culture can be understood, implanted, and disseminated. Therefore, the language used in informal communication should be a cultural or regional language. The use of intercultural language (Indonesian) should be implemented by involving the AUD threshold, for example through learning while playing, playing while learning, reading story books, playing the role of storyteller and listener (storyteller & listener).

3. CONCLUSION

The harmonious condition of the multicultural Indonesian society is one of the things that other countries admire. However, this condition is dynamic. Various bad possibilities, especially fears of influence and social conflict could spread in the future. Therefore, in line with literacy programs, including informal literacy, it is a preventive effort so that harmony in Indonesian society is maintained and even more conducive.

In addition to being aware of parents in carrying out informal literacy to foster and develop insight, acceptance, and appreciation for cultural diversity, parents should always update themselves with regard to information. Especially, information related to the successful implementation of informal literacy programs. The family is a miniature of society. Therefore, the success of fostering and developing insight, acceptance, and appreciation of multiculturalism in the family is the pillar of the teacher, the main pillar, for the acceptance and appreciation of the community for the uniformity and cultural diversity of the Indonesian people.

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