

Managing Multicultural Classrooms of Schools in Indonesia: Some Considerations

Diah Safitri

Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta

Yogyakarta, Indonesia

diah.safitri.2018@student.uny.ac.id

Ariefa Efianingrum

Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta

Yogyakarta, Indonesia

efianingrum@uny.ac.id

Abstract—This study provides deceptions concerning management of multicultural classrooms as an effort to accomplish the objectives of multicultural education. In Indonesia, multicultural classrooms have been implemented by some schools. The success of the implementations of multicultural education is an integration of the entire components of the school. Therefore, managing multicultural classrooms need to consider various aspects, particularly concerning teachers as the main facilitator in the class. Teachers must have the capabilities and experiences to accommodate the diversities of the students. This discourse of multicultural classrooms is expected to get blown up widely in the schools in Indonesia based on the capabilities and circumstances of each school.

Keywords: *multicultural education, multicultural classroom, diversities*

I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is well-known as one of the biggest multicultural country in the world, it can be seen from the various conditions both in terms of the sociocultural and the complex, diverse, and large geographical conditions. [1]. Diversities are inherent in Indonesia with the existence of heterogeneous circumstances, including ethnicity, race, religion, culture, and other various things. Diversities in communities are a wealth we must realize, develop, and keep up appropriately to avoid the occurrence of contradictions. The diversities within communities are related to culturing, on the other hand, education is the process of shaping the character of the nation. Tilaar stated that multiculturalism is the concept of culturing and due to the education process is the process of culturing, it can be said that multicultural communities can be created with education. Education also has a reciprocal relationship with the social conditions of the communities [2]. Which means the sustainability of education is an idea of the social condition of the communities or vice versa, the state of the communities such as the progress and civilization is reflected in the condition of the education [3]. For this reason, the sustainability of education in Indonesia needs to consider so-cultural and ethnic diversities within communities.

The diverse circumstances of the communities in the realm of education could impact the varied conditions of the students. Diversities within communities allows the students to have different characteristics which are seen from the physical appearances as well as the behavior, the physical appearances including the height, weight, fashion style, hairstyle, skin color, language, gender, social class, religions, academical abilities, and the response of the students. Education is the right move to face this situation

because it is believed to have an effective role in the process of internalization and implantation of diversity values, with the hopes that the awareness of diversities will also grow up widely within communities [3]. Education in its development presents multicultural education aimed at accommodating the diversities. Indonesia also has adopted multicultural education as a discourse to achieve equality in education. Multicultural education can be interpreted as the process of developing all human potentials that respect plurality and heterogeneity because of having the diversities of cultural, ethnicity, race, and religion [4]. The implementation of multicultural education is inseparable from the efforts to foster the spirit of multiculturalism.

The availability of the multicultural education becomes an idea in the reformation of education that intended to change the structure of educational institutions so that students from various backgrounds have the same opportunity to achieve education in schools [5]. Multicultural education shows differences, not to distinguish, but the differences must be accepted fairly with an attitude of tolerance to co-exist in achieving the goals [6]. The implementation of multicultural education can be done through awareness of diversities which is used as a move in finding actions, one of which is in the continuity of the learning process. Diversities in learning are related to students' ability to respond to the curriculum and instruction while participating in learning. Therefore, teachers have a significant role as the organizers of multicultural education in the classroom.

Multicultural classrooms then become an early move to start implementing multicultural education within schools. It is accordance with what Irina Bokova said, the General Director of the UN-UNESCO Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization that the availability of multicultural classrooms could be a way to initiate an effort to build trusts which is advantageous to create eternal foundations for the sake of a country's peace [7]. Indonesia is still striving for the availability of multicultural classrooms in schools, even though managing multicultural classrooms haven't yet fully implemented because there are some considerations. Thus, this study intends to understand deeply regarding multicultural classroom management which can be a step of implementing the multicultural education.

II. THE INFLUENCE OF MULTICULTURAL IDEAS IN INDONESIA

The development of the idea of multiculturalism is the history of American, Canada, and Australia as countries that are quite serious in developing concepts and theories of multiculturalism as well as multicultural education. These countries have immigrants who have joined in and become

successful countries in developing multicultural communities to establish a national identity, with or without eliminating the identity of pre-existing or the original cultures [8]. The idea of multicultural education in America grew through the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s which came from Americans that are the offspring of African to eliminate the discrimination of the communities such as the accommodation, housing system, employment, and education. The consequences of that action affected the availability of the educational institutions which is demanded to provide schools and curriculum that reflect experiences, histories, and the perspective of the minorities. Besides, the whites in America also propose to partake in employing their class as the social control in schools to reflect the diversities within communities in America [5].

The situation mentioned shows that America is trying to build equality and unity by emphasizing appreciation and respect for the rights of minorities, in terms of ethnicity, religion, race, or skin color. [8]. The further appreciation and movement conducted by America could increase the participation of communities to be the part of the raising and strengthening action towards the position of the nation with keep accommodating the diversities of existing communities without eliminating or cornering certain groups. Australia as a diverse country also carries the spirit of multicultural education by including programs intended at preparing students to be able to partake in diverse cultural communities to meet the special needs students from various backgrounds [9]. Multicultural education then developed as a worldwide discourse that emphasizes equality in education.

Multicultural education in Indonesia is relatively just known as an approach considered more corresponding for the heterogeneous condition of the Indonesia communities. Although multicultural education is still relatively new, Indonesia is committed to conducting multicultural education as it has been demonstrated through the Curriculum of 2013. The existence of the 2013 curriculum is emphasized to strengthen the spirit of diversities towards the multicultural conditions of communities. The spirit of diversities has been cultivated since the inception of the 2013 Curriculum, as the Mohammad Nuh's explanation as a Minister of Education and Culture, stated that the spirit of diversities was reflected in textbooks with the efforts built through the characters in the book with the presence of six figures representing religious and ethnic diversities in Indonesia [10]. The curriculum planned by the government is a step in implementing multicultural education in schools and it is expected the communities will have the same level of understanding concerning the facts of diversities in Indonesia.

III. MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IN INDONESIA

Multicultural education emphasizes giving the highest respect and appreciation for human dignity and respecting them regardless of the differences in the background [4]. Multicultural education provides spaces and real access to build equality of education. Multicultural education becomes a gate to build understanding which dimensioned by diversities on broadening the discourse. Banks has a thought regarding the implementation of multicultural education which must include the institutional changes,

including changes in the curriculum, learning materials, teaching and learning styles, attitudes, perceptions, and behavior of teachers and administrators, and the objectives, norms, and school cultures are implicating that multicultural education in Indonesia must be based on a conceptual and strong policy foundations [11]. An in-depth study of policies in the administration of multicultural education is needed to accomplish the objectives.

The sustainability of the implementation of multicultural education in Indonesia can pull better outcomes through true understanding and consistently implementing under the right theories or policy foundations, so that multicultural education could be realized comprehensively through clear directions [11]. Indonesia in its history has been realizing the condition of its diversities within the communities and is striving for unity as it is written in the national principle i.e *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. Other than that, the implementation of multicultural education in Indonesia is strengthened by article 20 of 2003 in the constitution [12]. Regarding the education system as is contained in article 4 section 1 that education is implemented democratically, fair and not discriminatory with keep upholding the human rights, religious values, cultural values, and national diversities, also as it is written in the article 5 section 1 that each citizen has the equal right to get a good quality of education.

The existence of these provisions can be the basis of the implementation of multicultural education in Indonesia which asserts that every citizen has the right to get an education without exception. But, until now the discourse of multicultural education hasn't manifested yet even by the education observers, then ideas and efforts are needed to encourage multicultural education [13]. The thing Indonesia needs the most to accomplish the multicultural education objectives is efforts to implant the multicultural awareness [14]. In its process, the other effort will have an impact, for instance, the use of a multicultural education model. The multicultural education model itself shows diverse objectives that apply strategies and tools to accomplish it.

The education model in Indonesia and the other countries show diverse objectives used to accomplish it. However, the revision of the school curriculum in conducting multicultural education in the UK and some places in Canada is only limited by the cognitive dimension of existing cultural diversities. Additional information regarding cultural diversities is a multicultural education model that covers revisions or learning materials, including textbooks. Indonesia still needs a long effort in revising textbooks to accommodate contributions and participations for people from various ethnic, religious, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Models in multicultural education are not only revising the learning materials, but also conduct reformation within the education system [13]. Various multicultural education model existing can be an option then adjust it to the circumstances in Indonesia.

Besides, the sustainability of multicultural education in Indonesia can adopt the idea stated by Gorski that covers 3 transformations, they are self-transformation, process and school transformation, and community transformation [13]. If the multicultural ideas in Indonesia develop constantly then interactively can be realized in the form of curriculum,

material, method, or in other forms that aimed to accomplish education equality. But in the way to realize the equality in education, the thing that needs to be emphasized is the fact that equality is not only about treating the students fairly and ignore their culture differences, but it needs the teacher education program to be held actively and make them more open towards the students' background [15]. The importance of the teacher education program is it contains the spirit of multiculturalism; Indonesia also needs to perform that program mentioned to prepare the teacher in developing the awareness of diversity through managing multicultural education in the class.

IV. MANAGING MULTICULTURAL CLASSROOMS IN INDONESIA

Multicultural education as an attitude and behavior developing a process of a person or group to maturing people through learning, training process, deed, and ways of teaching that appreciate the plurality and heterogeneity [4]. The implementation of multicultural education is related to the competence of teachers and the adequacy of the education program [16]. A multicultural perspective has to prepare the teachers to be critical in terms of reflecting the strength and the privileges out of cultures that dominant in the system and create equality through teaching practices [17]. Therefore, teachers must realize the background differences between students and integrating diversity education into the whole curriculum. The learning method and teachers' personality also must play a clear role to support trust and achievement in the multicultural class [18]. Teachers as an in-class practitioner have important roles because they influence the sustainability of achieving the multicultural education objectives.

The importance of teachers' role in implementing the diversity values which is inclusive in education can be carried out by an effort to build diversity paradigm, respect the language differences, build sensitivity in gender, social care, attitude of anti-ethnicity discrimination, attitude of anti-capability differences discrimination, and attitude of anti-age discrimination [19]. The achieving objectives of the sustainability of multicultural education above can be carried out through multicultural based learning which is based on the concept of meaningfulness of differences uniquely on each person and communities. In the terms of the sustainability of multicultural classrooms, the process can be done with drafting the class in small groups so that each student has an equal chance to learn and build collective awareness in the class. Multicultural classes can be a place to start understanding the diversity of students to respect and understand each other.

The important thing is that multicultural classes are not only limited by students' knowledge but also their experiences while being in diverse circumstances. Nevertheless, multicultural classes do not eliminate the students' identities but are as a form of community state simulation to build collective awareness of students and then those experiences can be brought into the real socializing in the community [20]. Management of multicultural classes also can't be separated from the role of teachers as the one organizing, conducting the process, and evaluating the learning [21]. Teachers need to pay attention to several things related to students' backgrounds, such as

religion, language, gender, social status, ethnicity, ability, age, and so on. Teachers' treatment on students, even those considered small things, greatly influences the achievement of multicultural education objectives. For this reason, the teacher needs to understand every action that will be taken and has sensitivity towards various issues related to discrimination in the classroom.

The teacher's treatment to foster an attitude of respecting differences according to M. Ainul Yaqin are through various explanations related to differences in community conditions, such as (1) when there are students who make fun of one particular dialect and language accent, the teacher needs to immediately take actions such as stopping and giving an explanation to appreciate the differences, (2) the need for teachers to be fair to both women and men which can be done through the same output of speech intonation (3) the development of students' knowledge about social, economic, political injustices which exist in communities, (4) the need for teachers to provide examples of behavior that is impartial or discriminatory towards certain ethnicities, and (5) provide an understanding of the limitations of physical conditions related to differences in terms of ability of the students [21]. These actions can be a reference for the teacher to take any action in the multicultural classroom. Besides multicultural classes are also associated with students' participation. Class discussion can develop students' awareness about diversity through interactions to understand, recognize, respect, and change their mindset about culture inherent in learners [22, 23]. The class discussions encourage the interactions that reflect the culture of students so that students can actively participate and get positive learning experiences.

Management of multicultural classrooms becomes an important part of the processes that occur in schools. The teacher as a facilitator must support the activities of students firmly and purposefully. In Indonesia, appreciation for diversity has been carried out in several schools, including the Tumbuh School (Sekolah Tumbuh) and Taruna Nusantara High School (SMA Taruna Nusantara). Tumbuh School, especially 2 Tumbuh Primary School (SD 2 Tumbuh) in the research of Siti Anafiah and Latifah Dinar shows that learning activities have integrated the spirit of diversity [24]. The situation can be seen from the planned class activities by considering the background of students. The class activities encourage students to communicate and help each other, while teachers are more directed towards the potential of students and then overcome the discriminatory actions of students with special needs. And in Taruna Nusantara High School (SMA Taruna Nusantara) in the research of Laila Octaviani in 2013 shows the process of implementing multicultural education through teaching, nurturing and training activities [25]. Although this research is more about the implementation of multicultural education in schools, the existence of values that are developed and integrated can be used as a booster in realizing multicultural classes. The values that are developed in daily life are nationality, struggle, and cultural insights.

Those various explanations above show that the success of organizing a multicultural class is not only through one aspect but must be supported by various components. Existing considerations and selection of appropriate steps

can encourage the success of multicultural classes. For this reason, the implementation of multicultural classes that have been carried out by some schools in Indonesia should be an example for those who haven't, and they can adapt and innovate the systems of the existing multicultural classes. Thus, the students' diversity in Indonesia can be accommodated through multicultural classes, with the hope that those students can bring the multicultural class knowledge when socializing in communities.

V. PROMOTING TOLERANCE IN THE MULTICULTURAL CLASSROOMS

Gay argues that multicultural classrooms cannot be released to underline the roles and the importance of the teacher as a "cultural mediator" i.e. helping students examine cultural conflicts, develop good relationships across cultures, and avoid ignoring prejudice, stereotypes, and racism [26]. Various strategies can be carried out to provide multicultural perspectives for students in multicultural classes, as stated by P.H. Martorella. i.e. learning how and where to set the goals, accurate information regarding diverse cultural groups, identifying positive aspects of different individuals or ethnic groups, learning the attitude of tolerance for diversity through experimentation in schools and classrooms with different practices and habits, developing empirical behavior through role-playing and simulation, applying perspective glasses by looking at the history or issues through the perspective of other cultural groups, develop self-esteem, identify and analyze stereotypes and social prejudices that originate from the life of students [27]. For this reason, tolerance is an important part of the multicultural class to build awareness of the students concerning the diverse communities.

Managing multicultural classes becomes a complex process in realizing multicultural education goals. The importance of multicultural classes in schools needs to be recognized together. Awareness efforts regarding tolerance to diversity in the classroom must be done through concrete actions because the classroom is a miniature community and is seen as quite effective as a place to start. Teachers, regardless of their background, they have to try to place themselves in the diversity class by recognizing students more deeply and having attitudes and behaviors that value, not discriminate and discriminate, and provide fair services as a form of a democratic society to help students develop and improve ability to achieve educational success ability to achieve educational success [23, 28]. The teacher in its implementation also needs to make learning that is culturally responsive by considering several ways of learning [29]. Teachers' understanding of diversity is expected to encourage tolerance in multicultural classes.

The actions of teachers that reflect tolerance can encourage the growth attitude of tolerance among diverse learners. Teacher readiness through multicultural experience becomes necessary, so teachers need to prepare themselves to face the diversity of teachers through providing opportunities in enhancing a culture of self-awareness, fostering diversity appreciation, increasing cultural competence, and preparing to work effectively with the situation of diverse students [30]. The role of the teacher in encouraging the attention and involvement of students to tolerate requires a multicultural classroom management

strategy. Tartjwik, Brok, Veldman & Wubbles in their research [31] suggested the ideas of Evertson and Weinstein that the strategy carried out by building positive relationships through shaking hands and being friendly, class management using the social and moral curriculum, and teachers need to consider the background characteristics of students. Another thing to realize is that the development of tolerance in multicultural classes is not only centered on the teacher, but the school must encourage and participate to make it happens [32]. The explanation gives a clear deception that multicultural class is a combination of various existing systems. For this reason, all the considerations are expected to be a reference for Indonesia in developing broad multicultural class management.

VI. CONCLUSION

Management of multicultural classrooms is part of the implementation of multicultural education. The multicultural classroom is designed to accommodate the background differences of students with the existence of teachers as supportive facilitators. Management of multicultural classrooms is needed to give a fair chance for students to get educated regardless of their backgrounds. Teachers must be experienced in terms of multiculturalism so it can be a reference in carrying out various actions in the class. The actions and treatments of teachers need to prioritize the tolerance with the objective students can follow. In Indonesia, multicultural classrooms have been implemented by some schools. For this reason, the success of the existing multicultural classes is expected to be followed by other schools with considering the condition and ability of the school concerned.

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