



# Awareness Education by Paulo Freire in the Novel *Laskar Pelangi* and *Negeri 5 Menara*

Dewi Pusposari<sup>(✉)</sup>

Universitas Negeri Malang, Malang, Indonesia

dewi.pusposari.fs@um.ac.id

**Abstract.** This research is based on the ongoing issues with education in Indonesia. These problems have inspired Indonesian novelists to address the issue of education in their works. The novels are: (1) *Laskar Pelangi*, and (2) *Negeri 5 Menara*. This type of research is descriptive qualitative research. Research information is present in the two novels as words, sentences, and paragraphs with educational value. Data analysis methods include text analysis, literature analysis, data presentation, data reduction, data organization, data interpretation, and research findings conclusions. The findings of the data analysis demonstrate that education, in essence, has no bounds because the standard of living keeps rising. The issue with education is not just imparting knowledge, but also teaching students how to interact with and converse with the circumstances of the time. The discussion is based on awareness education developed by Paulo Freire. According to Freire, this form of education is based on human awareness, which has three different aspects: naive consciousness which sees humans as the root cause of problems, magic consciousness in the form of public awareness that is unable to see the link between one factor and another, critical consciousness (critical consciousness), namely awareness that sees the system as a source of problems. To achieve all of this awareness, students need a critical education grounded in social realities rather than a “banking style” education, which will only produce robots with no understanding of the social realities they must contend with. Education that can engage in critical reflection on the “dominant ideology” that currently governs society, confront unfair systems, and consider alternate systems in the hope of bringing about social change and the creation of a just society.

**Keywords:** Education · Naive Awareness · Magical Awareness · Critical Awareness

## 1 Introduction

Indonesia’s educational issues have not yet been resolved. Many parties are concerned about this. Even novelists, who are not educators, criticize Indonesian education because it has never been “established.” Name two well-known books: Novel *Negeri 5 Menara* (N5M) by Ahmad Fuadi and *Laskar Pelangi* (LP) by Andrea Hirata. Because of its outstanding sales and yearly reprints, Andrea Hirata’s LP served as the basis for the movie of the same name. It is stated that the novel LP is based on the life of an island

rich in tin, but in contrast, there are 11 children known as *Laskar Pelangi* who attend school in a nearly collapsed building. Behind the irony are two teachers who are devoted to their profession: Mr. Harfan, the principal, and Mrs. Teacher Muslimah. These two teachers are always an inspiration to the LP's 11 members.

The second book, *Negeri 5 Menara*, follows the life of an outlander boy from Sumatra who decides to study in Java after his parents object to his desire to enrol in high school. His parents preferred that he complete his education at a facility that could also offer religious instruction, like a boarding school. With a heavy heart, the child decided to attend the Madani Islamic Boarding School as an expression of his disappointment at not being able to attend the school he desired after receiving information from an uncle. He then began his thrilling, ibrah-filled adventure at this boarding school.

The two novels more or less describe the condition of education in Indonesia. Several definitions of education: (1) Education is an activity of receiving and imparting knowledge so that culture can be passed on from generation to generation. (2) Education is a learning process of loyalty and willingness to follow the rules in order to train and develop the human mind. (3) Education is a process of growth and development of human strengths, talents, abilities, and interests. (4) Education is the reconstruction and reorganization of experience that adds meaning and the ability to provide direction for subsequent experiences. (5) Education is a process of adjustment to the elements of experience that become the personality of modern life so that it becomes a mature person [1, p. 26].

Education is essentially an effort to help someone reach their full potential through the process of teaching and learning activities in an educational environment in order to create a balanced, harmonious, and dynamic person in achieving his life goals; in reality, this is still far from what is expected. The practice of education in Indonesia is still influenced by some interests that do not fully support educational objectives. The estuary of education in Indonesia has not yet produced a complete Indonesian human. This is consistent with Freire's belief that education, as a means of human awareness of the reality of their existence, contributes to improving one's welfare and social status [2]. Paulo Freire is a prominent educational philosopher who is well-known for his work on humanity's social problems. Due to the educational inequality that existed in his community, Paulo Freire struggled in school. This motivated him to work hard to increase community awareness so that people could identify the causes of inequality. This appears to be consistent with the state of education in Indonesia, which continues to be dominated by certain interests and excludes the oppressed. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to study the issues with education in Indonesia by focusing on how the educational criticism started in Andrea Hirata's novels LP and Ahmad Fuadi's N5M is consistent with Paulo Freire's view as the originator of liberating education.

## 2 Method

This article's research was done qualitatively, specifically through library research. The library research method, according to Sari and Asmendri [3], is a data collection technique by looking up and reading various books, literature, notes, and reports related to the desired problem. The material discussed in the research is taken from a variety of

literature books and online scientific journals. *Laskar Pelangi* and *Negeri 5 Menara*, two novels, both contain research information in the form of words, sentences, and paragraphs that have educational value. Techniques for data analysis include text analysis, literature analysis, data presentation, data reduction, data organization, data interpretation, and research findings conclusions.

### 3 Findings and Discussion

#### 3.1 Equality in Education

The LP novel is set in Gantong Village, East Belitong. The story begins with the South Sumatra Ministry of Education and Culture threatening to dissolve SD Muhammadiyah Gantong if it does not enroll 10 new students. Only nine kids showed up for the opening ceremony at the time. Harun and his mother arrived to register just as Pak Harfan, the principal, was about to give a speech concluding the school. The ten children come from fishermen's families and are employees of the Timah District Court. An SD was established not far from SD Muhammadiyah by PN Timah, one of the significant national companies at the time. The story at SD PN Timah provides a very different view from the condition of SD Muhammadiyah where *Laskar Pelangi* goes to school.

The condition of SD PN Timah is quite exclusive, it is limited by a wall fence with a gate that is always closed during lessons. The elementary school students appeared tidy, well-groomed, dressed in uniform, and wearing shoes. In a structure that was on the verge of collapsing and had a hole in the roof, SD Muhammadiyah only occupied one room. The pupils at this elementary school were not in uniform, did not wear shoes, and appeared to be dirty and unkempt. This section demonstrates the phenomenon of unequal access to education in society.

The story's fragments in the LP imply a number of insightful lessons as a rationale for improving current educational practices. As a result, there is a significant gap. The school founded by the PN Timah is very magnificent, bordered by high walls and a large gate, while SM Muhammadiyah is described as a school with a very pathetic condition in contrast to the PN Timah school.

The fact that their school had to be closed because it fell short of the required quota of 10 students negatively impacted the LP students' spirits. This appears to demonstrate that administrative issues, such as the required minimum enrollment of students, are frequently constrained in Indonesia, particularly in 3T areas (frontier, remote, and underdeveloped). When low-cost schools had to close due to administrative issues, many students from lower socioeconomic classes were disheartened and some even chose not to go to school. This condition is supported by the view of some conflict observers that school institutions have caused conditions of social inequality [4]. Poor children can only attend elementary school, which has very limited facilities. Children from wealthy families can attend school with all the necessary resources.

In yet another scene, the phenomenon of educational inequality is displayed. One day, Mahmud -a teacher at SD PN Timah - was distributing calculators to his students during a Math lesson. The calculator is given away without charge. The plot completely changed during Muhammadiyah Elementary School's math classes. A stick that had been divided into small pieces was being used by Muslimah at the time to teach LP how to count.

These two contradictory scenes criticize the inequality caused by differences in learning facilities, specifically the differences in learning facilities between children from wealthy families and children from low-income families. Poor people with various limitations are only able to use sticks as a counting tool. This is ironic when two elementary schools are close together, inside it seems as if there is a high wall that can distinguish the children around it. This reality frequently shows up in the face of our country's educational system.

Schools are exclusive institutions with high walls and iron fences that are ready to bar access for the underprivileged to study in quite luxurious settings. Instead of providing security, fences have actually restricted kids' access to the world around them, as if they were being quarantined while learning. The social environment around the school should be a learning material for students [2]. This criticism is also expressed in the book LP. Additionally, Ibu Muslimah and Pak Harfan frequently invite LP to study outside in the sweltering sun, in the garden, or even while playing on the beach. One scene that strengthens this analysis is when Lintang and Ikal attempt to play in the yard of SD PN Timah, which is then expelled by school guards because they are not students of SD PN Timah. Another scene is when Lintang and Ikal are standing on the closed fence of the SD PN Timah. They were only able to talk to one of their friends at the elementary school from behind the fence.

### 3.2 Equal Education

Freire's concept of education is based on a high concern for love for fellow human beings. Human beings should sympathize with each other. Sympathizing means having a sense of participation in feeling the feelings of others, both happy and sad. Sympathy is shown in the quote of the novel N5M as follows.

“We came closer and put our arm around his shoulder. In my heart, I promised to help him as much as possible. Baso nodded gratefully while blowing his nose which was clogged with grief. Suddenly my nose also ran like a cold person” [5].

The story is about Baso who is sad after telling him that his grandmother, the only family he has, is sick in his hometown. They no longer have a family to take care of their grandmother. A kind neighbor who is willing to take care of her grandmother. Baso also said that he was sent to school at Pondok Madani for the kindness of his neighbor. Now he feels that he can no longer continue his studies in peace. He already felt bad for his neighbor's kindness and wanted to accompany his ailing grandmother. Alif and his close friends only found out about the story after being friends for a long time. His friend turned out to have a sad sorrow. Alif and his friends feel sadness.

The following quote also shows the affection that the author expresses.

“...Amak's love is indescribable to me and my brothers and sisters. Even though she is busy correcting her class assignments, she always makes time; to read books, listen to our chatter, and accompany us to study.” [5].

In the quote, it appears that every parent must love and adore their children. In the novel N5M, the character Amak is shown to be attentive to her children despite her busy schedule.

Freire's concept of education in educational discourse, including in Indonesia, is a strong love for humans. Freire strive to establish a world that is "meno fetu, menos malvado, menos desumano" (not bad, not evil, and human). A high sense of love will lead to equality. Likewise in education. Equality in the world of education fosters concern for structures that are oppressive, unfair, and unbalanced. The oppressive structures must be dismantled and must be fought for. A neutral attitude towards oppressive situations is not a good attitude because of neutral means pro oppressors. Thus, Freire fights for: (1) equality in the education system, (2) dedication to the oppressed, (3) an education system that emphasizes learning as a cultural action in liberation, (4) banking education, and (5) conscientization or forming awareness. individuals and society.

In Freire's view, oppression can be broken down through education. An oppressive social structure can be changed through education. If you want society to progress, education must also advance and go hand in hand. The social structure will change if education changes, and vice versa.

Formal education plays an important role in determining the sustainable reform of a democratic society. Thus, society has the freedom and opportunity to create knowledge based on their own experience [2]. The forms of oppression are very diverse, for example being oppressed by authoritarian regimes, oppressed by unfair and discriminatory social structures, and oppressed because of race, ethnicity, gender, and subculture. A dependent society is a silent society. His voice does not come from the bottom of his heart but is a reflection of the voice of the people of the metropolis in all fields, when the people of the metropolis speak, they listen [5]. So when a mute society dismantles a mute culture and gains the right to speak and when a radical structural change changes that society, then they can stop this mute culture from growing.

The silent culture, according to Paulo Freire, was also created because of the banking concept of education. The concept of Bank Education, according to him, is a relationship where one party is an educator who always tells a story (the teacher as narrator) and is considered the source of all knowledge. a topic completely foreign to the existential experience of the students As Paulo Freire says that

"In the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider knowing nothing Projecting an absolute ignorance onto others, a characteristic of the ideology of oppression, negates education and knowledge as a process of inquiry [5] [In the concept of Bank Education, knowledge is a gift given by those who consider themselves knowledgeable to those who are considered to have no knowledge. means denying education and knowledge as a search process.] As a result, in this educational concept, educators only direct students to record and memorize mechanically the lessons told by their educators."

In other words, it can be said that in this Bank Education System, students are only given the main points of material by educators, students do not have to know in depth about the material given, but they must memorize the content of lessons given by educators. students as people who are on the opposite side. By considering them absolutely stupid, then he confirmed his own existence. Students who are like alienated

slaves in Friedrich Hegel's dialectic, accept their stupidity as an endorsement of the existence of the teacher.

A prominent feature of the Bank's Educational System is "the ambiguity of words and not their transforming power" [5]. For example, three times three equals nine, and the capital city of Indonesia is DKI Jakarta. just taking notes, memorizing, and repeating, without understanding three times three, or the real meaning of the word "capital" in the expression of the capital city of Indonesia DKI Jakarta.

The understanding of the awareness in the concept of Bank Education states that the role of educators is to regulate the way the world enters students. This Bank Education system always covers certain facts that explain how humans exist in the world. In practice, this education rejects dialogue and treats students as auxiliary objects. It is clear, therefore, that this Bank Education System hinders creativity and tames consciousness and the world, thus denying the ontological call of man to become a complete human being.

The concept of Bank Education is opposite to the *raison d'être* of liberating education (liberation education) which lies in its efforts toward reconciliation. both are teacher and student together. Such a solution is not and may not be found in the concept of Bank Education.

The characteristics of Bank Style education are: (1) teachers teach, students learn; (2) teachers know everything, students are considered to know nothing; (3) teachers think, students think; (4) the teacher tells the story, the students listen obediently; (5) the teacher determines the rules, the students are regulated; (6) the teacher selects and implements the choice, the student agrees; (7) the teacher acts, the student imagines himself acting through the teacher's actions; (8) the teacher chooses the material and content of the lesson, the students adapt; (9) the teacher mixes the authority of science and the authority of the position that he does which hinders the freedom of students; and (10) the teacher is the subject in the learning process, the student is the object.

It is true that the teacher is an artist who plays an important role in the classroom, but that does not mean that the teacher has the right to print students according to their wishes. Teachers should make students become themselves so that students' potential is optimal.

## 4 Conclusion

Education problems in Indonesia are so complex that they receive a lot of attention from various groups, including Indonesian novelists. Several problems regarding education have been discussed in the novel *Laskar Pelangi* and the novel *Negeri 5 Menara*. Numerous issues need to be fixed right away. Freire proposes problem-solving education or education about problems as a solution. Education facing problems views humans as the starting point in education, for example in the agricultural environment, the education offered is education about agriculture. Man does not exist separately from the world and its reality, but exists in the world and together with the reality of that world. That reality must be faced by students so that there is an awareness of the reality. Awareness will grow from the struggle with the reality faced and is expected to produce critical behavior in them.

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