



English Teachers' Perspectives About *Tri Hita Karana* in dealing with Multiculturalism in the Classroom : A case study in a National School of Bali, Indonesia

Ni Komang Ayu Antini*¹ and Luh PutuArtini²

^{1,2} Postgraduate Program, Ganesha University of Education, Bali, Indonesia

ayu.antini@student.undiksha.ac.id

Abstract. As a multicultural country, Indonesia has some policies in education that build students' awareness of the diversities in ethnicities, cultures, and religions. The role of teachers for students' awareness and understanding as well as preserving the cultures is substantial. In Bali in particular, the awareness and understanding of the differences are addressed through the local values of *Tri Hita Karana*, which literally means the three ways for living in harmony. This study aims to explore English teacher perspectives on the implementation of multiculturalism values within the *Tri Hita Karana* framework in National school Bali, Indonesia. The philosophy of *Tri Hita Karana* encompasses the harmonious relationship of human to God, human to human, and human to the environment. This study used a qualitative approach with in-depth interview methods and participatory observation to collect data from students. The results showed that English teachers played an important role in integrating *Tri Hita Karana* values in their teaching, creating an inclusive learning environment and appreciating cultural diversity. The students felt an increased understanding and appreciation of the values of multiculturalism, also gave them positive impact in interpersonal relationships and learning environment. The findings suggest that local value-based approaches such as *Tri Hita Karana* can be effective in promoting multiculturalism in schools nationwide.

Keywords: Students Perspective, English Teacher, Multiculturalism, *Tri Hita Karana*, National School.

1 Introduction

Indonesia is an archipelagic country with ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity. With more than 1,300 ethnic groups and more than 700 regional languages, Indonesia is known as a multicultural nation [1,2]. Multiculturalism in Indonesia is both a wealth and a challenge in social life, including in the world of education [3]. Education has a central role in shaping the character of a nation that is inclusive and tolerant of cultural diversity [4]. Therefore, a multicultural education approach is important to be embedded in the national education system. Multicultural education is an approach to education that emphasizes recognition and respect for cultural diversity and encourages equality in the learning process [5]. Banks (2019) explain that

multicultural education aims to ensure that all students, regardless of ethnic, social, or cultural background, have equal learning opportunities [3]. This education not only emphasizes teaching about various cultures, but also develops an attitude of tolerance, empathy, and openness to differences [6]. In Indonesia, multicultural education has been integrated into the curriculum with various approaches, one of which is through local wisdom. Local wisdom-based education can be a strategy to instill values of togetherness, tolerance, and harmony in social life. One form of local wisdom that is relevant in the context of multicultural education in Bali is the *Tri Hita Karana* philosophy.

Tri Hita Karana is a concept of local wisdom of the Balinese people that emphasizes three harmonious relationships as the basis of life, namely the relationship between humans and God (Parahyangan), the relationship between humans and others (Pawongan), and the relationship between humans and the environment (Palemahan) [7]. This philosophy is not only a guideline for the lives of the Balinese people but has also been implemented in various aspects of life, including education [8]. In the context of learning, the application of *Tri Hita Karana* values has a positive impact on the development of students' multicultural character and attitudes. The relationship between humans and God (Parahyangan) in education can be realized through learning based on spiritual and ethical values, so that students can understand the importance of morality in life [9]. The relationship between humans and others (Pawongan) emphasizes the importance of tolerance, cooperation, and empathy in social interactions at school [10]. Meanwhile, the relationship between humans and the environment (Palemahan) teaches students to respect the surrounding environment as part of a harmonious life [11].

Although multicultural education has been integrated into various curricula, in reality there are still various obstacles in its implementation. Several studies have shown that teachers' understanding of multicultural education is still limited, so that its implementation in the classroom is not optimal [12]. In addition, the lack of learning resources that support multicultural education based on local wisdom is also an obstacle in the learning process [13]. In English language learning, the use of language as an inclusive communication tool is an important aspect in teaching multicultural values [14]. Therefore, this study aims to:

1. Analyze how English teachers use language in teaching *Tri Hita Karana*-based multiculturalism.
2. Determine students' perceptions of the use of language by teachers in teaching *Tri Hita Karana*-based multiculturalism.

The results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of multicultural education based on local wisdom and increase the effectiveness of English teaching in the context of multiculturalism.

1.1 Previous Research

Several studies have explored the integration of *Tri Hita Karana* (THK) and multicultural values in education, as well as teachers' perceptions of multiculturalism

in classroom settings. These studies serve as a foundation for investigating how English teachers integrate THK values in multicultural classroom settings.

A study conducted by Sawitri et al. (2023), titled *Exploring Multicultural Values in Tri Hita Karana Philosophy and Its Relevance as a Social Studies Learning Resource: A Study in a Junior High School*, aimed to explore multicultural values embedded in *Tri Hita Karana* and analyze their relevance in social studies education [15]. This qualitative study involved 12 research participants from SMP Negeri 1 Singaraja and used interviews and observations for data collection. The study identified nine multicultural values within THK philosophy that were positively relevant to social studies education, highlighting its importance in fostering multicultural awareness in classroom learning.

Research on teachers' attitudes toward multiculturalism has also been conducted beyond Indonesia. Horenczyk and Tatar (2002), in their study *Teachers' Attitudes Toward Multiculturalism and Their Perceptions of the School Organizational Culture*, explored how teachers in 34 Israeli schools perceived multicultural education [16]. The findings indicated that teachers had more positive attitudes toward integrating multicultural students into society yet displayed more assimilationist views within the educational context. This study highlights the significant influence of school organizational culture on teachers' approaches to multicultural education.

In the context of environmental education and multiculturalism, Cohen and Reilly (2013) conducted a study titled *Teachers' Perspectives on Environmental Education in Multicultural Contexts: Towards Culturally Responsive Environmental Education* [17]. The study, conducted in Québec, found that teachers faced challenges in integrating environmental education in classrooms with high cultural diversity, particularly due to value clashes and political constraints. The study emphasized the need for culturally responsive teaching that considers students' diverse backgrounds in education.

Meanwhile, Putra and Musigrungsi (2022) examined the beliefs of Indonesian EFL teachers in their study *Indonesian EFL Teachers' Beliefs about Incorporating Cultural Aspects in Their Multilingual and Multicultural EFL Classrooms* [18]. This research surveyed 68 Indonesian EFL teachers and found that they prioritized the integration of Indonesian culture in English classrooms to maintain multilingualism and multiculturalism, while also recognizing the importance of international culture for global communication. Their findings highlight how teachers balance local and global cultural perspectives in EFL education.

While previous studies have explored the integration of *Tri Hita Karana* in character education and its relevance to social studies, research on how English teachers incorporate THK values in multicultural classrooms is still limited. Additionally, existing studies primarily focus on teacher beliefs but lack insights into students' perceptions regarding how THK values are presented in language learning. Based on this research gap, the present study aims to:

1. Analyze how English teachers incorporate THK values in their teaching to address multiculturalism in classrooms.
2. Investigate students' perspectives on the use of THK values in English language learning.

By examining these aspects, this study contributes to the literature on multicultural education, local wisdom integration, and language teaching, offering practical insights into how English teachers can preserve cultural values while promoting multicultural awareness in classrooms.

2 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design with an ethnographic approach, focusing on in-depth interviews and participatory observations to collect data. Ethnographic research is used to understand cultural practices, behaviors, and perspectives within a particular social setting. This approach allows researchers to analyze how *Tri Hita Karana* (THK) values are incorporated into multicultural education by English teachers in the classroom. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative research seeks to explore individuals’ lived experiences and the meanings they assign to their interactions. In this study, ethnography was chosen because it enables an in-depth exploration of teachers’ and students’ perceptions regarding THK in multicultural education [19]. The study was conducted in a national elementary school in Bali, Indonesia, where fourth-grade students and their English teachers participated. Ethnographic research typically involves participant observation, allowing researchers to become immersed in the setting and interact directly with participants [20]. In this study, observations focused on teacher-student interactions, classroom discourse, and the application of THK values in learning. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers and students to gain insights into their perceptions and experiences of multicultural values in English language learning.

2.2 Research Procedure

The research followed a systematic qualitative procedure, aligning with the ethnographic approach. According to Merriam & Tisdell (2016), ethnographic research involves multiple stages, including identifying the research setting, selecting participants, collecting data, and analyzing cultural themes [21]. The steps in this study were as follows:

Table 1. Steps in this study

Research Subject	Observations	Interviews	Data Collection
The study was conducted in July 2024 at a national elementary school in Bali. The participants included:	The researcher conducted non-participant observations in the English classroom, focusing on: How the	Semi-structured interviews were conducted with: The English teacher, to explore their perspectives on	Observations (documenting classroom interactions, teacher strategies, and student responses). Interviews

• One English teacher who integrated THK values in teaching. • Ten fourth-grade students who were observed and interviewed regarding their understanding of multicultural values in language learning.	• teacher used THK values in teaching English. • How students responded to multicultural themes in classroom interactions.	• integrating THK values in language teaching. • Students, to understand their opinions on the teacher's language use and multicultural content.	• (exploring perceptions of THK in multicultural learning). • Field notes and audio recordings to ensure accuracy in data interpretation.
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According to Miles et al. (2019), triangulation is essential in qualitative research to enhance credibility. Thus, data from observations, interviews, and document analysis were compared to ensure validity [22].

2.3 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following Braun & Clarke's (2021) six-step approach [23]. Familiarization with Data, the researcher transcribed interviews and observation notes and Initial patterns were identified. Generating Initial Codes, key themes related to teacher strategies, student responses, THK values were coded and searching for Themes, and codes were grouped into broader themes, such as multicultural values, teacher-student interactions, and linguistic approaches. Reviewing Themes, themes were refined by checking their alignment with the research questions. Defining and Naming Themes, is the final themes were clearly defined, ensuring they captured the essence of the data. Producing the Report, the findings were structured into a coherent narrative, supported by direct quotes from participants. According to Flick (2018), qualitative research utilizes various data collection techniques, including observation is directly recording teacher-student interactions related to THK values in multicultural learning [24]. Interviews is engaging with teachers and students to understand their perceptions. Field notes and audio Recordings to ensuring accuracy and depth in data analysis.

Observation Sheet

According to Nasution in Sugiyono (2020) observation is a condition where direct observation is carried out by researchers in order to be better able to understand the context of the data in the entire social situation so that a comprehensive view can be obtained [25]. In this study, researchers conducted observations in 4th grade, totaling

10 students with using observation Check list model. Observe the teacher's activities in opening lessons, core activities, closing lessons and identify their existence by ticking "yes" if the indicator of the activity is carried out by the teacher and ticking "no" if the indicator is not carried out by the teacher. Researchers observed by observing teachers while teaching in class and observing students how they were able to understand the teacher's explanations. Based on the observation sheet in this research, it has been described starting from remarks, delivery of material, delivery of assignments, discussion with students, summarizing, to closing.

Interview Guide

According to Esterberg in Sugiyono (2020), an interview is a meeting of two people to exchange information and ideas through questions and answers so that meaning can be contributed to a particular topic [25]. In this research, the researchers were interviewed with the results of the analysis of the observation of the teacher and 10 students. The questions in the interview session for students are mentioned below:

1. Do you agree that when learning English, teachers relate multicultural learning, especially to *Tri Hita Karana*? Why?
2. Do you get benefits when teachers apply multiculturalism, especially to *Tri Hita Karana* in learning English? If yes, mention it!
3. Do you agree or disagree with the implementation of *Tri Hita Karana* values applied by teachers in your class?

The questions in the interview session for the teacher are mentioned below:

- a. Do you agree that when learning English, linking multicultural learning, especially to *Tri Hita Karana*? Why?
- b. Do you get development when you apply multiculturalism, especially to *Tri Hita Karana* in learning English? If yes, mention it!
- c. Do you agree or disagree with the application of *Tri Hita Karana* values applied in your class in learning English?

Based on the interview guide, all of the students' answers to the questions above are very similar, they agree toward the use of bilingual language by the teacher in their EFL classroom with different or varied reasons and explanations.

3 Results

3.1 Observation Sheet

Observation is a fundamental method in qualitative research that allows researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the research context by directly observing social situations [25]. Through observation, researchers can analyze behaviors, interactions, and patterns in a natural setting to obtain comprehensive insights. In this study, observations were conducted in a 4th-grade classroom, involving 10 students, using a structured observation checklist model. The checklist was designed to evaluate various

aspects of classroom interactions, particularly the teacher's instructional strategies and students' engagement. The observation focused on:

1. Lesson Opening – How the teacher initiates the lesson and engages students.
2. Core Activities – The methods and strategies used by the teacher to deliver materials and interact with students.
3. Lesson Closing – How the teacher concludes the lesson and reinforces key points.

Researchers recorded their observations by marking “Yes” if an indicator was met and “No” if it was not. Additionally, researchers examined students' comprehension of teacher explanations and their participation in classroom discussions. The observation sheet captured critical teaching behaviors, including lesson introduction, content delivery, assignment explanations, student discussions, summarization, and lesson closure.

Table 2. Indicators or Points of Observation

Indicators or Points of Observation	Yes	No	Notes
Opening			
Greeting	Ö		The teacher said “good morning student”
Check student attendance	Ö		The teacher does not check student attendance
Checking students' readiness to take lessons		Ö	The teacher does not ask students' readiness when learning and immediately explains the material
Growing motivation	Ö		The teacher says “come on it's okay”, “come on loud”
Liven up the class atmosphere	Ö		The class atmosphere is ordinary but students pay attention and follow the lesson calmly
Give a clear explanation of the lessons to be learned	Ö		The teacher gives directions and explanations about the material to be studied about “ <i>Tri Hita Karana</i> ”
Give questions whether students ever heard the competencies to be taught, for example (have you ever heard about <i>Tri Hita Karana</i> ?)	Ö		The teacher does ask questions
Core Activities			
The teacher asks students about what they know about <i>Tri Hita Karana</i>	Ö		Students say “relation human to God”, “relation human to human”, “relation human to environment”. The teacher pronounces the vocabulary from the <i>Tri Hita Karana</i> “relation human to God”
Repeating the words mentioned in English.	Ö		repeatedly and students follow after the teacher “relation human to God” The teacher lifts a power point slide and says “relation human to human”

Saying vocabulary by holding the object repeatedly	Ö	the teacher points to a slide power point and says “relation human to environment”
Asking students to follow the pronunciation of objects mentioned by the teacher in English	Ö	The teacher says “please follow what I said right, <i>Tri Hita Karana</i> is a three harmony relation”
Give an example about <i>Tri Hita Karana</i>	Ö	The teacher points or gives one of the point by <i>Tri Hita Karana</i> (do you know the example of relation human to God?) and asks students to guess the answer. The teacher tells the students “everyone
Ask students to observe the given paper	Ö	looks at the picture of the slide”
Ask students to write the examples of <i>Tri Hita Karana</i> , the teacher give papers it has a picture that relate of <i>Tri Hita Karana</i>	Ö	The teacher says “allright now you can continue the example of <i>Tri Hita Karana</i> , so now please write under the picture right”.
Closing		
Asking again if there are students who have difficulty and do not understand the material.	Ö	The teacher asked the students “do you understand? Or do you have a question?”
Checking students' writing and pronunciation success one by one.	Ö	The teacher tests the students one by one and confirms the pronunciation and writing of the vocabulary that has been learned.
Ending the lesson with a prayer	Ö	End with praying Students says “Thankyou teacher”
Say greetings	Ö	Teacher says “your welcome student”

Based on the observations showed that teachers and students use cheerful English that integrates the values of *Tri Hita Karana*. The teacher uses inclusive and relevant language, linking the principles of *Tri Hita Karana* with the subject matter to facilitate students' understanding. Students feel that this approach makes lessons more interesting and meaningful and increases their understanding of different cultures. Overall, the application of the values of *Tri Hita Karana* in teaching English creates a harmonious learning environment and supports student openness to cultural diversity.

3.2 Interview Guide

Interviews serve as a crucial data collection method in qualitative research, allowing researchers to explore participants' perspectives and experiences in depth [25]. An interview is a structured or semi-structured exchange between the researcher and

respondents to gather information, clarify observations, and gain deeper insights into the research topic. In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the teacher and 10 students to complement the observation data. The interview questions were designed to explore:

1. The teacher's perspective on implementing multicultural values within the *Tri Hita Karana* framework in classroom teaching.
2. Students' perceptions of the language used by the teacher when explaining multicultural values.

By integrating observations and interviews, this study aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of how multicultural values are embedded in classroom teaching and how students perceive and respond to them.

Table 3. Student Interview

STUDENTS	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3
Student 1	Agree, it makes us appreciate cultural differences when learning English more	Yes, because we learn to appreciate and respect different cultures.	Agree
Student 2	Agree, Linking with <i>Tri Hita Karana</i> helps us understand the importance of harmony in learning	Yes, because we become better at interacting with people from various backgrounds	Agree
Student 3	Agree, This makes us more open to other cultures when learning new languages	Yes, because we become more accepting and curious about new ideas and traditions.	Agree
Student 4	Agree, <i>Tri Hita Karana</i> teaches us about mutual respect when learning English	Yes, because we understand others' perspectives and experiences more deeply.	Agree
Student 5	Agree, Learning about cultural harmony helps us understand English better	Yes, because we build better relationships with diverse groups of people.	Agree
Student 6	Agree, This teaches us to live harmoniously with various cultures while learning language	Yes, because we gain knowledge about global cultures and practices.	Agree
Student 7	Agree, Linking with <i>Tri Hita Karana</i> will enrich the experience of learning English	Yes, because we see the world from multiple cultural viewpoints.	Agree
Student 8	Agree, This helps us see the relationship between language and culture positively	Yes, because we become more flexible in different social settings.	Agree
Student 9	Agree, Learning English with a cultural context makes it easier for us to understand others	Yes, because we learn to approach problems from various cultural perspectives.	Agree
Student 10	Agree, <i>Tri Hita Karana</i> makes learning English more meaningful by respecting culture	Yes, because our education becomes more comprehensive and meaningful.	Agree

Based on interviews, students agree that connecting English learning with the values of *Tri Hita Karana* is very useful. They feel that this approach helps them understand and appreciate different cultures. Students experience developments in terms of understanding culture, openness, communication, and empathy when applying multiculturalism and *Tri Hita Karana* in the classroom. They also assume that applying these values creates a more harmonious learning environment and supports a more effective learning process. Students believe linking *Tri Hita Karana* with English learning makes them more open and respectful of cultural diversity.

Table 4. Teacher Interview

TEACHER	Question 1	Question 2	Question 3
English Teacher	Yes, I agree. Linking English learning by learning about <i>Tri Hita Karana</i> helps students understand the importance of respecting different	Yes, we get developments. By applying multiculturalism and <i>tri hita Karana</i> in learning English, we become better understanding	I agree. Applying the values of <i>Tri Hita Karana</i> in class while learning English helps create a harmonious and mutually respectful environment, which makes the learning process more fun and effective.
	cultures. This makes us more open and respect various ways of life, as well as learning language in a more meaningful way.	and appreciate other cultures, become more open, and be able to communicate better with people from various backgrounds.	

Based on the interview, the teacher agreed that integrating the values of *Tri Hita Karana* in learning English is very useful. They believe this approach helps create a harmonious and mutually respectful class environment, which ultimately supports a more effective learning process. The teacher also emphasizes that applying multiculturalism and *Tri Hita Karana* facilitates better cultural understanding, improves communication skills, and encourages open attitudes and empathy among students. By applying these values, students can learn English in a more meaningful and fun way and are better prepared to adapt to various cultural backgrounds.

4 Discussion

The findings from observations and interviews indicate that English teachers adopt inclusive and culturally sensitive language when teaching about multiculturalism and *Tri Hita Karana* (THK). They integrate THK principles by emphasizing the importance of harmony between humans, God, and nature, aligning these values with English learning. The teachers carefully select accessible language and relevant real-life examples to facilitate students’ understanding of these concepts. From the students’ perspective, the teacher’s approach is perceived positively. Students feel that the

explanations provided clarify the relevance of THK to their daily lives, making learning more engaging and meaningful. This aligns with Banks' (2019) concept of multicultural education, which suggests that embedding cultural values into the curriculum enhances students' critical thinking and social awareness [26].

These findings are consistent with previous research by Sawitri et al. (2023), which highlights that multicultural values embedded in THK positively contribute to the development of social studies learning. Their study emphasized that THK fosters students' appreciation of diversity and strengthens their ethical and social competencies [27]. Similarly, Putra & Musigrungsi (2022) argue that integrating local wisdom into English language teaching can serve as a bridge between linguistic competence and cultural awareness, reinforcing students' sense of identity and cross-cultural understanding [28]. The practical implications of this study suggest that integrating THK into English learning not only enriches students' language acquisition but also promotes intercultural competence. This supports the argument by Gay (2018) that culturally responsive teaching fosters inclusive classroom environments and enhances students' engagement [29]. By embedding local wisdom into language education, teachers can create a more holistic and meaningful learning experience while fostering students' respect for cultural diversity. In conclusion, the findings highlight that the language used by teachers in teaching multiculturalism and THK plays a critical role in shaping students' understanding and attitudes toward diversity. A harmonious classroom environment is established when teachers use inclusive language and contextualized examples, helping students become more open-minded, culturally aware, and socially responsible individuals.

5 Conclusion

The use of inclusive and culturally sensitive language by English teachers in teaching multiculturalism and *Tri Hita Karana* (THK) fosters better understanding and a harmonious classroom environment. Teachers integrate THK principles by emphasizing harmony between humans, God, and nature, using clear language and relevant examples. Students respond positively, finding the lessons meaningful and applicable to daily life. Integrating THK into English learning enhances cultural awareness, respect for diversity, and social skills, making education more engaging and holistic. This study highlights the importance of incorporating local wisdom in language teaching to promote intercultural competence and social responsibility.

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