

# THE ROLE OF TEACHERS IN BUILDING TOGETHERNESS IN MULTICULTURAL AND MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION AT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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**Abstract:** *The diversity of ethnicities, culture and language in Indonesia is the reality of history and socio-cultural. Concerning the phenomenon, this paper explores some issues on teacher's role in building togetherness in multicultural and multilingual education applied in elementary school. The method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive. And the data will be analyzed by using the Miles and Huberman technique (reduction, display, verification). The research informants were a girl student of the fourth class, teachers, and the headmaster of SDIT Lukmanul Hakim Langsa, Aceh. The findings suggest that the teachers of SDIT Lukmanul Hakim Langsa understood the students' needs, and they were able to build students' togetherness in their class and school environment. From its understanding of multilingual education, it can be found that an Arabic teacher knew the children's needs for the initial stage of multilingual education, especially considering students' ages 7 to 12 years. Therefore, the teacher used the game learning to attract the students' needs and attention. They are natives in their mother tongue (L1) and Bahasa Indonesia as the national language (L2). Furthermore, multilingual education has been implemented in this SDIT concerning its importance and relation to the existing values for future development.*

**Keywords:** The role of teachers, multicultural, multilingual education

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## Introduction

Indonesia is one of the world's biggest multicultural nations. The range of diversity and language in racial and cultural terms is inseparable. With distinct races, ethnic groups, religions, and rich languages, there are diverse customs. This diversity is accepted or not, many problems are caused, an issue that is still the number of individuals who do not acknowledge the disparity that results in negative things. There needs to be mutual respect, empathy, and mutual reverence from each citizen if this nation wants to be safe and unified. Having people accountable for themselves and respecting other people also requires a sense of togetherness. Therefore, unity cannot be formed immediately or rapidly but must go through many phases and essential parental roles, teachers, and the environment.

According to educational sociologists, there is a common reaction between the world of education and society's social condition. This relationship means that what is going on in education

is a picture of the real conditions in society's complicated life. Teachers, administrators, and policymakers bring their own experiences and cultural perspectives and influence every educational decision and action. Similarly, students are coming from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds in a school. This different culture can cause cultural conflict, which can only be mediated and reconciled through the effectiveness of an enlightening instructional process and opens rigid cultural boundaries. An absolute thing requires teachers' engagement and the active role of students in the learning process of informal education. Teachers behave appropriately according to their occupation, and students learn according to self-consciousness that is generally generated because of the teacher's inspiration. Educational experiences in learning must always be expressed between teachers and students. This communication is a substantive and ground-breaking two-way active partnership formed in the sense of educational goals.

Besides, teamwork is one of the enabling variables in 21st-century education. Therefore, without separating tribes and religions' status earlier, it is essential to build on the character of togetherness in students. And they have the skills to collaborate one day. Of course, in designing problem-solving activities, a teacher must be innovative, given that problem-solving is one element that students must-have in the 21st century. (Arsil: 2019, Butet: 2018, Chan: 2019,).

In elementary school, multicultural and multilingual education is essential since elementary school is the first education level for children worldwide. In terms of comparison, multicultural education means ingesting all human potentials that respect diversity and heterogeneity as the implications of cultural, ethnic, ethnic, and religious religions. ( Arifudin: 2009),Zainiyati: 2007)

Based on the above background, the researchers are interested in studying teachers' role in building the value of togetherness for elementary school students in multicultural and multilingual education, especially in the fourth class of girls student from different ethnic groups, cultures, and languages at SDIT Lukmanul Hakim Langsa. This study aims to explain teachers' role in building the value of togetherness in multicultural and multilingual elementary school education.

## **Literature Review**

Multilingualism is a fact, more than ever before. It is an unavoidable consequence of approximately 200 countries exchanging about 5000 languages spoken worldwide (6000 according to some estimates). The recognition and propagation of English diffusion as a global means of communication is another significant factor leading to multilingualism growth. Several studies have addressed the issue of multilingual and multicultural education used in schools and institutions separately. Concerning multilingualism, Skutnabb Kangas (2000) points out; there is a strong relationship between cultural – linguistics diversity and biodiversity; the regions, which are rich in biodiversity, also have a high degree of linguistic and cultural diversity. Mohanty (2003) explains bilingualism, supported by the multilingual pluralistic social ethos and socialization process, is assumed to directly impact cognition since complex communicative demands of a multilingual society challenge and pure cognitive development to higher levels. It can be drawn that Indonesian multilingualism can be viewed as having positive cognitive and social consequences.

In addition, Gheng (2013) shows that if students are appropriately taught for multilingual learning at an early age, it can spur competence development. Also, Lukens-Bull (1998) reports that the benefits of learning a second or third language at an early age include everything from increasing the ability of creativity and children have a greater understanding of the culture. These assumptions are associated with the concept of development in most multilingual societies, as in Indonesia, languages are located in different layers of a power hierarchy. Some languages, such as English, Germany, Arabic, etc., are privileged and endow their speakers with greater power and

access to resources. Thus, especially in the fourth class of girls from different ethnic groups, cultures, and languages at SDIT *Lukmanul Hakim Langsa* apply multilingual education to their students with one foreign language, namely Arabic.

On the other hand, the concept of multicultural education had been recognized by Lukens-Bull (2001) points out the multicultural education is educational policies and practices that acknowledge and strengthen human dissimilarities and similarities related to gender, race, handicap, and class. Banks (1989) clearly defines it "as a philosophical position, and movement deem that gender, ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity of a pluralistic society should be reflected in all of the institutionalized structures of educational institutions, including the staff, the norms, the values, the curriculum, and the student body."

From the statements above, it is clear that SDIT *Lukmanul Hakim Langsa*, especially in the fourth class of girls from different ethnic groups, cultures, and languages. It was a gathering place for students to learn foreign languages, particularly Arabic, religion, and other sciences, with a spirit of togetherness and unity even though they came from different ethnicities, cultures, and languages.

## **Method**

### *Types of Research*

The approach in this research is a descriptive qualitative approach with ethnographic type. According to Creswell (2012:462), Ethnographic designs are qualitative research procedures for describing, analyzing, and interpreting a culture-sharing group's shared patterns of behavior, beliefs, and language that develop over time. This research aims to know the role of teachers in applying multicultural and multilingual learning strategies, what research subjects experience holistically, in a descriptive way in the form of words and languages in a particular context that is natural, and by utilizing various scientific methods.

### *Research Time and Place*

This research is in SDIT *Lukmanul Hakim Langsa* Aceh at the fourth class of girl students, consisting of 24 students from different ethnicities, cultures, and languages. This research was conducted for two months in the 2020/2021 school year.

### *Sampling Techniques*

This research used sampling techniques that are often used purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is sampling with specific considerations (Sugiono: 2015). In purposive sampling, there are criteria for sample selection. In this study, researchers set the following standards: Principal of SDIT *Lukmanul Hakim Langsa*, the fourth class teacher, Arabic teacher, and a girl student of the fourth class of SDIT *Lukmanul Hakim Langsa*.

### *Data Collection Techniques*

Data collection techniques in this research are observation, interview, and documentation.

#### **Research Instrument**

Use observation sheets and interview sheets

### *Data Analysis Techniques*

Data analysis in this study used Miles and Huberman models, including data reduction, data presentation, conclusion drawing, and verification.

## Result and Discussion

Based on the observations conducted in December 2020 and January 2021 on the value of togetherness in multicultural and multilingual education, the initial stage was carried out by looking at the importance of student togetherness conducted by the fourth class of girl students. The observations used including several aspects in the teacher's strategy in teaching the value of multicultural education togetherness can work well. The initial stage is carried out by observing the learning process introduced by the teacher.

It can be explained that the teacher's approach in building the value of togetherness and respect each other with different races, cultures, and languages. The teacher encouraged the value of togetherness for students, such as reading prayer before studying together. Teachers teach *adab* to respect each other, and love each other. And it ends by reminding students that the ideals of togetherness must concern each other.

Besides, with the principal and teachers' guidance, the teacher invited the students to conduct *Dhuha sunnah* praying. Then they asked the students to return to their classes. After that, by forming a study group, the teacher continued the lesson by remembering the essential importance of togetherness and respecting their friends despite the various tribes, cultures, and languages.

Every Friday, the headmaster invites all students to clean up the school environment and plant trees together at the end of each month. This activity aims to build togetherness among the teachers and students.

### *Interview Description*

The observation was conducted on observing 24 students know the characters of each student's value of togetherness based on multicultural and multilingual education in the fourth grade of girl students.

The idea of multicultural education's objective is relevant to AliIsmail (2016), as he states that social justice for all stakeholders in educational organizations. In this case, the researchers asked the principal of *Lukmanul Hakim* Langsa. And He said that before building the value of togetherness to the students, the value of togetherness should firstly be applied to teachers' assembly by holding a meeting every Saturday by equating expectations and mutual commitments on the importance of Islamic togetherness. The headmaster also reflected on the value of *adab*. After the teachers' similar vision about the value of togetherness, it will be applied to the students to build and build the value of togetherness with various activities such as cleaning the eco-environment and planting flowers together.

Based on the teacher of the fourth grade of Girl's class, she said that the value of the students' togetherness has been excellent. It was also learned through the learning process to care for each other and support each other.

There are several points that researchers get: 1). The teacher's strategy is to establish the value of the students' togetherness by introducing each student's background at the beginning of the entry, 2). They were forming student familiarity by requiring students to know more about each other's friends 3). Adjust the sitting position in the class by alternating 4). Form discussion groups whose members come from different tribes. 5). Getting used to community service in class or outside the classroom.

As for the 3rd interview with a teacher of Arabic lessons, it can be concluded that the application of multilingual education to learners from various tribes and languages. A language teacher should have a particular strategy in introducing a foreign language, in this case, Arabic. A teacher must know the child's needs for the initial stage, especially considering students' ages 7 to 12 years.

Therefore, the teacher always uses the game learning to attract the students, inviting students to mention vocabulary such as *qalamun* (pen), *maktabun* (table), etc.

From the last interview found from the student of SDIT Lukmanul Hakim. The student said that she could know the value of togetherness from the teaching strategy implemented by the teachers and also from the whole activities run in the school environment. Based on the documentation and analysis results regarding the Integrated Thematic Learning Implementation Plan, the fourth class of girl students of SDIT *Lukmanul Hakim*, Langsa, have learned following the RPP and syllabus. They then implemented the central and closing of the preliminary activities, which are seen in the steps of learning activities, beginning with greetings, prayer, and applying a friendly learning atmosphere connecting the learning material. All of the activities can be seen from students, and teachers reflect on the learning that has been carried out, concluding education, providing input, and providing maternal material.

On the other hand, in the application of multilingual education, an Arabic teacher has a particular strategy in introducing foreign languages by understanding students' needs, especially considering students' ages 7 to 12 years. To make the classroom atmosphere more exciting and enjoyable, the language teacher always uses simple and attractive games and repeatedly repeats the Arabic vocabulary to attract the students' interest.

## Conclusion

The life of multiculturalism and multilingualism cannot be found in daily life. It will also be found in the educational field from playgroup, elementary school, junior high school, senior high school, an Islamic boarding school. Therefore, through education, the Indonesian government should find an excellent model to educate students for social harmony, particularly in schools, where it is the place for multicultural and multilingual education.

Based on the issues of teachers' role in building the principles of multicultural and multilingual education on togetherness building at SDIT *Lukmanul Hakim* in the fourth class of girl students, the teachers have a particular strategy or steps in teaching. And it has made their students from different ethnicities, cultures, and languages respected each other.

The teachers have several methods for students, namely, to build the value of the students' togetherness by incorporating each student's history at the beginning of the entry. By requiring students to know more about each other's friends, they created student familiarity, alternating to change the class's sitting position, form discussion groups whose members come from differences.

An Arabic teacher should know the children's needs for the initial stage of multilingual education, especially considering students' ages 7 to 12 years. Therefore, the teacher used the game learning to attract the students, inviting students to mention vocabulary such as *qalamun* (pen), *maktabun* (table), etc.

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