

## Multicultural Values in Popular Indonesian Novels: Development of Multicultural Values Through Indonesian Language Learning

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### Abstract

This study, which is library research, emphasizes identifying elements of cultural diversity in two popular novels, namely *Laskar Pelangi* (2005) by Andrea Hirata and *Assalamualaikum Beijing* by Asma Nadia (2013) to represent multicultural values and suggest ways of developing These values are through learning Indonesian for students. This research is seen as an important study to be developed in the world of education because the nation's next generation needs to be familiar with cultural diversity in order to foster multicultural values such as tolerance, no prejudice, respect for differences and maintaining peace, especially in the diverse country of Indonesia. Primary data for this qualitative research was collected from the two novels in the form of statements from the narrative in the novel. By utilizing Stuart Hall's theory of representation for data analysis and interpretation, the results of this study show that both authors show elements of diversity through the characters, language and cultural backgrounds in their novels. This study also suggests that the development of multicultural values in education can be carried out through Indonesian language subjects by providing relevant reading and audio-visual materials and discussion activities in class. This study, which is library research, emphasizes identifying elements of diversity. culture in two popular novels, namely *Laskar Pelangi* (2005) by Andrea Hirata and *Assalamualaikum Beijing* by Asma Nadia (2013) to represent multicultural values and explain how to develop these values through learning Indonesian for students. This research is seen as an important study to be developed in the world of education because the nation's next generation needs to be familiar with cultural diversity in order to foster multicultural values such as tolerance, no prejudice, respect for differences and maintaining peace, especially in the diverse country of Indonesia. Primary data for this qualitative research was collected from the two novels in the form of statements from the narrative in the novel. By utilizing Stuart Hall's theory of representation for data analysis and interpretation, the results of this study show that both authors show elements of diversity through the characters, language and cultural backgrounds in their novels. This study also suggests that developing multicultural values in education can be done through Indonesian language subjects by providing relevant reading and audio-visual materials and discussion activities in class.

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## INTRODUCTION

Literary works always display various kinds of events or phenomena that attract the reader's attention. People who like reading literary works can certainly choose the type of literary work they are interested in. The Big Indonesian Dictionary (Adiwimarta & Sunaryo, 2016) defines literature as "a person's composition in the form of poetry, prose or plays". This definition shows that literary works are human creations that are fictional or someone's imagination. However, what is interesting about literary works is their role in presenting something. In this regard, Suhariyadi (2014) explains that literary works can make something that is not real become something that can happen in human life and fictional events become reality.

Creators of literary works (poets, novelists or playwrights) certainly have certain goals in their work. In this regard, Ahyar (2019) explains that literary works can be a forum for expressing opinions or views about all kinds of things that contain elements of novelty and provide knowledge in the language style desired by the creator. Ahyar's statement can show that basically every literary work contains something that can be learned by readers of literary works. Various kinds of literary works such as poetry, prose (novels, short stories) and drama certainly have their respective functions and audiences. So, literary works are seen as a form of art that is still popular today even though in this day and age it is being hit by technology, literary works can adapt so that literary works can still be enjoyed.

Even though it is often underestimated, it turns out that literary works have a big role or function in influencing the perspective of readers. For example, novels, a type of literary work that is generally of interest to many people (especially young people), are able to provide readers with an overview of events, incidents or phenomena that occur in society. This is the attraction of literary works. Of the many social issues or phenomena, one of the most interesting is individuals who have diverse cultural backgrounds. This is closely

related to views on cultural diversity in society or what is known as multiculturalism.

This still seems to be a theme that is often discussed in various forums and scientific research. Cultural diversity can be said to be an important discussion because a society or country that consists of several types of cultures often triggers conflicts or problems. This is often reported in print and electronic media, especially in the current era of social media. In the United States, for example, the problem of hatred towards racial minorities and discrimination against certain ethnicities is still homework for the government to handle seriously. Therefore, Berkes (2010: 4) in his research revealed that the views or ideas of multiculturalism can actually be studied to deal with the problems faced by minorities in a society.

It cannot be denied that society, especially in the current era, is formed from a group of people with different backgrounds in terms of habits, customs, language, beliefs, etc. (Rudy, Simanjuntak & Simanjuntak, 2022). This means that more and more society is created from these differences. A situation like this is what Ogharanduku and Tinuoye (2020) say is a multicultural society whose characteristics can be seen from the diversity of cultures, skin colors and languages within one group called society. Therefore, every individual in society (at this time) certainly has had the experience of living in society with individuals of different cultures and ethnicities. This is considered something interesting because in reality, every individual in society does not always come from the same culture.

For example, Indonesian society is basically formed from groups of individuals who come from various ethnic groups. This is also supported by the condition that the number of immigrants from various countries is increasing and this contributes to cultural and ethnic diversity (Grishaeva, 2012). The term multiculturalism is generally often used to describe the unification of various ethnicities and cultures of different communities in a country. In fact, according to Oladjehou and Yekini (2018), multiculturalism can be the forerunner to the

construction of a society that can overcome problems of division or discrimination. This is the main reason for the importance of discussing multiculturalism. Even though it is important, there are still many people who do not fully understand the meaning of multiculturalism. Therefore, discussions about multiculturalism continue to be carried out in various national and international forums.

This nation consists of various ethnic groups, cultures and religions. This cultural diversity makes this nation a multicultural nation. The term multicultural is often also used to describe the unity of various different ethnic communities in a country. Apart from including the meaning of tolerance towards cultural diversity, multiculturalism can also be interpreted as an understanding that contains the concept of equality for local cultures. In this regard, Derson and Gunawan (2021) show an example by showing the condition of Indonesian society which is multicultural, and this condition was observed by the founding fathers of the nation which was then confirmed in the foundation of the Indonesian state which upholds diversity or diversity. Therefore, a multicultural society should be able to understand the concept of multiculturalism as a guideline or perspective that respects equality for local cultures and respects the cultures of other communities.

Multicultural societies uphold differences in social groups, cultures and ethnicities. However, this does not mean that there is a gap or difference in rights and obligations because there is legal and social equality. Based on the underlying assumption that different cultures can coexist peacefully, it can express the view that society is enriched by preserving, respecting and even encouraging cultural diversity. Various interesting and at the same time important things can be discovered if this view of multiculturalism is researched and discussed in more depth. Because of the importance of the theme of multiculturalism for the public to study and understand, this research focuses on discussing multicultural values contained in literary works.

Based on the problem formulation above, the aim of this research is to identify multicultural

values in the novels *Laskar Pelangi* (2003) and *Assalamualaikum Beijing* (2013) and to analyze how multicultural values can be developed through learning Indonesian.

A literature review that has been carried out on a number of references discussing the values of multiculturalism in Indonesian novels shows that there are several studies, namely Mudzhar (2005), Abidin (2016) and Puspitasari (2017) concluding that multiculturalism is an understanding that respects diversity in the form of mutual respect, respect, tolerance, unity, cooperation and solidarity between ethnicities. The findings from previous researchers still seem to be an attraction for current researchers to expand knowledge about multiculturalism. By using novels from the 2000s as objects of study, it is hoped that this study can provide new ideas and views regarding multiculturalism.

Apart from that, there are several studies regarding the value of multiculturalism in novels from the 2000s that have been carried out by several researchers. In research from Serta Aldiyah (2012) said that the value of multiculturalism is found in everyday life with different ethnic cultures. Meanwhile Marinda et al. (2014) stated that the value of multiculturalism can be expressed through the intertwining of events and characters who marry Americans. Apart from that, Fatmawati (2019) in her research found that Indonesian novels depict the value of multiculturalism by connecting a person's interactions in society with different cultures through religious theory.

Even though the three studies discuss multicultural values in novels, their studies are still different from this study in terms of research objects and analysis theory. This study uses two novels to express multicultural values and with Stuart Hall's representation theory to interpret these multicultural values so that the concept can be seen more clearly. In addition, the background stories contained in the novels used as research objects for this study certainly show various things related to multicultural values, so this could be something different from previous studies.

## METHODOLOGY

This study is considered qualitative research because the object of research is literary works in the form of novels with multicultural values as the focus of the study. Descriptive research is usually chosen by researchers from the fields of humanities and education. This type of research is appropriate to use to explain phenomena, issues or trends that exist in society (Hancock, et al., 2007: 7). In addition, this descriptive research requires as much information as possible in order to explain the phenomenon or issue being discussed clearly (Hariwijaya and Djaelani, 2004:39).

Based on the research location, this study is categorized as library research. In other words, this study focuses on libraries as data. This type of research usually utilizes various kinds of references such as journals, books, scientific reports, theses, dissertations and others to answer the problem being studied (Giarruso et al, 1994, p. 84; Hasan, 2002, p. 11). Data for qualitative research is usually in the form of statements or text (Hasan 2002: 8; Mohajan, 2018: 2). Primary data for this research is in the form of text (from the novel) in the form of statements, conversations between characters and explanations to describe the story line in the novel.

These two novels were chosen as data for analysis because they have similarities, namely containing elements of cultural diversity (multicultural). This is in accordance with the principle of purposive sampling technique (purposeful sampling) which considers the similarity of characteristics in the required data, so that the selection of data or samples can be based on circumstances and requirements that are in accordance with the needs and objects being studied or researched (Etikan, 2016; Lenaini, 2021). The data collection process carried out in this research was divided into two stages. In the first stage, the two novels are read carefully in order to understand the storyline well and discover the multicultural values contained in these novels. This step is important because

reading can help researchers analyze the meaning contained in it.

The second stage is note-taking activities or what is more often referred to as note taking. This is the process of transferring important data in the form of text, dialogue or an event depicted in a novel to a notebook. This step may seem traditional but can still be seen as effective for data collection activities. According to Özçakmak (2019: 581), this note taking technique can help researchers understand the information better and can be repeated for study in the long term. The process of taking notes in data collection is considered important because it can help researchers to look at the data carefully (Boch & Piolat, 2005: 102). With this note taking technique, the process of identifying an object or comparing an object with other objects will become easier (Muswazi & Nhamo, 2013: 13). Therefore, the note-taking process was still used in collecting data for this research.

The type of analysis applied in this research is content analysis. This is used to explain, describe and interpret texts or media (Pal, 2017: 4854). This analysis is generally used by researchers who want to obtain a lot of information to interpret the objects discussed in their research (Adi, 2011, p. 144). Research objects that are often used in content analysis are stories, messages, songs, documents, etc. (Prasad, 2008, p. 173). This type of analysis is in line with the object of study of this study. Therefore, content analysis was deemed appropriate for this study.

The analysis process begins with compiling data that has been collected from the process of reading and researching three novels. The data is arranged by categorizing it based on key words that have been prepared to simplify the data classification process. Next, the data that has been placed according to its categories will be analyzed to identify the meaning of the data.

The process of analyzing the novels in this study consists of several stages, namely as follows: (a) In the first stage, the data that has been collected from reading the novels carefully and repeatedly is recorded in the form of statements to make categorization easier (b)

Next, the data in the form of statements is re-read to create categorization. (c) The collection of statements is arranged in detail based on categorization in the form of subtitles. (d) the final step is to use Hall's representation theory to interpret each statement that has been arranged based on the subtitle to show the multicultural values represented.

Forming meaning to produce a concept requires representation theory put forward by Stuart Hall with the basic understanding that any language, sign/symbol or image can be interpreted to find out its meaning (Hall, 1997: 15). Because the data from this study is dialogue or text that describes something from a novel, representation theory is deemed appropriate to use to express the meaning or concept that is actually represented by the data. This is in line with the opinion of Piliang (2003: 21) that representation can be understood as a way of displaying or presenting an object or something different from that object through signs/symbols that can be obtained from images, conversations (dialogue), written texts, films, , videos and others. The following diagram shows the flow of interpretation to make sense of data using representation theory:

Conceptualization		
data	meaning	draft

**Table 2.1** meaning formation stage

One type of Hall's representation system is a constructionist approach which emphasizes the formation of meaning through a language system or any system used by someone to make sense of something (Hall, 1997: 25). This view is also supported by research conducted by de Casterlé (2011: 370) which explains that researchers play the role of building (giving) meaning to data and carrying out abstract thinking, so that they can assemble concepts. Generally, meaning can be seen as people's understanding of words and other linguistic expressions and concepts are seen as representations of people's psychological categories (Barsalou et al., 1993: 23).

shows that the main data in the form of dialogue (conversation), descriptions of settings,

characters, etc. as well as descriptions of storylines are symbols or symbols that need to be given meaning in accordance with the conditions depicted in the novels and clarified using interpretation that involves a constructionist approach. In this way, the dialogue, setting and plot in the novels which are the main objects will be conceptualized more broadly so that the reader can see clearly that a phenomenon or issue discussed with representation theory can be conceptualized further regarding that object and that is what referred to as a concept in the constructionist approach of Hall Theory.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the analysis of the two popular novels Laskar Pelangi and Assalamualaikum Beijing show that there are several types of cultural elements that are multicultural in nature. These elements of cultural diversity can be seen through the characters and language as well as the cultural background shown in the two novels. The results of the analysis can show that the two novels both depict cultural diversity which is reflected in terms of characters, language and cultural background as follows:

### Cultural Diversity in Novels Characters and Language

Characters play an important role in a novel, especially in reflecting a meaning. It is said to be meaningful because the characters in a story can convey various things. This can happen because according to Setiana (2017) characters undergo a characterization process which is a technique for an author or writer to describe the characters they create. Regarding characters, Milwasri (2017) explains that basically characters in a story can be considered as people in the story, while character is seen as the behavior or characteristics of the characters in the story. So, various kinds of meaning can be seen from the characters, including multicultural values.

The characters from the three novels studied in this research can show that the characters created by the three authors of these

novels can reflect cultural diversity. Talking about characters, the main thing that often gets attention is the physical description, namely the appearance or face of a character in the story. The face has often been considered something important for a long time (Little, 2014) and this is what makes people set standards about an attractive face in various ways. From the perspective of cultural diversity, a character's face does not always follow the standard.

The beauty of a character's appearance (face) does not have to be dominated by standards from a particular culture, for example the description of the beauty of a white face, a slim body, etc. (Rudy, Simanjuntak & Simanjuntak 2022). This point shows that the faces of figures from other races, ethnicities or regions can also reflect beauty. Therefore, a character's face can be seen as a symbol to show cultural diversity. There are several examples that can be obtained from the characters depicted in the three novels studied. The novel *Laskar Pelangi* (2005) features a number of strong and memorable characters. Ikal is the main character and narrator in this novel. Data analysis focuses on figures who clearly depict cultural diversity, namely A Kiong and Aling.

Laskar Pelangi (2005)	
Nama Tokoh	Latar Belakang Budaya (Etnisitas)
Bu Mus	Melayu-Belitong
A Kiong	Tionghoa
A Ling	Tionghoa
A Miauw	Tionghoa

**Tabel 3.1** Unsur Keragaman Budaya pada Tokoh dalam *Laskar Pelangi* (2005)

He is one of Ikal's classmates. Meanwhile, Aling is Akiong's cousin. A Kiong is described as a kind-hearted and loyal friend. Every character created or presented in a story can definitely represent something. Therefore, this study found that elements of cultural diversity in the two novels can be identified through the novel's characters.

In *Laskar Pelangi*, all the characters are described by Andrea Hirata as figures with

various backgrounds, family cultures, habits, skin colors and physiques, but they can relate to each other well. As students who are in the same class and study together, these characters are described as children who are able to see cultural differences (diversity). The main characters, who mostly consist of children in the novel *Laskar Pelangi*, can represent that cultural diversity should be a good thing because basically, the more cultures a person knows or understands, the richer and broader their insight will be. Children in *Laskar Pelangi* who can relate well with their friends who have different likes, namely Akiong (children of Chinese descent) can also symbolize sincerity in establishing friendships that are not based on any ethnicity, race or culture. This Akiong character is the key in explaining the elements of cultural diversity in the novel *Laskar Pelangi*. Even though he is depicted as a minority in school, the character Akiong is depicted as someone who has a good heart and values friendship. This can show that minority figures are also depicted as figures who value and do not discriminate between friends.

Apart from that, the main character named Ikal is also described as a smart child who falls in love with a girl of Chinese descent (Akiong's character's cousin). This is a picture that clearly shows that cultural diversity does not need to be a barrier to making friends, having good relationships, admiring or worshiping someone sincerely and sincerely. The presence of the characters Akiong and Aling in the midst of an environment dominated by characters from Malay-Belitong backgrounds in the novel *Laskar Pelangi* is a symbol of cultural diversity. This picture emphasizes the importance of mutual respect, which according to Grishaeva (2012) should be made a policy in all aspects of life such as education, work, media, associations and so on. Apart from that, the depiction of the closeness of the child characters in *Laskar Pelangi* also reflects the peace that is created in cultural diversity. A study from Rudy, Simanjuntak & Simanjuntak (2022) in their research on multiculturalism in Disney animated films suggests that respect for differences or diversity can give rise to peace. This means that mutual

respect and love of peace can be seen as part of multicultural values because the two are interrelated.

Apart from *Laskar Pelangi*, the novel *Assalamualaikum Beijing!* Asma Nadia's work also displays cultural diversity through one of its main characters. Characters who depict elements of cultural diversity (multicultural) in *Assalamualaikum Beijing!* are as follows:

Assalamualaikum Beijing! (2013)	
Nama Tokoh	Latar Belakang Budaya (Etnisitas)
Zhongwei	Negara Tiongkok

**Tabel 3.2** Unsur Keragaman Budaya pada Tokoh dalam *Assalamualaikum Beijing!* (2013)

The author of the novel introduces Chinese culture to readers without eliminating its Islamic and Indonesian elements. The key figure in seeing cultural diversity is Zhongwen. The meeting between the character Asma, who is a Muslim woman from Indonesia, and a man from Beijing named Zhongwen can show a portrait of cultural diversity. In accordance with the title of the novel, Chinese (Chinese) culture is the element that is highlighted. Even the film *Assalamualaikum Beijing*, produced in 2014, based on the same novel, shows elements of cultural diversity that are strongly attached to the character Zhongwen, who is depicted as a young man with a typical Chinese face, played by an Indonesian actor of Chinese descent named Morgan Oey. Both the character Zhongwen and the actor who plays him can be seen as emblems or symbols of cultural diversity.

The romantic relationship between the character Asma and the character Zhongwen shows fundamental multicultural values, namely tolerance, non-prejudice and respect for differences. The love story of Asma and Zhongwen, who come from different countries and cultures, is actually seen as an effort by the younger generation to recognize, learn and respect cultural diversity which is actually a reality of life. A good understanding of multicultural values like this according to Fatmawati et al., (2019) can basically provide

good changes in young people's perspective on how to think, learn, and respond to cultural differences and diversity that they see in their daily lives. day.

Thus, the portraits of the characters in *Laskar Pelangi* and *Assalamualaikum Beijing!* can represent an attitude of tolerance, an attitude of not having prejudice and an attitude of respecting differences for peace. In other words, the figures shown by Andrea Hirata show that there is a construction of the concept of tolerance, non-prejudice and respect for cultural diversity. These three values are in accordance with the multicultural values expressed by Doğan (2017), Olanrewaju & Asuelime (2017), Warikoo (2019), and Rudy, Simanjuntak & Simanjuntak (2022).

One thing that clearly shows the element of cultural diversity is the language found in the novels studied. The language referred to here can be the use of words originating from other regions. One indication of the existence of elements of cultural diversity in these novels is the presence of terms originating from other regions or countries. Language is of course a broad element and consists of specific parts. However, in general, the use of language is the main concern in the analysis of the novels *Laskar Pelangi* and *Assalamualaikum Beijing!* It is in the form of the presence of terms, words or sayings that can show the existence of access or dialect which is a characteristic of the language of a region or country.

Furthermore, the words or terms in a novel may not be something important for some people to pay attention to. However, the words or terms used by a novelist actually play an important role. If you look closely, the use of certain terms or words in a novel can indicate or show something. By including terms from languages from other regions (other cultures), the author has actually shown how important it is to know, understand and respect other cultures.

For example, in *Laskar Pelangi*, various cultures are shown by Andrea Hirata in depicting the richness of culture, including the language in Belitong. In terms of language, elements of cultural diversity in *Laskar Pelangi* are shown through the way the author tells his experiences



of living life in Belitong. The Malay culture that influences the Belitong community has given rise to terms used to greet someone such as "Pak Cik" and long typical Malay names, for example, "Trapani Ihsan Jamari bin Zainuddin Ilham Jamari" and "Harun Ardhi Ramadhan bin Syamsul Hazana Ramadhan".

Apart from that, the author also talks about the term "Nyi Ayu" which is a term in local culture, namely the old tradition of the Belitong kingdom which was used as a title for the nobility. So, the author also introduces typical Malay-Belitong names that have noble lineage such as "N.A. Muslimah Hafsa Hamid bint K.A. Abdul Hamid" or known as the character Bu Mus. This also shows that there is a combination of Malay culture and Belitong culture which is a characteristic of Belitong.

Apart from the terms for typical Malay nicknames and Belitong culture, there are nicknames that are characteristic of Chinese culture, for example "A Kiong", "A Liong", "A Ling", and "A Miauw". The author, through his novel, introduces terms or nicknames that are synonymous with Malay and Chinese culture to readers. Not only that, several Chinese ethnic names such as "kek", "Hokian", and "Tongsan" are also mentioned by the author to provide knowledge about the various Chinese ethnic groups. Andrea Hirata (2005) in *Laskar Pelangi* shows that there are short remarks from a Malay man who works as a Chinese shop assistant in the market who uses *Kek campur Malay* and the term "miang sui" spoken by A Ling which means fate. The author also introduces "Mbah Suro", a Javanese artist from Yogyakarta who lives in Belitong.

In the novel *Assalamualaikum Beijing*, there are also a number of words (terms) from foreign languages, namely English, Mandarin (Chinese) and Arabic. The emergence of the use of words from these three languages can actually be seen as an element of cultural diversity. This language element that reflects multiculturalism is related to the setting created by Asma Nadia in the novel. The author of this novel, with all his skill and creativity, wants to bring together Indonesian culture, Javanese culture, Chinese

culture, Arabic culture and global culture in one story. Febrianti and Kartikasari (2021) stated that there is a strong sociolinguistic aspect, namely code-mixing in the form of words, phrases or clauses in the novel *Assalamualaikum Beijing*. The mixed code in question can prove that there is the use of another language (foreign language) to form a context. By introducing cultural diversity, this Indonesian language novel needs to show elements that are considered to create cross-cultural nuances.

Therefore, in the novel *Assalamualaikum Beijing*, Asma Nadia tries to bring Islamic values and Indonesian culture to other cultures in order to show this diversity. This is a creative way to display cultural diversity in a literary work. Readers can see the diversity of language used by the author to show the beauty and harmony that is formed from several types of culture. This can also broaden the reader's insight and knowledge regarding cultural diversity and appreciate it.

### **Cultural Background**

The multicultural values in these novels are also visible in the traditions presented in the stories. Both authors also include cultural elements, namely traditions, to show the value of diversity. The traditions presented in these novels can reflect that cultures from other regions or countries are something that readers want to know. This condition shows that popular novels as part of popular culture can act as entertainers as well as enrich knowledge (Adi, 2011).

Elements of cultural diversity in these two popular novels are also visible in the settings. As one of the important elements in literary works, the setting plays an important role. Just like character and plot, the setting in a literary work, especially in a novel, is created by the author to perfect the novel. According to Oktapiana et al. (2018) aims to evoke the atmosphere in a story. The cultural diversity in the two novels can be observed through the cultural settings depicted by Andrea Hirata and Asma Nadia.

The cultural background discussed in this study can include aspects of traditions, customs, art, customs, myths, cultural festival celebrations of a community group featured in the novel. In

Laskar Pelangi, for example, the author shows a number of aspects related to the various cultures displayed in the story or experience in Belitung as shown in the following table:

Laskar Pelangi (2005)		
No	Aspek Budaya	Deskripsi Budaya
1	gaya rumah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• komunitas Tionghoa tinggal di bangunan permanen tanpa pekarangan yang juga digunakan sebagai toko</li> <li>• rumah panggung orang Melayu dengan tiang-tiang yang tinggi dan pekarangan rumah orang Melayu ditumbuhi jarak pagar, beluntas, beledu, kembang sepatu, dan semak belukar</li> </ul>
2	Mitos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• penganut ilmu buaya jika mati, mereka akan menjadi buaya</li> <li>• dukun buaya</li> <li>• burung Pelintang yang singgah di kampung adalah petandan akan terjadi badai besar dan angin puting beliung</li> </ul>
3	karateritik etnis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• orang Sawang adalah pelaut ulung yang hidup di perahu dan berkelana dari satu pulau ke pulau lainnya</li> <li>• warga Tionghoa adalah pedagang yang efisien, pekerja keras</li> <li>• kaum Melayu pribadi yang sederhana</li> </ul>
4	Upacara (ritual) adat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chiong Si Kui atau sembahyang rebut dalam Kong Hu Cu diadakan oleh warga Tionghoa</li> </ul>
5	Kebiasaan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• orang Tionghoa mandi saat tengah hari, menyisir rambut yang masih basah ke belakang dan memotong ujung kuku</li> <li>• budaya patriaki yang kuat dalam masyarakat Melayu</li> </ul>
6	Suku (etnisitas)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Melayu-Belitung</li> <li>• Orang Sawang</li> <li>• Orang Tionghoa (suku Kek, Hokian, Tongsan)</li> </ul>
7	karya sastra dan seni	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hikayat para Nabi</li> <li>• kisah Hang Tuah</li> <li>• gurindam</li> <li>• sulaman kaligrafi Arab Kulil Haqqu Walau Kana Murron</li> <li>• tarian Suku Masai dari Afrika</li> <li>• Tembok Besar Cina yang membentengi Cina dari serangan suku-suku Mongol dari utara</li> </ul>

**Tabel 3.3** Keragaman Budaya dalam Novel *Laskar Pelangi* Karya Andrea Hirata (2005)

Assalamualaikum Beijing! (2013)		
No	Aspek Budaya	Deskripsi Budaya
1	Penanggalan Jawa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• weton</li> </ul>
2	Mitos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• kepercayaan bahwa gembok cinta sebagai tanda cinta yang awet</li> </ul>

3	bangunan bersejarah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tembok Besar Cina</li> <li>• makam Kaisar</li> </ul>
4	Kegiatan belajar bahasa dan budaya asing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• belajar berkomunikasi dengan Bahasa Cina</li> <li>• penggunaan bahasa Inggris</li> <li>• Zhongwen yang belajar agama Islam</li> </ul>

**Tabel 3.3** Keragaman Budaya dalam Novel *Assalamualaikum Beijing!* Karya Asma Nadia (2013)

So, the various cultures depicted in the two novels can basically be seen as a forum for introducing cultures to be interpreted by readers so that cultural diversity can be preserved (Kustyarini, 2014).

From the analysis above, it can be clearly seen that both the novels *Laskar Pelangi* and *Assalamualaikum Beijing* depict cultural diversity through elements of characters, language and cultural background. These three aspects are the key to guiding readers to see the various cultures that are beautifully combined in the two novels. Every narrative about cultural diversity that is found can reflect the harmonization between one culture and another.

Characters with different cultural backgrounds are portrayed as figures who can maintain and maintain good relationships. The good relations between the Malays, Sawang people and Chinese people in Belitung and the joy of all the residents there who watched, played and enlivened the Chiong Si Kui tradition as narrated in *Laskar Pelangi* and the willingness of the character Asma in the novel *Assalamualaikum Beijing* to know Chinese culture and learning Mandarin to communicate can represent an attitude of tolerance, an attitude of not being prejudiced, an attitude of respect and peace towards cultural differences and diversity which are referred to as multicultural values. These values are the essence of multiculturalism and are often found in digital era novels like today. The representation of multicultural values can show how rich the culture of this country and the world is, broadening one's horizons and increasing one's abilities and creating a beautiful atmosphere.

### **Developing Multicultural Values Through Indonesian Language Education**

Analysis of the two popular Indonesian novels *Laskar Pelangi* (2003) and *Assalamualaikum Beijing* (2013) in this study proves how rich the multicultural values (cultural diversity) contained in these novels are. The characters, language, traditions and settings presented by the two novels contain elements of cultural diversity which can provide important knowledge to readers that multicultural values are not just text or discussion material. Multicultural values need to be developed and taught to Indonesia's young generation. This is important because Indonesia is famous for its cultural and ethnic diversity. All parties within the formal school environment, including principals, teachers, administrative staff, janitors and students, need to have knowledge of the importance of the values of multiculturalism. In other words, before teachers teach about the values of cultural diversity (multicultural), they must first understand and uphold multicultural values.

Therefore, the role of schools is the main focus in developing these multicultural values. Indonesian language education, which is mandatory in every school in Indonesia, is seen as important as the spearhead in teaching multicultural values. In this regard, Azmussa'ni (2021) in his research revealed that the fact of diversity or multiculturalism itself can be seen from the diversity of languages that exist in Indonesia and if multicultural values cannot be implemented well, then this linguistic diversity will have the potential to give rise to things like negative thing. This shows that formal education from elementary school to high school needs to prepare and teach multicultural values (diversity) to their students.

Clear evidence can be seen from the seriousness of the Indonesian government in preparing the curriculum for formal education in

schools. The results of research conducted by Nafi'ah and Masyhuda (2021) show that the textbooks used by elementary school students contain multicultural values and according to them, this is an important element in the world of Indonesian education. These findings can be interpreted as meaning that the diversity (multicultural) values contained in textbooks for elementary school students can function as a foundation for the formation of better character.

Regarding the role of multicultural values in schools, Setiawan, Maryati, and Wirawan (2021) in their research also explained that socialization about the importance of multicultural values needs to be implemented in schools and in the teaching and learning process, educators need to include values -the value of diversity. Knowledge about multiculturalism in education can basically be done in various ways. One way that is considered more effective is through Indonesian language education. Although understanding or knowledge of multicultural values can also be done through ethics, religion or Pancasila education, Indonesian language education is still seen as a more appropriate creative effort, because there are a number of language aspects and skills such as speaking, writing, listening and reading that can be embedded with multicultural values. It is necessary to realize that multicultural education cannot yet be realized as a subject. Multicultural education is not specifically taught in Indonesian schools. Trisna (2017) in this case also stated the same thing that multicultural education is still a small part of Indonesian language learning materials in schools. Nevertheless, the importance of multicultural values must be taken into account in language learning.

Apart from that, Indonesian can be considered as a subject that can cover various types of competencies, namely cultural competencies, emotional and spiritual competencies, linguistic and communication competencies, citizenship competencies and creative competencies (Azmussya'ni, 2021). This explanation from Azmussya'ni proves that the application of multicultural values is in line with the essence of Indonesian language learning and

the role of Indonesian language subjects, especially those related to cultural competence and citizenship. Therefore, this study explores and identifies the role of Indonesian language education to help students learn multicultural values.

The results of the analysis from this study can provide an understanding that Indonesian language subjects can be used as an access door to develop knowledge of the multicultural values of language teaching because there is a lot of learning that can be done in Indonesian language education. Learning Indonesian within the scope of formal education has the potential to have a good impact in terms of developing multicultural values for Indonesia's young generation because according to Munandlir (2016) practicing diversity values means giving quality to oneself, the nation and the state. In other words, Indonesia, which consists of various ethnicities and cultures, must be able to produce human resources that uphold multicultural values.

Apart from playing an important role in providing knowledge to train and improve the language skills of Indonesian students, Indonesian as a mandatory subject in all schools in Indonesia can be used as a medium to introduce, teach and develop the values of diversity ( multicultural). The development of multicultural values can be done through education or Indonesian language subjects at school in the following ways:

### **Comprehension of the Text**

In general, texts can be found anywhere and at any time in human life, especially in the field of formal education. Talking about learning Indonesian, texts are very important. Texts are needed to train all language skills which include listening, speaking, reading and writing. Students from elementary to high school who take Indonesian language subjects always have to be in touch with texts. Everything that is heard, read and studied is text. School rules or regulations are also texts. Teachers who teach languages also definitely pass on their knowledge to their students through texts.

Therefore, texts become a valuable resource for learning needs. All information, ideas and knowledge are contained in the text. All values of human life, including diversity (multicultural) values can be found in the text. All learning materials for Indonesian language subjects can be said to be texts. Even the national Indonesian language learning curriculum is also text-based (Saragih, 2016; Isodarus, 2017). Generally, the meaning of the text seems to refer to the written form. However, the definition of text can basically cover a wide scope. According to Saragih (2016) sounds, words, sentences, paragraphs and books can be categorized as text. Agustina (2017) also explained that text can basically be interpreted as an expression of a person's feelings, opinions and emotions regarding their experiences in social life expressed in written or oral form. It can be said that the reach of the text is actually wider. So, text can be defined as information, news, ideas or knowledge conveyed in language, whether spoken or written.

In relation to texts, Isodarus (2017) also stated that texts can be classified into literary texts, for example literary works of poetry, novels, short stories, etc. and non-literary texts such as textbooks, reports, newspapers, etc. These two types of texts are used as Indonesian language learning materials. Both literary and non-literary texts, various kinds of information and knowledge, including multicultural values, can be found. A text cannot function properly if it is not understood. A text delivered orally or in writing is said to be successful if the listener or reader is able to understand and interpret the text well. Therefore, in Indonesian language subjects, the texts presented as learning materials must be understandable by students. For this reason, teachers need to train their students to interpret texts. The meaning of text applied in language learning aims to expand and improve the knowledge of language learners (Agustina, 2017).

So, the process of interpreting a text begins with the activity of viewing and reading the text. This first step plays an important role because if a (written) text is not read, its meaning will not be conveyed. The role of the teacher at this initial stage is to motivate his students to read the text.

Every teacher who teaches Indonesian certainly applies different approaches or methods to train their students' ability to read texts. In this context, schools have certainly trusted their teachers to attract students to read. They are also required to use different approaches to foster students' interest in reading texts. Reading in this context means understanding the text. In other words, reading a text to gain an understanding of the content or message contained in the text. Amir (2013) stated that understanding plays an important role in avoiding misunderstandings between the message creator (writer or speaker) and the message recipient (reader or listener).

It cannot be denied that training students to understand text (reading) is not an easy matter. Every student has different abilities in understanding what they read. A number of studies have been conducted on how to improve the ability to understand text. In this regard, Hakim, Bakri and Basri (2023) found that there are four techniques that can be applied to help students understand the texts they read, namely reading carefully, looking for sentence ideas, noting important points and reading repeatedly. - time. These methods are certainly useful for teachers to help their students understand reading or text. However, the effectiveness of a technique or approach basically depends on several factors, for example the environmental situation, school facilities, student conditions, and so on.

From the results of searching various sources, this study suggests that to train students to understand the texts they read, teachers must be able to explain the core or concepts related to the message of the texts they will read. For example, so that students can find multicultural values in a text or reading, the teacher must first explain the definition or meaning of multicultural (including examples of multicultural values and the reasons why these values are important in everyday life). For example, the multicultural values demonstrated by *Laskar Pelangi* and *Assalamualaikum, Beijing!* through characters. The presence of ethnic Chinese (Chinese) main characters, for example Akiong and Aling in *Laskar Pelangi* and the character Zhongwen in *Assalamualaikum, Beijing!* as an example that

can be used by teachers to explain the concept of multiculturalism. These two novels show the existence of other cultural elements by presenting characters/characters of Chinese (Chinese) descent who have good relationships with native characters/characters. This portrait can symbolize tolerance and solidarity between ethnic groups, which are important values in multiculturalism.

A number of sources relating to techniques or methods that can be applied to motivate students to read that have been collected show that there are several methods that can be used by teachers to increase their students' interest in reading. A study conducted by Nurmanita, Darojah, and Anam (2022) explains that teachers can start by motivating elementary school students to read story books that contain pictures and then can continue by motivating them to read the text. For example, to teach multicultural values, Indonesian language teachers can provide story books or short stories (short stories) for elementary or middle school students and novels for high school students as additional learning materials.

Apart from that, Husna (2022) in his research suggests that teachers can direct their students to visit the library and assign them to read books that are interesting to them. Visiting the library to read books is an important activity. In connection with learning multicultural values in texts, Indonesian language teachers can assign their students (individual or group assignments) to report to the teacher about the elements of cultural diversity (multicultural) that they can find in books in the library.

There are many texts in the form of short stories, novels, or articles that contain multicultural values that can be presented to students according to their level and abilities. By developing their interest in reading and applying interesting and creative techniques as well as teaching them the right way to understand texts, slowly, they will be trained to express the multicultural elements or values they find in their texts or reading. Apart from that, teachers must also be aware of the importance of teaching multicultural values to their students in order to

produce a young generation of Indonesian people who respect and show tolerance for cultural diversity.

### **Use of Audio Visual Media**

Metode lain yang dapat diterapkan untuk mengembangkan nilai-nilai multikultural melalui pelajaran Bahasa Indonesia adalah dengan media audio-visual atau film. Perkembangan teknologi pada masa sekarang semakin pesat dan sekolah-sekolah juga harus memanfaatkan teknologi untuk mendukung proses pembelajaran bahasa Indonesia. Sejumlah kajian mengenai penggunaan audio-visual untuk pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia telah menunjukkan nilai positif. Penelitian-penelitian tersebut mengungkapkan bahwa murid-murid merasa bersemangat mengikuti mata pelajaran Bahasa Indonesia dengan memanfaatkan media audio-visual atau video (Yuanta, 2017; Eggiet & Erviana, 2019; Idawati et al., 2023). Ini artinya, guru-guru Bahasa Indonesia perlu dimotivasi agar dapat memanfaatkan media audio-visual secara maksimal untuk mengajar dan melatih kemampuan bahasa anak-anak didik mereka. Media audio-visual yang umum dikenal adalah film. Terdapat berbagai macam film yang dapat dipilih sebagai media pembelajaran. Berbagai pengalaman manusia dan pengetahuan dapat dilukiskan dalam film (Adi, 2011). Guru dapat menentukan sebuah film pendek atau film animasi dan menugaskan anak-anak didiknya untuk menontonnya dan mencatat atau melaporkan hasil dari aktivitas menonton film tersebut.

Meskipun media audio-visual telah banyak digunakan dalam dunia pendidikan, metode audio-visual ini tetap harus terus dikembangkan, terutama untuk pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia. Media audio-visual, misalnya video yang berisi gambar-gambar yang bergerak dan dilengkapi dengan suara dapat digunakan untuk membantu murid-murid melatih kemampuan mendengar cerita (Yuanta, 2017). Selain dapat melatih kemampuan mendengar (listening skill), murid-murid juga akan merasa bersemangat apabila pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia tidak hanya sekedar melihat teks tertulis atau buku-buku saja,

tetapi juga bisa melihat video-video edukatif yang berkaitan dengan pokok pembahasan dalam mata pelajaran Bahasa Indonesia.

Indonesian language teachers can choose audio-visual media with content that suits their students' conditions. Some examples of audio-visual media that can be utilized by teachers are sound images, documentary videos, DVDs, animation, TV, films, etc. For example, for elementary school students, teachers can use motion pictures with sound, animation or cartoons. Meanwhile, for middle and high school students, the appropriate audio-visual media to use are documentary videos, short films, documentaries, etc. This is a method that can attract students' attention to focus (pay attention) to each video display (Idawati et al., 2023). Therefore, film is an important medium for learning things. It is said that film is an artistic medium that contains messages, ideas or experiences that can function as a tool for communicating with people (Manesah, Minawati & Nursyirwan, 2018).

In today's digital era, various documentary videos or films can be accessed easily. Teachers can also use YouTube to display short videos or documentaries that suit their students' needs to serve as additional material to train them to understand a discussion. Multicultural elements, for example, are often found in films. The novels *Laskar Pelangi* and *Assalamualaikum, Beijing!* It has also been made into a film and achieved great popularity. For example, to train high school students to observe cultural diversity through watching the films *Laskar Pelangi* or *Assalamualaikum Beijing!*, teachers can design several questions that can encourage or train students to reveal elements of cultural diversity (multicultural) that are seen in films. Teachers can ask questions such as:

(a) Are terms (words) from certain areas found in the dialogue? What are they?

(b) Who are the characters depicted as coming from a particular tribe or region? (Character names or nicknames can usually indicate their tribe or region)

(c) Are there any characters wearing traditional costumes/clothing typical of a region or country?

(d) Does the video or film contain certain customs, customs or ceremonial celebrations originating from a particular region or tribe?

(e) Does the film show certain forms of houses or areas that are characteristic of a tribe or society?

There are many more questions designed by Indonesian language teachers to help students observe and discover elements of cultural diversity in films.

Apart from that, multicultural values are also often found in animated films produced by the well-known American film company Walt Disney. There are a number of Disney animated films that depict cultural diversity from various countries such as China, Arabia, Japan, Mexico, Southeast Asia, and others (Rudy, Simanjuntak & Simanjuntak, 2022). Using animated films can be a good choice for elementary to high school students. By using several classic animated films produced by Walt Disney which contain multicultural elements such as *Aladdin* (1992), *Pocahontas* (1995), *Mulan* (1998), *Big Hero 6* (2014), *Moana* (2016), *Coco* (2017), *Raya and the Last Dragon* (2021) and others, students can be directed to see various cultures from other countries.

It seems that the choice of film types for elementary and middle school students needs to be considered carefully and adjusted to their abilities. Animated films might attract their attention to learn to see elements of cultural diversity (multiculturalism). Animated films that tend to be of interest to students, especially those at elementary school level, are animated films that are simple, easy to understand, short and entertaining (Fathurohman, Nurcahyo & Rondli, 2014). Therefore, teachers must be more astute in selecting animated films that are suitable for elementary and middle school students. Teachers are required to briefly explain to their students in advance about the film they will be assigned to so that they understand which culture they will be observing.

Indonesian language teachers can help them by preparing some simple instructions so that they don't have difficulty finding elements of cultural diversity in the films they watch, for example, the teacher uses the animated film *Mulan*. Some clues in the form of brief explanations that can direct them are as follows: (a) pay attention to the clothes or costumes worn by all the characters in the film which are traditional Chinese/Chinese cultural clothing during the dynasty era (b) there is a small dragon that can talk and dragons are creatures which is sacred in Chinese mythology (c) there are lanterns which are typical Chinese lanterns made of red paper and thin rattan and shaped like a cage into which candles can be inserted for light (d) the figure eats using chopsticks which is a Chinese tradition. So, teachers play an important role in guiding their students who are the nation's next generation to see the importance of knowing and recognizing elements of cultural diversity in order to develop attitudes of tolerance, not have prejudice and show respect for cultural diversity at home and abroad.

#### **Application of Relevant Language Practices**

Apart from reading texts (books) and using audio-visual media to train students to express elements of cultural diversity to learn multicultural values, several types of linguistic training can also help them learn the values of cultural diversity. Considering appropriate language practice activities for students can also show the creativity of Indonesian language teachers. In this case, Indonesian language teachers are required to be creative. Waritsman and Hastina (2020) revealed that the more creative a teacher is in teaching, the easier it will be for his students to understand the lesson. By thinking creatively and presenting interesting new activities, the teacher can be said to be a creative teacher (Jamaludin & Husaini, 2018). However, generating creative ideas is not an easy thing to do. This is certainly a challenge for Indonesian language teachers.

Combining learning with interesting activities requires time, experience, broad insight, patience and readiness to face various inhibiting

factors. However, teaching students to observe cultural diversity and to appreciate multicultural values is necessary so that they grow into people of quality and value. So far, many students are not aware of cultural diversity, so many do not know the importance of cultivating tolerance towards cultural differences. This should be a concern for all school officials and parents. According to Pi'i (2017), this is necessary so that the younger generation can preserve diversity and maintain peace. Therefore, children need to be provided with information or knowledge about cultural diversity and trained to observe various cultural elements.

Several types of activities that can train students' language skills can be used to train them to recognize and understand multicultural values. The following are two types of activities that Indonesian language teachers can consider:

(a) Tell stories or legends from various regions. This can also be called story telling carried out by students. This activity can be done in class as a group or individual assignment. Indonesia is a country rich in ethnicity and culture. Therefore, this activity is a good opportunity to teach students to see the richness and diversity of Indonesian culture. Rukiyah (2018) stated that by telling stories and listening to legends or folk tales, students can broaden their insight, increase their vocabulary, and practice critical thinking. There are many elements of cultural diversity that can be found in stories or legends that can be studied. In this way, students can also be trained to pay attention to cultural diversity in the form of various tribes, languages, legends, etc. that exist in Indonesia and learn to tolerate and respect diversity.

(b) Another way that can be done to introduce cultural diversity to develop multicultural values among students is by sharing knowledge about festivals (celebrations), cultural ceremonies, customs or traditional games from various regions or other countries with help with pictures and descriptions. Indonesian language teachers may consider this activity as an additional assignment that can also train their students to pay attention to cultural diversity. For example, in the novel *Assalamualaikum Beijing!*



there are elements of Chinese culture shown to the reader, for example, there is the myth about the Great Wall of China.

Indonesian teachers can assign their students to look for Chinese culture in the story and give them additional information about Chinese culture, for example Chinese New Year celebrations, the Moon Cake Festival, or other Chinese traditions. Not only that, in the story of *Laskar Pelangi*, for example, there are traditional ceremonies of the Chinese-Belitung community, belief in the paranormal, local myths, Eid al-Fitr celebrations or other Belitung community customs that reflect a combination of local Malay-Belitung culture, Islamic culture and other cultures. Chinese. So, according to Yusria (2021), the activity of discussing and sharing stories about customs and culture from various regions can be said to be part of preserving local culture through learning activities that are able to develop generational creativity and awareness to appreciate cultural diversity, both local, national and cultural. or abroad.

However, these activities also need to be adjusted to the students' abilities or level of knowledge. For elementary school students, teachers can use visual aids in the form of pictures or photos of culture originating from a region or country. These images or photos can then be used to tell a story about a culture. Teachers may also give opportunities to their students who may have seen or know about the culture shown in photos or drawings and ask them to tell stories. According to Widiyanto (2017), activities with the theme of multiculturalism like this contribute to fostering students' insight into the importance of tolerance towards cultural pluralism and diversity so that conflicts rooted in cultural differences can be avoided.

Even though schools in Indonesia generally do not make multicultural education a subject, school students must be equipped with knowledge about cultural diversity so that multicultural values can be instilled in the younger generation. This is a necessity because the Indonesian people live in a culturally diverse country. So, according to Yapani and Zuraya (2017), basically activities that teach students

about cultural diversity include reading texts/storybooks/legends, watching films/videos or discussing various cultural ceremonies, customs, etc. another is so that they can respect and show tolerance to friends who come from different ethnicities or cultures.

## CONCLUSION

This section presents several important things concluded from this study, namely:

(a) Understanding and knowledge of multicultural values plays an important role in the life of the Indonesian nation and state which consists of various ethnicities and cultures.

(b) A broad insight into the importance of respecting cultural diversity (multiculturalism) can foster an attitude of tolerance and respect for cultural differences for the good of social life and interacting with citizens of other countries.

(c) Multicultural elements (cultural diversity) in the two popular novels *Laskar Pelangi* (2005) and *Assalamualaikum, Beijing!* (2013) can be observed through the characters, language, customs and cultural background in these novels. There are a number of elements of cultural diversity (multicultural) that are highlighted in the two novels. In the novel *Laskar Pelangi*, elements of cultural diversity are clearly visible in the characters Akiong and Aling who are depicted as characters of Chinese descent. *Laskar Pelangi* also highlights the use of Malay-Belitung accented language and the setting depicted in the novel is a village in Belitung where there is culture and traditions that are different from other regions. Likewise with the novel *Assalamualaikum Beijing!* which shows elements of cultural diversity from the presence of a character of Chinese descent named Zhongwen who also displays several Chinese traditions. The setting in the novel is Beijing.

(d) Schools need to equip students with knowledge about multicultural values in order to produce the nation's next generation who are aware of and respectful of cultural diversity. Therefore, teachers must also be aware, understand and learn about the importance of cultural diversity in order to teach children.

(e) understanding of cultural diversity can be developed through learning Indonesian using several methods, namely: first by using texts or books, both literary and non-literary, which contain the values of cultural diversity as reading material for students; second, by using audio-visual media to attract students' attention to view and listen to short videos, documentary videos, sound pictures, short films, etc. which contain the values of cultural diversity; and third, by carrying out educational activities such as sharing stories about festivals or cultural ceremonies from different tribes, introducing some general vocabulary from regional languages, and various knowledge about the habits of people from other countries and the languages they speak. they use.

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