

## MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION AND PROCESS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING OF DANCE IN INDONESIA

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**ABSTRACT:** *The goal of this paper is to explore and offer a form of multicultural education through the teaching and learning of dance in Indonesia. The result of the study reveals that the teaching and learning of dance can form multicultural characters as well as humanized character like stated in previous research (Sutiyono, 2010). This formation of character is important along with the rising number of conflict and violence in Indonesia. On the rising violence and conflict, People often blame education which is believed that it fails to cope with the problem. Education fails in building multicultural generation. In the other hands, Indonesia has potential cultures to be explored into countless heritage. This paper explores ideas on the potential of teaching and learning of dance to be used to build multicultural education in Indonesia.*

**KEYWORDS:** multicultural education, dance, arts, teaching, learning.

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### INTRODUACTION

A practice-based subject in Yogyakarta State University describes that students of dance Department obtain a dance named *Bambangan-Cakil*. The dance was presented by a pair of student. The first dancer acted as *Bambangan* (knight) representing truth, and the later acted as *Cakil* (giant) representing crime. All students got their turn to practice dancing both as *Bambangan* and as *Cakil*. By practicing the two characters, the students are expected to feel the good and evil character. At the end, the students are expected to be able to learn values of life within the contested characters and transfer the value into their daily life.

The students, then, were involved in a deep discussion on the two characters. This discussion leads to thorough understanding about the characters. In consequence, the classroom teaching and learning reaches three levels. They are (1) cognitive, a state in which students are able to comprehend the knowledge about *Bambangan-Cakil* dance, (2) affective, in which students are able to understand and model values of life reflected in *Bambangan-Cakil* dance, and (3) practice, in which all students had to rehearse the dance . In a whole two months, the students exercised the dance in classroomom regularly every Thursday. At the end, they had to perform the dance in complete wardrobes as a final fulfilment of examination.

In another deep discussion, a question was forwarded to all students. This was about their feeling when they were protagonist or antagonist position, just like in acting *Bambangan*, and *Cakil*. The discussion is getting more significance because when students act a character, they are playing a theatre. In other sense, playing a theatre is believed to shape humans' character (Kwaky-Opong, 2014: 77). Their answer and

claim about the evil and good characters becomes important in the process of transferring knowledge and value. The values transferred are expected to be able to positively affect the attitude of the students. It is in line with the principle of humanism in the artworks.

The research result also describes that the process of dance teaching and learning contains attribute of building humanist characters. The processes are through the following steps. (1) the decision by the students to prepare the rehearsal, (2) self-directed exercise by students without teachers' guidance, (3) guided practices, (4) dance performance as the final examination. The steps above constitute a working design in the multicultural education. (Taylor, 2011). Students need a total two months to accomplish the project. This is in line with the curriculum stating that one single dance repertoire should be through two month learning.

Deep within the long process of the dance, there are complex values embedded, for instance, the act of caring and sharing from student to student. Due to the high-energy consumption, in every rehearsal, students shared their meals and drinks. This sharing is important because they felt one, a unity in a practice time. This was to anticipate of energy loss. They needed two hours of dancing in a single rehearsal. It does spend much energy.

Another sharing reflected from the rehearsal was the sharing of tools, like tape recorder. In a single rehearsal, a group of students needs at least one tape recorder. A good lesson to learn is that the student was at his/her true will to bring and lend the tape recorder. It affects the unity of the group. In many cases, the students whose skills are better act as peer trainer, helping other students whose skills are underdeveloped. At the end, they are formed as a unity.

In modern era, a simple thing is sometimes difficult to get. A smile is believed to be magical in any means of communication. The rising values of hedonism, selfishness, and individualism hide smiles in the faces of the people. In the dance class, a smile is not a part of design in curriculum. However, it is within the character of a dancer or a performer to keep their smiles before audience. Therefore, the interaction in dance class is full with students' smiles. In other words, the teaching of dance art could be believed as a part of character education. It affirms that arts is an agent of change in society (Haider, 2013) in the sense that the education of arts is to transform humans to be more humanist and multifaceted in orientation.

Based on the findings of this research, it is believed that the education of arts does not only result in humanized humans, but also an offer to multicultural education in Indonesia. Besides, in the process of teaching and learning dance, a sense of cooperation is needed. Helping others is common. Moreover, treating others the same is the core of the relation. In an example, a student from java assists a student coming from Kalimantan facing difficulty in rehearsing Javanese dance, and vice versa. The ability to learn other dances is from the united process of the classroom. The students learn that it is in the hands of all members not only one single member to master a skill. Learning a Javanese dance, for instance, cannot be individualized.

Therefore, dance learning constitutes elements of tradition, transformation, and social justice (Ward, 2013).

The process of dance learning and teaching involves direct social aspect in the academic and non-academic worlds. In academic world, the process is more formalized. In non-academic world, the process is far abundance. It is in line with the following definitions on education. First, education means a human transformation obtained from equalized development of body, mind, spirit, and intellectuality both personal in nature and universal. Second, education means a self-being and self-making process, finding self-identity in the unity with self and other human beings (Nagata, 2002). This final reference is a multicultural education.

### **Conflict and Violence as Problems of Nation**

Various kinds of problem of the nation emerge recently. One of them is the ethnocentrism. People are too proud of their social status. Many noblemen are proud of their family's glory. At result, they filter friends avoiding those who are not in the same level. Another problem is being too proud of the culture owned. People are getting more resistance to other cultural forms. Religion fanatic, for example, has put people not to accept other religions. An the end, people try to destroy other religion believers. These problems are the one recently this nation must face.

The problems of the nation are not only resulted from ethnocentrism and religion fanatic. There are other problems that put this nation in a severe and sad condition. Destructive and barbaric actions are among the problems people worry about. Some of the conflicts are too real, like what happened in Sambas and Sampit (Kalimantan), Poso (Sulawesi), Ambon (Maluku), Aceh, and Papua. All of those problems are rooted in the ego and selfishness. They are not aware of other cultures in this nation. It cannot deny that the root problem is about multiculturalism. This big problem deals with many aspects of life in a nation. It does deal with politic, economy, social, race, religion, faith, custom, money, food, clothes, household, ethic, etc. In the interaction in a community, the difference often results in a conflict and, at the end, results in anarchism.

Indonesia as a multifaceted country with multi-socio-cultural backgrounds often fails in forming justice. This is because some other parties try to bend and manipulate the concept with their greediness and selfishness. They have forgotten the voice of children of the nation as people of Indonesia (Sutrisno, 2001).

Multiculturalism, in one side, does not only portray the richness of a country but also a pattern to keep the country live in harmony, avoiding conflict and violence. It is supposed to protect people from chaos so that a case like Madura and Dayak in 1999 will not happen anymore. The problem was due the economy contest within the area lived by the two ethnics.

A severe violence in Poso (Sulawesi Tengah) in 2001 was due a small problem. A child bought a candy in a Chinese store. He got a candy wrapped with paper with Arabic character. A group of people called that an insult to Islam. Soon after, the group burned the store. The fact was that the characters in Arabic were a love letter. It

does portray that ethnic sensitivity is crucial to discuss (Erika, 2013). The fights among students and other severe crimes by certain groups worsen the chaotic situation. The most outstanding is the problem of terrorism. Although it is not a daily case, but the threat runs daily. The potential bombs in mosques, Islamic schools, and other places put this country in a never-ending violence.

The problem of nationalism and the cases of violence seem to be difficult to overcome. This is because the conflict solved moves to other areas with the same and even more complex conflict. According to Beuken (1997), it is not surprising that today's era is the era full with blood. Violence becomes so real within human's life. People even treat this only as a contemporary trend. However, Bauken hopes that the violence in any form will get immediate treatment, although the execution is still delayed.

People keep questioning the civilized Indonesia. Why does the severe violence happen in Indonesia. The sophisticated thinking of people in Indonesia is supposed to direct Indonesia to be more civilized. The diversity is a God's blessing and the glory of the nation. However, the diversity becomes a potential of conflicts which ends in a severe disaster (Naim, 2008).

People think that the morality crisis in recent conditions is due to education. The teaching of morals in schools is believed to be so weak. In other sense, education becomes the most crucial element in nation character. A nation will not be developed without good education. A nation without good education will only lead herself to destruction and result in an uncivilized people. It is unarguably that this country suffers a crisis in morality. Besides, the big number of continuing conflicts from small to big scale demands the emergence of multicultural education (Donoghue, 2012).

### **The Importance of Character Education**

Ongoing conflict and violence involving ethnics in Indonesia are problems of multiculturalism. No country will bear conflict within the nation. Government of Indonesia has designed to eliminate factors potential for conflict and to foreground factors leading to peace. One of the expected elements is the education. It is normal because education is the place for hope and future. Sociologically, education does not only store ammunition for future but also own dialectic relation with transformation of social and society. Education has multi-function such as transferring knowledge, training brain, sharpening skills, inscribing moral values, forming consciousness, building character, etc (Naim, 2008). The underlined function is the one in building characters.

It is, of course, the education which prepares smart and good moral individuals. The forming of those characters might lead to ideal conditions of society with spirit to develop self-potential to reach truest happiness and safety in earth and the world after (Zuchdi, 2008). A good moral and smart individual can be gained through character education which is based on friendship putting the emphasis on free participation to thoroughly develop themselves (Rukyanto, 2009).

Education is not only about increasing academic or intellectual capacity but also more on the humanity side development of the students, both as individuals and as members of a nation. Therefore, education which base only on academic is not suitable to develop individuals because it neglects another side of children's character (Suparno, 2009: 48). This description explains that education is not only directed to produce smart individuals but also humanized and multiculture people.

From this problem, character education becomes important and urgent to form. Lickona (1991) states that in character education there is a multicultural education describing teaching of morality such as an appreciation to the various cultural heritage. In character education, students' emotion is shaped. Students will be emotionally smart. Emotional quotient is an important aspect in preparing students for their future. It deals with the ability to cope with multiculturalism. Afterword, multiculturalism is seen not as a problem but as challenge and potential for the development of the nation (Mahgoub, 2015).

### **The Urgency of Multicultural Education**

The urgency of multicultural education cannot be felt by society till now. In the education world, the term is not well understood both as an idea and as socio-cultural practice. It is limited to dichotomy of some sciences like in sociology, anthropology, politics, and religion studies. In concept, multicultural education is not yet executed in Indonesia. In the other hands, multicultural education becomes the core point to reach other disciplines. It considers the diverse background of the society which is sensitive to conflicts and cultural clashes.

The limited discussion on multiculturalism is due this term is not yet known by people. It is normal because it hits the momentum in Indonesian background in the late years along with the emergence of conflicts and violence. Therefore, it is badly needed to apply character education which is based on multiculturalism. This construct of education is oriented to the understanding of multifaceted condition in religion, politics, and culture. Palmer (1998) emphasizes that character education is about respecting each other including respect to nature and culture. Further, multicultural education is positioned as a systemic effort to overcome potential of conflict and violence. The basic value of this education is tolerance, that is, an attitude to respect the difference without any force to be with other values (Naim, 2008). Hence, multiculturalism aspect is rooted from respect from human to culture.

In essence, education becomes a process of socialization of values of peace. For instance, family becomes the centre of multicultural education. If in family and schools the children are accustomed with difference, the nuance of tolerance and democracy will soon be built. In other hands, respecting others is the core value (Kartono, 2009). Multicultural education becomes the base of widening horizon for certain group of people to the point that humanity is about the same future, that is, difference in the same goals. In multicultural education, the mind mapping is about an understanding to the difference. In the difference, tolerance and respect will lead to the good life of the people (Naim, 2008).

Many western scholars see multicultural education in schools fits the art education (Liao, 2011). Since students learn arts, they deal with reality of human beings. It is due the art work can affect the environment surrounding the people. It is proven that the art work does not only function in amusement but also in a meaningful education. The meaning making appears because in the process of creativity students go through intuitive and perceptive (Hickman, 2013) which lead to catharsis. The art learning in this context is the one oriented to the development of cultural awareness. In this sense, the cultural awareness is the goal of the teaching and learning.

The teaching and learning of dance proposed is the common practices in universities in Indonesia. The model varies from Jawa, Bali, Sunda, Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, to Maluku. Students learn all the dances gradually until a self-cultural consciousness is obtained (de Quincey, 2010). The duration is based on the formatted curriculum. In four years, students learn dance and at the end will get their self-awareness on culture. For sure, the students are well developed (Enamhe, 2014) until they reach their cultural awareness.

### **Offering Teaching and Learning of Dance for Multicultural Education**

Dance Education Department of Yogyakarta State University offers various kinds of ethnic dances ranging from Central Java (Yogyakarta and Surakarta), west Java, East Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, to foreign dances. In this context, due the students learns various materials of dances, they also learn how to appreciate. The most important is that the students appreciate cultural forms which is the biggest part of multicultural education leading to social reconstruction (Colby, 2011). The students are designed to be individuals who respect other forms of culture.

An understanding on multiculturalism is obtained through the teaching and learning of dance. In this learning, students are not only sharpening skills but also mastering knowledge of other culture. In other words, the students face the form and the context of culture. A musician, Lundquist (1991), states that it is better for students learning music to learn other various musics and master the knowledge within the music. Further, Nethsinghe (2012) states that the process of teaching and learning of music can be treated as the multicultural education for students and teachers.

Dance Education Department of Yogyakarta State University teaches dancing in forms of skills and cultural understanding. Kinds of materials taught involve (1) local material, (2) material from other area, and (3) material from abroad. The process of understanding local dances compared to the understanding of foreign dances at once is the multicultural education. Schwadron (1975) states that within the learning of music there is a music multicultural education. What is meant by multicultural is that education which is based on comparasion between two forms of music. Comparing elements of music is a process of learning multicultural. The elements cover actors, instruments, notes, melody, and wardrobe, make up, lighting, and stage property. Besides, the understanding on background of the appearance of the music is in relation to social structure of the musician. It is based on an awareness that music phenomenon cannot be escaped from socio-cultural context.

Based on that assumption, people learning to dance Javanese dances will learn Javanese culture. It also happens to those learning Sumatran and Kalimantan dances. This is a special domain supporting multicultural perspective in dance education. The perspective puts learners of arts to learn also culture and society within the arts (Fung, 1995). Hence, the students learning a dance also learn the culture and society of the dance. This is a learning of various arts and culture. This is what people call multiculturalism.

In addition, the students also learn traditional music, *gamelan*. Learning *gamelan* cannot be individual. This must be communal or together because the nature of this music is orchestra. It involves several people in an orchestra. During the process of playing *gamelan*, the teachers and the students also discuss about Javanese culture and Javanese values. In this context, some members of class whose cultural background is not Java also learn about Javanese culture. It means that this kind of teaching and learning can be developed to be a model of multicultural education that bases on ethnicities (Sensoy, 2010).

The various kinds of cultural background of the students are supposed to invite conflicts. They seem to be forced to learn certain culture. In fact, no conflict appears so far. On the contrary, they feel happy and enjoy the learning. The process of learning becomes the entertaining process. With their joy on learning, slowly they can understand the essence of difference. In result, the teaching and learning process is in harmony.

In addition, the students also practices values of Javanese culture. For instance, the students exercise *gamelan* and at the same time practices Javanese concept of politeness. To exercise togetherness and harmony, they need each other when they prepare their final examination. This care and share concept is across ethnicity. Java ethnic helps others and vice versa. In other words, the teaching and learning constitutes a cultural event used to develop sense of togetherness (Bowel, 2014). It is strengthen by Hughes-Freeland (2008) stating that dance is about exercise of sense that can be developed into social identity and social character.

The custom of helping each other forms the character of the students. It seems that teaching and learning of dance can result in skills and moral values. All of them lead to multiple intelligence. In short, the system of teaching and learning of dance covers transfer of knowledge, skills, and values. Many students from various ethnicities feel that they are getting better in attitude after three years learning dance. Being soft/polite in attitude reflects the building of multicultural character which is in line with humanity benefits in the previous research (Sutiyono, 2010). In essence, all students are forced to be familiar with cooperation and sharing.

Moreover, in the curriculum of Dance Education Department, there are subjects of dances ranging from Bali, Java, Kalimantan, Sumatra, Maluku, to Papua. All subjects are mandatory. In the subjects, the students do not only master the skills but also the cultural knowledge. Therefore, the students face a cross ethnicities dances. By this fact, the students are proud of the diversity of this nations' culture. The concept of being proud of cultural heritage is formed in all students. This pride leads them to be

intelligence. Again, this teaching and learning could be the basis of multicultural education.

Educational institution has to prepare the smart and faithful individuals. Those criteria might lead to ideal society possibly developing self-potential and using it for the sake of happiness today and the world after (Zuchdi, 2008). In conclusion, education institution is hoped to produce multicultural people. In this context, the teaching and learning of dance can be seen as the model. Therefore, the teaching and learning of dance can be offered as the basis of character education bringing the students into multiculturalism.

## CONCLUSION

It has been more than fifty years Indonesia is not able to unify the diversity (multiculturalism). There are conflicts, violence, ethnocentrism, radicalism, discrimination, and group selfishness as the expression in responding to difference. To anticipate problem of multiculturalism that until now has no panacea, people rely on education. Education is expected to be able to overcome potential problem related to diversity. Even, education can turn threats of diversity into potential and richness of the nation. At the end, a more civilized nation will be immediately obtained.

In response to multicultural education, the attitude of multicultural is well maintained in the teaching of dance. This kind of teaching seems to be able to change character. This teaching practice is the real practice of multicultural education involving psychomotor and affective aspects. Besides, the education cannot stand alone without awareness to apply it in the teaching and learning of dance. In the learning of dance, a fruitful cultural aspects is offered.

Students are not only demanded to be skilful in dancing but also to be good in attitude (Yalalov, 2015). Learning dance is basically involving in the cultural event. This event is best place to develop togetherness. Further, the value of humanity is the core since the learning of dance much involves feeling which is not only aesthetical feeling but also ethic, solidarity and peace and sense of togetherness.

The feeling of togetherness in dance learning puts students in harmony. They blend and respect each other. After long years of learning dance, students accept other art from other ethnicities. This is the awareness in multicultural world. Besides, in the learning of dance, students are accustomed to cooperate and help others willingly. This results in a high feeling of tolerance. Baker (1994) states that multicultural education deals with three aspects. They are (1) idea and awareness on the importance of cultural diversity, (2) a reformation in education, and (3) a process. Therefore, the teaching and learning of dance can be the base of multicultural education in Indonesia.

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