

Multicultural Perspectives in Indonesian Social Studies and Student Prejudice Reduction

Fattah Hanurawan

Abstract: Children's prejudice is still a problem in the educational world. The importance of reducing children's prejudice through the teaching of multicultural perspectives in social studies education (IPS) is relevant to education in a multicultural society, such as Indonesia. The development of multicultural perspectives is crucial to prevent Indonesian students from negative prejudice to other groups. The basic education conditions for reducing the development of student prejudice are democratic school environment, the teachers' role and schools' multicultural curriculum. Indonesian teachers can develop some instructional strategies which are appropriate to the problems related to the prejudice.

Key words: Multicultural perspectives, Indonesian social studies, student prejudice reduction.

In the mid of May 1998, there were riots in some big cities in Indonesia, e.g., in Medan, Jakarta, Surakarta, and Surabaya. On the above riots, there were many targets belonging to Chinese-ethnic groups were destroyed by pribumi (Indonesian indigenous) people, such as luxurious houses, banks, and department stores. It can be said that there are some social backgrounds underlying those social disasters. One of the social back-

Fattah Hanurawan is a lecturer of FPIPS IKIP MALANG and D2 PGSD IKIP MALANG. This article is edited by Utami Widiati.

grounds is pribumi people's prejudice against the much better economic welfare of Chinese ethnic force in Indonesia. Prejudice can be defined as a negative attitude towards the member of some specific groups, leading the person who holds such views to evaluate others in terms of character, solely on the basis of their membership in that group (Baron & Byrne, 1987). Beck (1992) defines prejudice as a preconceived attitude toward the members of a particular group formed only upon the basis of their membership in that group. The emphasis on the negative consequences of the prejudice is suggested by Singh (1992) who describes prejudice as irrational and one which often leads to intolerant behavior toward other groups. It is accompanied by stereotyping, that is attributing characteristics of a whole group to all its individual members.

Indonesian society is definitely multicultural. A multicultural society is a society where different groups cohabit harmoniously and are free to maintain many of their distinctive religious linguistic, or social customs and values (Bullivant, 1986). Clearly a multicultural society has a number of the key elements. They are: the existence of diversity; at least minimal sharing and interaction; equal access to economic and educational resources; political and civil rights; valuing of cultural diversity; and shared commitment to one nation (McLean, 1991).

Indonesian society consists of groups from many different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The main ones are Javanese, Batak, Minang, Bugis, Makasar, Banjar, and Aceh. The complex history and cultural heritage of Indonesian society is blended under the one Indonesian philosophy of life and ideology, the five principles Pancasila.

It is clear from the above description that in a multicultural society where people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds live together, the social phenomena of the prejudiced person can disturb cross-cultural relationship among ethnic groups. The prejudiced person is one who thinks in a rigid and inflexible way about the object of prejudice, such as a person who becomes a member of other groups. Pate (1992) suggests that the development of children's prejudice is still a problem in the educational world. Preventing and reducing prejudice are challenging tasks. The importance of the reduction of children's prejudice through the teaching of multicultural perspectives on social studies education (IPS) is relevant to education in a multicultural society such as Indonesia.

environment. Therefore, social backgrounds which are related to the development of children's prejudice can be used as a starting point for choosing appropriate methods in effort to delay prejudice development or prevent children from negative effects of this kind of behavior.

There are a number of theories which attempt to describe the development of prejudice. From the social sciences perspective, there are four main important factors which can lead to the development of individual prejudice. They are: direct intergroup conflict, social categorization, early learning experiences and several aspects of the social cognition.

Realistic conflict theory states that direct intergroup conflict can be seen as an important factor in the sources of prejudice. In this point of view, prejudice stems from competition between various social groups over valued commodities, such as the competition over jobs, education, or status. This theory further suggests that as such competition continues, the members of the groups involved start to view each other in negative ways. The result is that what begins as simple competition soon develops into full scale prejudice, with all that this implies (Baron and Byrne, 1987).

In other place, the social categorization perspective state that the origins of prejudice begin with the division of the social world around them into two distinct categories, ingroup or their own category ('us') and outgroup or other category ('them'). Some several studies (e.g. Locksley, Ortiz, and Hepburn, 1980; Tajfel and Turner, 1979 in Baron and Byrne, 1987) show that subjects generally expressed more negative attitudes toward members of outgroups and treated them in less favorable ways than members of their own in groups.

Social learning theory states that early living experience is an important phase which can facilitate the development of individuals' prejudice. In this theory children learn to imitate the negative attitudes toward specific social groups from their social environment, such as from their parents, friends, teachers, or the mass media. The process of imitation is facilitated, because their social environment specifically gives some rewards for adopting their negative attitudes about other groups (Baron and Byrne, 1987).

The social learning theory views human behavior as being determined by interplay between the influence of situation, the person's behavior, and the person's cognition and emotions. In regard to the process of prejudice imitation, if someone sees other people being rewarded for a

given behavior (prejudice), this information increases the chances he or she will imitate this behavior (prejudice) (Stephan and Stephan, 1990). The prominent social learning theorists, Bandura and Walters, explain that much social behavior is learned through imitation and reinforcement.

Children learn prejudice behaviors and responses by watching others. They develop tendencies to copy what they see by having their actions reinforced by others (Sleeter and Grant, 1988). Observational learning and modeling may be the mechanisms by which parents inculcate their racial attitudes in children. William and Moreland (1976 in Albert and Dersby, 1994) suggest that with the type of influence, the children develop an earlier awareness of racial categories and view race as highly salient. This increased saliency may alert the child to cultural messages concerning race and lead to greater prejudice.

Finally, the origins of the development of prejudice can be traced from several aspects of social cognition. They include stereotypes, illusory correlation, and illusion of the outgroup homogeneity. The stereotypes consist of knowledge and belief about special groups, much of it negative in nature. Illusory correlation refers to individuals' tendency to perceive associations between variables that do not factually exist. Illusory correlation can sometimes play a role in the development of stereotypes and prejudice. The illusion of outgroup homogeneity can be seen as individuals' tendency to perceive the members of outgroup as much more similar than members of our own ingroup (Baron and Byrne, 1987).

MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVES IN INDONESIAN SOCIAL STUDIES

Social studies occupies an important place as an integral part of the Indonesian primary school curriculum. Indonesian social studies education (IPS) is a course about social life based on the subjects of geography, economics, sociology, anthropology, politics, and history. Specifically, social studies education consists of the elements of 'social knowledge' and 'history.' It is taught hours per week in grade 3, and five hours in grades 4 to 6 (Depdikbud, 1994).

In general, Indonesian social studies education has the objective of developing students' social capabilities within their social environment. This objective is relevant to one of the Indonesian education objectives

expressed in Undang-undang no. 2 1989 (Act of National Education System) about the national education system. The objective can be described as follows:

The social competencies include: behaviors which demonstrate a duty to God within a society with different religious backgrounds; behaviors which support a *spirit of national unity within a multicultural society*; behaviors which support efforts to achieve Indonesian social justice (Depdikbud, 1993:2).

In order to build comprehensive social capabilities in dealing with the social world, it cannot be denied that Indonesian social education must teach the knowledge of its multicultural environment. In facing the problems of building students' cultural understanding, teachers can use and develop multicultural perspectives within social studies curriculum.

It is clear from an Indonesian multicultural society perspective, in an effort to achieve the principle *Bhineka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity), the development of multicultural perspectives is very crucial to prevent Indonesian students from negative prejudice to other groups, such as ethnic, sex, and handicap. This objective is relevant to one of the objectives of multicultural education in general, i.e. trying to reduce prejudice and stereotypes between the races, men and women, to eliminate their gender discrimination, and to help all people to feel positive feeling about themselves (Sleeter and Grant, 1988).

Indonesian current population reflect a great diversity of ethnic and backgrounds. To the school students bring not only different ways of thinking and behaving but also diverse ways of communication. Since Indonesian communities are composed of people of many cultures, Indonesian social studies curriculum must recognize the existence of the many cultures that characterize the community. Therefore, teachers must be sure that multicultural perspectives in social studies does not become a process for building or reinforcing group stereotypes. Through learning multicultural perspectives, Indonesian students can learn their own cultural background as well as that of other ethnic groups in order to build their social and cultural understandings. To develop Indonesian national status, multicultural perspectives can be seen as an instrument for transforming the nature of Indonesian society. The important goals of multicultural

education will help all children develop their knowledge, skills, and attitudes which they will need to survive and function effectively in a culturally diverse society.

There are some main principles for learning and teaching multicultural perspectives in Indonesian social studies curriculum: The selection of subject matter content should be culturally inclusive based on up-to-date scientific research; the subject matter content selected for inclusion should represent diversity and unity within and across groups; the subject matter selected for inclusion should be set within the context of its time and place; the subject matter selected for inclusion should be priority to depth over breadth; the subject matter selected for inclusion should be treated as socially constructed and therefore tentative; pedagogy should incorporate a range of interactive modes of teaching and learning in order to foster understanding, examination of controversy, and mutual learning (Covert, 1996: 2)

Basic Condition for Reducing Student Prejudice

The first basic condition for the reduction of student prejudice is the democratic school environment. Of all the formal agents in society, schools are in a very important position to prevent and reduce prejudice. It may be argued that multicultural perspectives demonstrate a 'reverse coherence relationship' between school climate and classroom climate. Consequently, school must establish the policies that facilitate the prevention or reduction of the development of children's prejudice. These policies as the basic education condition for fairly multicultural education will be based on democratic principles, equal opportunity, and a sense of fair play. The policies must be known by all the people in the school, that is the teachers, the school administrators, the students, and the community (Pate, 1992).

There are some characteristics of an effective school's environment in relation to preventing and reducing children's prejudice and discrimination. They can be described as follows: A school climate conducive to learning; teachers' expectation that all students can achieve; an emphasis on basic skills instruction and quality time on tasks for learners; a system of clear instructional objectives for monitoring and evaluating of learning;

a head teacher who creates incentives for learning, sets school goals, maintains discipline, observes classrooms and is a strong leader (Pate, 1992: 140).

Besides establishing the school's democratic climates, the teachers' role can also be seen as one of the most important contributions to successful teaching of the essential content of multicultural perspectives in the classroom. Indonesian teachers should be convinced that through teaching of multicultural perspectives they can ensure educational opportunities for all children of whatever ethnic and cultural background, such as from Chinese, Java, or Sunda ethnic. Indonesian teachers must have a critical understanding of their students' cultures, including their social status, sex, geography, appearance, or ethnic backgrounds.

The third basic condition for the reduction of student prejudice is the schools' multicultural curriculum. A school curriculum must present diverse perspectives experience and the contribution of a variety of groups. For example, IPS (Indonesian social studies) curriculum should draw examples of Indonesian citizenship from the heroes of a variety of cultures and not just from the dominant cultures. People who exemplify loyalty, courage, honesty, and all the other traits which derive from the Pancasila come from all cultural backgrounds (Hanurawan and Waterworth 1997). The curriculum must provide positive models of different ethnic groups, opportunities for students to discuss racial-and ethnicity-related questions in a non-threatening atmosphere, encourage interaction between children from different groups in learning process and encourage children to bring pictures of social life into the classroom context as part of their learning (Covert, 1996).

Instructional Strategies for Reducing Student Prejudice

Indonesian teachers can develop some instructional strategies which are appropriate to the possibilities and problems related to the prejudice and discrimination. Before selecting these specific strategies, teachers should consider some basic principles, namely, that the chosen instructional strategies should be comprehensive; that strategies actively involving students should be most effective; that strategies should start with students' real-life experiences; and through that strategies each child should be able to experience success in the classroom, and the success of some

should not be contingent on the failure of others (Sleeter and Grant, 1988).

One of the most exciting and effective approaches in teaching multicultural perspectives for reducing children's prejudice is the use of cooperative learning. Research on multiethnic cooperative learning shows that task interdependency induces friendly behavior and develops liking and respect for one's own groupmates. After having reviewed over ninety studies, Johnson et al. (1984 in Singh, 1992) conclude that (1) intergroup cooperation without intergroup competition tends to promote more positive attitudes and relationship between majority and minority students than either interpersonal competition or individualistics; (2) intragroup cooperation with intergroup competition promotes more positive attitudes and relationship between majority and minority students than either interpersonal competition or individualistic efforts.

Through the use of cooperative learning, students from diverse cultural background can increase the interracial and cross-gender friendship patterns and develop a stronger sense of self-esteem, a more positive attitude toward school, and more internal locus of control (Pate, 1992). In line with the social psychological theory, clearly prejudice can be reduced by direct interpersonal contact. Aronson, Bridgeman, and Geffner (in Baron and Byrne, 1987) found that direct contact under cooperative conditions can be an instrument for effectively reducing children's racial prejudice.

There are many versions of this kind of instructional strategy such as Jigsaw, Teams, Games, Tournaments, Academic Division, or Group Investigation (Pate, 1992). For example, the Jigsaw method is a special structured interdependent learning program to enhance students' self-esteem and academic performance, while also reducing student prejudice. After having worked with the Jigsaw technique, children realize that their old competitive behavior is inappropriate to their group work. Rather, in order to learn the material in the Jigsaw program, each student must listen, ask appropriate questions and contribute to the group (Aronson and Thibodeau, 1994).

The second strategy is a cognitive modification strategy which attempts to attack prejudice by increasing students' cognitive skills. Pate (1992) states that this approach causes an increase in students' critical thinking skills and in the processing of information. Research in social

psychology (Langer et al., 1983 in Baron and Byrne, 1987) suggests that teaching individuals to learn actively about others, rather than to accept information with previously existing categories of reference, can be a useful strategy for overcoming the development of a sense of prejudice.

In this modification strategy, multicultural perspectives can provide accurate information about various ethnic groups, gender, handicaps, or social classes. The strategy of providing accurate cognitive information can be used in replacing stereotypes and misconceptions that the children may already have (Sleeter and Grant, 1988). Singh (1989) establishes that through this strategy students can make sense of human diversity and can develop an informed understanding of the concepts of justice, fairness, rights and responsibilities. The aim of the strategy is to create in people respect for the rights and feelings of others and to develop a sense of personal morality which takes into account the concern for others.

The third strategy is simulation. Through simulation students will learn the process and values of a culture followed by structured encounters with that culture. In simulation program, students struggle to develop skills in interpreting verbal and non verbal communication and experience the alienation and discomfort common in culture shock (Anderson and Cushner, 1994). Dissonance theory states that through role playing in simulation, students can change their previous negative attitudes about other groups. Indonesian teachers can use Simulasi Pancasila (the Pancasila Simulation) for applying the Pancasila based ideology to the context of Indonesian multicultural everyday life.

The fourth strategy is a community action project. In this project, teachers ask their students to perform voluntary community service. Students move out from the classroom and are directly in contact with members of a target group in the community to do some sort of service project. The strategy provides contact with others in an effort to reduce stereotyping. For the strategy to be most effective, students who are performing community service must behave in a constructive and positive manner. Indonesian teachers can use *Sinau Wisata* (the study tour) or *Karya Wisata* (the field trip) as a form of a community action project.

The fifth strategy involves the use of appropriate audiovisual material in multicultural perspectives. Carrington and Short (1993) state that multicultural video material can be used to challenge some of children's misconceptions of other cultural groups. Unquestioned assumptions, mis-

conceptions and ignorance about other cultures are likely to provide a fertile breeding ground for prejudice and ethnocentrism. Film in which students can participate vicariously as well as those that portray members of minority groups as real people with basic needs, hopes, and problems also affect students' perceptions. Teachers can use the other multicultural material, such as special local reading materials, that can help lessen prejudice. Students at the primary level are especially able to identify characters in a story, have an increased level of empathy, and recognize past stereotype (Pate, 1992).

CONCLUSION

Multicultural perspectives may become a powerful element in the Indonesian social studies curriculum to reduce student prejudice. Indonesian society is truly a multicultural society because it embraces many different cultural perspectives, like ethnicity, sex, social class, and language, so it is relevant for Indonesian schools to implement the teaching of multicultural perspectives. Through learning multicultural perspectives, Indonesian students can learn their own cultural background as well as that of other ethnic groups in order to build their social and cultural understandings. Multicultural education should give students a respect and tolerance for all cultures and a belief in the intrinsic worth of all of them. This will make it more possible for us to build a fairer and more equal society in Indonesia.

The basic Education conditions for reducing the development of student prejudice are democratic school environment, the teachers' role, schools' multicultural curriculum. Indonesian teachers can develop some instructional strategies which are appropriate to the possibilities and problems related to the prejudice and discrimination, such as using cooperative learning, a cognitive modification strategy, a simulation, and a community action project.

REFERENCES

- Albert, M. and Derby, D. 1994. The Development of Racial Attitudes in Children. In Lynch, J., Modgil, C., and Modgil, S. (Eds.). *Cultural Diversity and the Schools. Education for Cultural Diversity. Volume two. Prejudice, Polemic and Progress*. London: The Falmer Press.

- Anderson, R., and Cushner, K. 1994. Multicultural and Intercultural Studies. In Marsh, C. (Ed.). *Teaching Studies of Society and Environment*. Sydney: Prentice Hall Australia.
- Aronson, E. and Thibodeau, R. 1994. The Jigsaw Classroom: A Cooperative Strategy for Reducing prejudice. In Lynch, J., Modgil, C., and Modgil, S. (Eds.). *Cultural Diversity and the Schools. Education for Cultural Diversity. Volume two. Prejudice, Polemic and Progress*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Baron, R.A. and Byrne, D. 1987. *Social Psychology: Understanding Human Interaction*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.
- Beck, R.C. 1992. *Applying Psychology, Critical and Creative Thinking*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Bullivant, B.M. 1986. Multicultural Education in Australia: An Resolved Debate. In Banks, J.A. and Lynch, J. (Eds.). *Multicultural Education in Western Societies*. Eastbourne: Holt Rinehart and Winston.
- Carrington, B. and Short, G. 1993. Probing Children Prejudice, A Consideration of The Ethical and Methodological Issues Raised By Research and Curriculum. *Development. Educational Studies*. (19)2, 163—179.
- Covert, P. 1996. *Some Initial Thoughts on Multicultural Education*. Virginia: University of Virginia.
- Depdikbud. 1993. *Keputusan Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Nomor 060/U/1993 Tanggal 25 Februari 1993. Kurikulum Pendidikan Dasar. Garis-Garis Besar Program Pengajaran*. Jakarta: CV Aneka Ilmu.
- Depdikbud. 1994. *Kurikulum Pendidikan Dasar. Garis-Garis Besar Program Pengajaran IPS*. Jakarta: Depdikbud.
- Hanurawan, F and Waterworth, P. 1997. Multicultural Perspectives in Indonesian Social Studies Education Curriculum. *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan (The Journal of Education)*. Volume 4, Special Edition, 265—275.
- Lynch, J. 1987. *Prejudice Reduction and the Schools*. New York: Nichols Publishing Company.
- McLean, B. 1991. Multicultural studies. In Marsh, C.(Ed.) *Teaching of Social Studies and Environment*. Sydney:Prentice Hall.
- Modgil, S. 1986. Multicultural Education: The Interminable Debate. In Modgil, S., Verma, G.K. and Modgil, C. (Eds.). *Multicultural Education: The Interminable Debates*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Pate, G.S. 1992. Reducing Prejudice in Society: The Role of Schools. In Diaz, C. (Ed.). *Multicultural Education for the 21th Century*. Washington DC:NEA.
- Singh, B.A. 1992. Teaching Methods that Enhance Human Dignity, Self-respect and Academic Achievement. In Lynch, J. and Modgil, C. and Modgil, S. (Eds.). *Cultural Diversity and the Schools. Education for Cultural Diversity. Volume two. Prejudice, Polemic and Progress*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Singh, B.R. 1989. Neutrality and Commitment in Teaching Moral and Social Issues in Multicultural. *Society. Educational Review*. (41)3, 227—241.

- Sleeter, C.E. and Grant, C.A. 1988. *Making Choices for Multicultural Education, Five Approaches to Race, Class, and Gender*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.
- Stephan, C.W. and Stephan, G.W. 1990. *Two Social Psychologies*. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Thermal, U. 1983. Ethnic Schools. In Falk, B. and Harris, J. (Eds.). *Unity in Diversity. Multicultural Education In Australia*. Carlton, Victoria: The Australian College of Education.