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## **Multicultural Education-Based Instruction in Teaching English for Indonesian Islamic Higher Education**

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### **Abstract**

The paper report explores the lectures' perception of multicultural education-based instruction in teaching English in Indonesian Islamic higher education. It employs online survey research design utilizing google form to collect the data on lectures perception on multicultural education-based instruction in their classroom teaching practices. Research result reveals that there were apparent variances in the way the lecturer perceives their multicultural education-based instruction in teaching English in their classroom, and these differences influence their classroom teaching practices. The interconnection of the lecturer attitude on multicultural based instruction toward their classroom teaching practices led to three categories of the lectures such as (1) Highly Implemented Multicultural Education (HIME), (2) Moderately Implemented Multicultural Education (MIME), and (3) Lowly Implemented Multicultural Education (LIME). This study found that the more positive of the lecturer toward their multicultural based instruction, the better the teaching performance they have in the Indonesian EFL classroom. This study has short of expanding on the scholarly understanding of multicultural based instruction in teaching English at Indonesian Islamic higher education.

**Keywords:** *Multicultural Education, Lecture's Perspective, EFL teaching and learning.*

### **Introduction**

Multicultural Education, sometimes referred to as multiethnic education, anti-racism education, or multiracial education. Many countries have been involving in this issue to refer to educational efforts that have attempted to inculcate more positive values about social pluralism and improve the learning potential for all students (Mitchell &



Salsbury, 1999). Multicultural education is one of the school transformations approaches within the framework of the social justice and democracy movement. Multicultural education emphasizes different cultural components and groups with the main aim of restructuring schools (Banks & Ambrosion, 2020).

<sup>15</sup> All students acquire to get the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function in an ethnically and racially diverse nation and world. In the 1960s, Multicultural Education (ME) grew out of the Civil Rights Movement. Immigrant African and Americans began a quest for their rights that was stateless in the US (Banks & Banks, 2010) It has historical between African and American ethnic studies movement that emerged in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the globalization era, as human beings, there are multicultural influences on our interaction cultural background, language, belief, value, norms, behavior, knowledge, attitude, gender, age, nationality, and others. In 2017, recent data that Indonesia is a multicultural society country. About 1.330 tribes and 730 languages. It means that is Indonesia has thousand native speakers and thousand-second language speakers. A word is a form of learned behavior and a part of the culture. Intrinsically, language and culture cannot be separated. The meaning is that every part of life is only understandable and learnable when it relates to the language. Every section of life is part of cultural materials and values. These cultural materials and values are deciphered using languages—the correlation between language and culture as the center of interest of many sciences.

<sup>1</sup> We realize that people are different, what is acceptable to one person may not be to others, even though the same culture. Our personality, experience, and knowledge of other cultures, among other factors, influence the extent to which our behavior is typical of our culture as well as the area to which we are flexible in accepting or tolerating behaviors that are not part of our culture. We do not need to go abroad to understand the importance of individual differences and appreciate the reality that understanding the culture in depth is never enough to predict others' behavior. Within our own culture, we are often puzzled by others' behavior and face disagreements, conflicts, and misunderstandings regularly. Bringing cultural differences into a community will pose challenges that are difficult to decipher because of their unclear baseline and initial characteristics. Conflict is a difference between two or more individuals, beliefs, cultures,

values, ideas, or interests. Conflict explains as the behavior due to which people differ in their feelings—there are many disputes connected to racial discrimination. The term racial discrimination means that minority groups, ethnic minorities, religious minorities, older society. All these groups are affected by prejudice. Even conflict can occur more broadly cause of misunderstanding. Conflict closely connected to communication. Communication may be the result of differences in speaking style, nonverbal communication style. A bad connection is a base on misperception and misunderstanding.

Culture creates a framework for humans to learn to regulate thoughts, emotions, and behavior towards the environment. In other words, culture is not innate (Neuliep, 2018).<sup>14</sup> Culture teaches one how to think, conditions on how to feel, and instructs one how to act, primarily how to interact with others; in other words, how to communicate. Culture is not static but is dynamic and continues to grow. Culture becomes exciting<sup>8</sup> and vital in everyday conversation among people from different cultural groups in a multicultural society. Therefore, cultural needs to be presented at schools in Indonesia to students from primary schools to university. This is important because understanding each other from people of different cultures can promote harmony and order in society.

In teaching, a teacher must have passion and interest not only for the subject but also for the students' education. Having great enthusiasm and excitement will create a positive atmosphere in the classroom (Weda et al., 2018), and this is important in the process of teaching and learning (Samad et al., 2018), especially how to know students' cultural understanding in the school. A teacher must also recognize the influence of their cultural background and attitudes on their communication on their students. Therefore, this study aims at providing information about the perception of the lecturers about multicultural education-based instruction in teaching English in Indonesian Islamic Higher Education. This study is expected to have a theoretical and practical contribution. Theoretically, this study can give more benefits to teaching and learning, especially in multicultural education. Besides, the result of this study is expected to be used by further researchers as information and reference in the field of multicultural education.



## Review Of Related Literature

### The Principle of Multicultural Education

The notion of multiculturalism includes the awareness of race, ethnic background, language, sexual orientation, gender, age, disability, social class, education, religious orientation, and other cultural dimensions (American Psychological Association, 2003). Multicultural education encompasses a process of teaching and learning in a way that promotes cultural pluralism. Multicultural Education is subject to the principle of educational equity for all students, regardless of cultural background, language, belief, value, norms, behavior, knowledge, attitude, gender, age, nationality, and others. It tries to remove barriers to educational opportunities and success for all students.

Multicultural Education, sometimes referred to as anti-racist education. Multicultural educational efforts that have attempted to inculcate more positive values about social pluralism and improve the students' potency. Multiculturalism is a movement on the <sup>16</sup> gender, ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity of a pluralistic society that should be attributed to all the standardized education settings, including the staff, the norms and values, the curriculum, and the students. Multiculturalism is relating to some different cultures, the tradition of people, different religions and races, different nationalities, and languages in living together.

<sup>6</sup> Multicultural education begins with the development of ideas and awareness of interculturalism after World War II. The emergence of an idea and interculturalism awareness is not only related to international political events regarding human rights, freedom from colonialism and racial discrimination, and so on but also to the increase of plurality in the Western countries themselves as a result of increased migration of newly independent states to the United States and Europe. The civil rights moment in the United States had a tremendous impact on educational institutions as ethnic groups (first African Americans and then others) demanded that (1) educational institutions' curricula reflect their histories, cultures, and perspectives; (2) schools hire more nonwhite teachers and administrators so that their children would have more successful role models; and (3) ethnic communities control schools and that textbooks reflect to the diversity of peoples in the United States (Sinagatullin, 2003)

Study programs and lectures that are developed should not be without careful thought and planning. Therefore, efforts are needed to make it healthier in education, for example, institutionalizing it in an education system (Banks & Banks, 2013). At present, multicultural education is well-thought-out as a form of education that respects differences and works without discrimination (Kahraman & Sezer, 2017). Education as a process of developing human resources to obtains social capabilities and individual development, which optimally provide a strong relationship between individuals and society. Another crucial aspect of multicultural knowledge is an understanding of how social systems operate for their treatment of culturally diverse groups of people (Toporek et al., 2010).

### **The Characteristics of Multicultural Education**

<sup>18</sup> Multicultural education has several characteristics that hold students together in the educational environment and empower peace and freedom in society. There are several key characteristics of multicultural education in our society (Rata, 2013).

<sup>12</sup> Multicultural education is an ongoing and dynamic process. Hence, it is critical pedagogy because both students and teachers involved in a multicultural teaching and learning process do not view knowledge as neutral and apolitical, multicultural education is anti-racist. Multicultural education is primary because, along with other disciplines, it represents an integral component of education. Multicultural education is pervasive in the overall schooling process. Multicultural education is vital for the majority and minority students. Multicultural education is aiming at school justice (Arslan & Rață, 2013).

Banks and Banks (2004) divide multicultural educations into five dimensions that can be used as a guide by teachers. Students can only share knowledge and values when the teachers apply specific techniques and methods that empower the academic achievements of students from different ethnic and social groups (Nakaya, 2018). <sup>10</sup> These dimensions indicate how multicultural education textbooks and teachers integrate multicultural content and help students to understand prejudice construction, authentic culture, social discrimination, and equity among ethnic groups, and thus develop positive racial attitudes.



The first dimension is content integration, which needs the infusion of ethnic and cultural content into the subject area instruction. However, it may not be necessary to integrate equally multicultural content in different subject areas. The inclusion of ethnic and cultural material may be easily applied to social studies. There may not be so many opportunities for mathematics and sciences. Content integration provides a better understanding of oneself and others, facilitating interactions between oneself and others. The second dimension is knowledge construction is described as a second dimension by Banks.<sup>4</sup> This dimension helps learners understand and determine the influence of cultural assumptions, perspectives, and biases on the way knowledge is constructed within a subject area. Teachers may ask students some questions related to historical, religious, racial, ethnic, political, and sexual perspectives to create knowledge about multicultural ideas.

The third dimension is prejudice reduction.<sup>4</sup> Teachers are required to help students develop expected and tolerant attitudes to different ethnic, racial, religious, and cultural groups. Consequently, students are expected to behave respecting each other both at school and out of school. If this dimension is neglected at school, some misunderstandings may happen among a social group in society. This dimension helps students develop positive feelings about various cultural groups through instructions that give positive images of ethnic people.<sup>7</sup> Equity pedagogy, is the fourth dimension, has some specific goals in facilitating and improving the academic achievement of students from different racial, cultural, gender, religious, and social class groups. This dimension insists on using a variety of teaching styles and approaches congruent with the learning styles of children from different ethnic, religious, and cultural groups. Equity pedagogy is encouraged when teachers teach the learning styles of the various divergent groups and modify them to suit the cultural and social class groups of their students.<sup>4</sup> Teachers should use a combination of a wide variety of teaching styles.

The fifth dimension is empowering school culture, which includes all members of the school staff.<sup>11</sup> Creating or allowing school culture cannot be the responsibility of the principal or teacher alone. A multicultural and robust school culture empowers students from diverse backgrounds and promotes gender, ethnic, religious, and social-class equity. The total school environment must be re-shaped to create and enable an expected school

culture. Empowerment is a process in which the culture of the school promotes equality for students from diverse groups. The procedure includes examining the teachers' ethnic and racial attitudes and the influence of these attitudes on the ethnic students' academic performance.

In order to apply multicultural education successfully in the school environment, the main issue is the school's latent curriculum. The curriculum is a strong part of school culture that communicates school attitudes towards various problems, including how schools treat students. Schools must regulate how schools treat students based on gender, ethnic group, religion, culture and race. Sleeter (2007) explain the goals of multicultural education as follows:

- 1) To acquire the skills, attitudes, and knowledge necessary for increasing an individual's ability to function effectively within a multicultural environment.
- 2) To develop the ability to seek information about the economic, political, and social factors of various cultures.
- 3) To foster the affirmation of all cultures; - To provide individuals with opportunities for experiencing other cultures and recognizing them as a source of learning and growth.
- 4) To build an awareness of an individual's cultural heritage that provides a basis for personal identity.
- 5) To increase tolerance and acceptance of different values, attitudes, and behaviors.

There are two main multicultural perspectives – vertical and horizontal. Vertical Perspective: Multicultural education consists of several enlarging layers. A classroom is a bottom layer; a school is a larger layer and the country as an even larger layer. They are called "class layer," "school layer," "country layer," etc. The multicultural goals of a particular layer may coincide with those of other layers in the hierarchy (Sinagatullin, 2003). Horizontal Perspective, Multicultural education may incorporate a single variable or a diversity of variables in a class, school, country, or larger socio-geographical area. The general idea firmly remains intact: creating equal opportunities and quality education for all students. In one school, teachers may place greater emphasis on ethical issues, in another institution, on teaching children with alternative health, in still another school, on



bilingual education. A rural school may be concerned with a problem of quality education and equal informational opportunities for all students

## Method

This study applied a qualitative method that employs a case study design on multicultural education-based instruction in teaching English for Indonesian Islamic higher education. The case study recognizes the socially constructed nature of knowledge (Lichtman, 2010). The case study enables a researcher to gain a wide range of information and seek the views, beliefs, and perceptions of the study participants. Case studies considered particularly valuable where the research context is too complicated for experimental or survey research. This study applied the descriptive analysis to describe a given situation as thoroughly and carefully as possible. In educational research, the most common descriptive methodology is the survey (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009), as when researchers summarize the characteristics (abilities, preferences, behaviors) of individuals or groups or (sometimes) physical environment (such as schools).

## Research Setting

To explore lecturers' perception of multicultural education in the EFL classroom, the authors conducted this research on the undergraduate program at one of Islamic Public institutions in East Kalimantan, Indonesia. There were fourteen English lecturers participated in this research consist of six male and eight females majoring in English study. The instrument of this research is a questionnaire with a Likert scale adopted the fifteen questions about lecturers' perception of multicultural education (Karacabey, Ozdere, & Bozkus, 2019). The scale was ranging from 1 to 5 scales (1 is Strongly Disagree; 2 is Agree; 3 is neutral; 4 is Agree; 5 is Strongly Agree). The authors sent the participants privately the questionnaire in the form of google form.

## Data Analysis

The data were then analyzed through some steps, namely, data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. We presented the data in the descriptive analysis, as in the findings section. The study was measured based on the multicultural



education indicator, as in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Implemented Multicultural Education Indicator

Score	Indicator
3.5 – 5	Highly Implemented Multicultural Education (HIME)
2.5 – 3.4	Moderately Implemented Multicultural Education (MIME)
1 – 2.4	Lowly Implemented Multicultural Education (LIME)

## Results and Discussions

This study explores the perception of lecturers on multicultural education-based instruction in teaching English in Indonesian Islamic higher education based on their real experiences in the classroom. The data in this study were collected through an online survey utilizing google form. Research results indicate that there were noticeable changes in the way the EFL lecturers perceive their multicultural education-based instruction in classroom teaching. The differences influenced their classroom teaching practices. The interconnection of the EFL lecturers' attitude on multicultural based instruction toward their classroom teaching practices led to three categories.

### Highly Implemented Multicultural Education (HIME)

Of the 15 total items that were responded by 14 participants in this study, 9 items included the HIME category. This signifies that participants implemented multicultural education in their teaching process. Items that are implemented maximally by participants can be traced obviously. More details, nine items can be seen in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Highly Implemented Multicultural Education (HIME)

No	Item Code	Items	Participants														Average Score
			P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	P14	
1	1	Teaching methods are adapted to suit students' culturally diverse needs.	3	4	3	3	4	3	4	3	5	4	4	4	5	5	3.9

2	2	Teacher should be aware of the cultural differences that exist in the classroom	3	3	4	5	5	4	3	3	4	3	3	5	4	3	3.7
3	3	it important to teach a culturally diverse student	4	3	4	3	4	4	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	5	3.8
4	4	Teachers can learn a lot from students who have a culturally diverse background	5	4	4	3	5	3	3	5	4	5	3	3	5	4	4
5	6	Multicultural awareness training can help teachers work more effectively with a diverse cultural community	2	4	5	4	4	3	5	5	4	5	3	4	3	3	3.9
6	7	Teacher should be aware of the cultural background difference in the class	3	4	3	5	4	5	4	4	4	5	3	4	3	4	3.9
7	11	Teachers are responsible for being aware of their students' cultural background	4	4	5	5	4	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	5	4	4
8	13	Teachers responsible for encouraging students to be proud one to be proud of his or her own culture	4	4	3	3	4	4	5	5	3	4	5	4	3	4	3.9
9	15	Today's curriculum should emphasize on multiculturalism and diversity	4	4	4	5	3	4	3	5	3	4	4	3	4	5	3.9

Table 2 above shows that the methods applied by lecturers in teaching should be adapted to the needs of diverse students. Lecturers should be aware of cultural differences in the classroom and feel important to teach them. Lecturers can also get a lot of information from students who come from various cultural backgrounds. Therefore, training on multicultural consciousness can help lecturers to work more effectively in diverse cultural communities. Teachers should also demonstrate a responsible attitude to encourage their students to take pride in their own culture and appreciate the culture of others. This should all be supported by a curriculum that emphasizes multiculturalism (Muhammad et al., 2019; Richardson et al., 2016; Sleeter and Carmona, 2017).

### Moderately Implemented Multicultural Education (MIME)

This study also attracted us because of the five items where the lecturers showed a hesitant attitude in implementing a multicultural education. Lecturers are disputed whether to answer “Agree” or otherwise “Disagree.” These five items can be viewed in table 3 below.

Table 3. Moderately Implemented Multicultural Education (MIME)

No	Item Code	Items	Participants														Average Score
			P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	P14	
1	5	The teacher's work becomes more valuable if the class differs culturally	3	3	4	4	2	4	5	3	1	5	3	4	2	5	3.4
2	8	Teachers should encourage the students to be aware of the multicultural difference	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	4	3	3	4	4	3.4
3	9	Teachers are required to take multicultural education	2	3	5	4	3	3	4	4	3	3	4	3	4	3	3.4
4	10	the teacher should address the needs of the culturally diverse students	3	3	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	4	4	3.4
5	14	Communication style is always associated as a matter of behavior	3	4	4	3	4	4	3	2	2	4	3	4	3	4	3.4

Lecturers are unconfident if the work as teaching in the classroom becomes more valuable if the students differ culturally. Some lecturers in this study also seemed hesitant to encourage students to be aware of the multicultural differences. In addition, lecturers also seemed reluctant if they were obliged to take a multicultural education. Lecturers are also less assured if they are required to meet all students' needs from various cultural backgrounds. Lecturers are also cautious about responding about whether communication styles are often interpreted as behavioral problems. It may be because communication



styles are heavily influenced by cultural backgrounds (Ting-Toomey & Dorjee, 2018), not just individual behaviors or characters.

### Lowly Implemented Multicultural Education (LIME)

The third aspect of the study was that there was 1 item that the lecturers disagreed. Although there are some lecturers who hesitate to respond to this item, but overall, the lecturers disagree with this item in multicultural education implementation issues. Items that convince almost all lecturers in this study answered “Disagree” can be seen in the following table 4.

Table 4. Lowly Implemented Multicultural Education (LIME)

No	Item Code	Item	Participants														Average Score
			P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	P14	
1	12	Classes are culturally different making teacher work more difficult	3	3	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	1	2	1	2.4

According to table 4 above, this study shows that lecturers disagree with the assumption that the cultural differences in the classroom complicate lecturers' work. This actually shows that the lecturer demonstrates the attitude of their students' cultural differences in carrying out their teaching duties in the classroom. Thus, the lecturer said that the task of teaching in the school is obviously not become more difficult just because of the difference in the cultural background of the students. In other words, the cultural differences in the classroom are the aspects that make the lectures' work difficult. The culturally diverse needs counseling (Sue, Sue, Neville, & Smith, 2019).

### Conclusion

This study indicates that the more positive of the lecturer toward their multicultural based instruction, the better the teaching performance they have in the Indonesian EFL classroom. This study has short of expanding on the scholarly understanding of multicultural based instruction in teaching English at Indonesian Islamic higher education. Indonesia is a nation that has various ethnicities, religions, classes, races, and social classes. Multicultural as in developed countries, although composed of

a variety of diversity, each nation has a background in developing multicultural education (Sinagatullin, 2003). This background determines how multicultural education is carried out.

To develop Indonesia, the idea of multiculturalism becomes a strategic issue, which is an urgent demand. Indonesia is a nation that was born with multiculturalism, where culture cannot be seen only as a glorified wealth but must be placed regarding survival as a nation. In the Indonesian context, multicultural education is a necessity, not a choice anymore. In it, the management of diversity and all the positive and negative potentials are carried out so that diversity is not a threat or a problem, but rather a source or positive impetus for the development and common good as a nation.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

One of the examples of efforts to develop multicultural education is local-based curriculum development. However, multicultural education only prepares students with their own ethnic, cultural awareness. The purpose of multicultural education is to prepare students with knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed in their ethnic, cultural environment, national culture, and among other ethnic cultures (Banks and Ambrosion, 2020). Education as the development of cultural awareness like this is still in the level of multicultural awareness that is only on the surface.

The fact that Indonesia has diversity is undeniable. Finally, for the development of national plurality, multicultural education in Indonesia seems to consider several things. First, multicultural education presents or provides a broad place for the processing of diversity or diversity of the nation. Second, multicultural education bases itself on Pancasila as the best choice in the variety of the Indonesian people. Third, multicultural education bases itself on the socio-political, economic, and cultural aspects of Indonesia. Fourth, multicultural education requires appropriate learning methods so that internalization of values can be realized properly

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