

# THE RELEVANCE OF PICTURES AS MEDIA IN THEMATIC LEARNING BOOK WITH PLURALISM VALUES IN INDONESIA

Suwardi<sup>1</sup>  
Sri Anitah W.<sup>2</sup>  
Muhammad Akhyar<sup>3</sup>  
Asrowi<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Education Program of Study, Universitas Sebelas Maret Surakarta  
Email: suwardi\_imam@yahoo.com

<sup>2</sup>Education Technology Program of Study, Universitas Sebelas Maret Surakarta

<sup>3</sup>Mechanical Engineering Education Program of Study, Universitas Sebelas Maret Surakarta

<sup>4</sup>Education and Counseling Program of Study, Universitas Sebelas Maret Surakarta

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**Abstract:** Indonesian people are very plural in ethnics, races and religions. In Indonesia, there are about 931 ethnics, 731 local languages, and 6 religions. This situation may cause horizontal conflicts in Indonesia. Historically, there were some outstanding communal conflicts in Indonesia, happening in Ambon, Maluku, Poso, Kalimantan, Sampang Madura, Cikeusik Banten, Papua, Nusa Tenggara, Talang Sari Samarinda, etc. Education has a strategic role to prevent the conflicts among people by implementing the pluralism values to students. This study aims to investigate the relevance of pictures in the thematic learning book for the first grade students of elementary school with the pluralism values in Indonesia. This is a descriptive quantitative research. The objects of this research are pictures as media in the thematic learning book used by the students in the first grade of elementary school. There are 222 set of pictures. Picture in one page is considered as a set of picture. The data are analyzed in a descriptive statistic way using percentile formula. The findings of this research show that there are 128 (57.66%) pictures in the learning book are relevant to the values of ethnic and religion plurality.

**Keywords:** Pictures As Media; Textbook, Thematic Learning; Plurality; Pluralism Values

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## Introduction

Indonesian people are very plural in ethnics, races, religions and languages. Taum (2006:1) states that Indonesia has the characteristics as multiethnic country. In Indonesia, there are about 931 ethnics and 731 local languages. On the other hand, Widiastuti (2013:10) argues that in Indonesia, there are more than 1.128 ethnics spreading all over thousand of islands in Indonesia from Sabang to Merauke. Ethnics with great number of people are Java, Sunda, Madura, Malay,

Balinese, Minangkabau, Batak, Dayak, Bugis, and China. The government recognizes six official religions; they are Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism.

The plurality of the Indonesian may cause conflicts among ethnics, religions, races or other social groups which might threaten the integration of the country (Najwan, 2009: 195; Widiastuti, 2013: 8). Several works have reported the existence of any conflicts in Indonesia which were caused by religion and ethnic differences. There are three outstanding communal conflicts happened in Indonesia. Firstly, it is a religious conflict between Muslims and Protestants in Ambon and Maluku. Secondly, it is still a religious conflict which happened in Poso, Sulawesi. The third conflict is an ethnical conflict between Dayak and Madura ethnical group in Kalimantan. Beside those three big conflicts, there are also several minor conflicts, among others are conflict in Sampang Madura, Conflict in Cikeusik Banten, conflict in Papua, Conflict Nusa Tenggara, and Conflict in Talang Sari Samarinda (Humaedi, 2014:150, Kusuma, 2014:1; Ruslikan, 2001:1; Bahari, 2008:1).

It will be ineffective to resolve ethnical and religious conflicts in Indonesia through formal law legalized by the government (Bahari, 2008:4). According to Azar in Humaedi, (2014: 152), one solution to stop conflict is by respecting the identities of other communities, regardless whether they are major or minor communities. In addition, it is also necessary for those communities to have an open accessed dialogue from the grassroots. Humaedi (2014:160) adds that almost all conflicts steered by ethical issues are related to the spirit of narrow ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism is way of thinking which places their own community as the center of everything and becomes the benchmark in assessing other communities. Every community is assumed to build their own pride and esteem. Then, they feel superior and think that their own community is the right one and underestimate the others. To prevent the ethnical and religious conflicts caused by ethnocentrism, teachers can implement the pluralism values to students. Understanding about plurality in learning will not only prevent conflict but also to ease students to adapt to other ethnics. Pawanteh (2015:515) and Ahmad et al (2015:390) state that students having other cultural identity need to be negotiated strengthened in daily communication.

Educating pluralism values will be much more effective if presented in a textbook. Some related opinions and researches indicate that textbooks have a great impact on the construction of the students' attitude and knowledge (Franzolin & Bizzo, 2015: 224; Aslan, 2010: 880; Badea & Iridon, 2015: 303; Atay & Danju, 2012: 65; Mahmood, Iqbal, & Saeed, 2009: 2; Pešikan in Marinkoviü & Eriü, 2014: 73; Sovič & Hus, 2015: 495; Bujorean, 2015: 508). Therefore, textbook content needs to be well-structured, including images displayed in textbooks. Ma (2015: 34) concludes that pictures have a superior effect, because the pictures can make it easier for the students to understand and remember the inputs (materials) rather than texts exposure only. It shows that pictures as media in the textbook have strategic role in the implementation of pluralism values in Indonesia. This current research, however, investigates the relevance of pictures as media in the thematic learning book used in the elementary schools with the pluralism values in Indonesia.

## **Literature Review**

Some scholars define the concept of plurality and pluralism differently. Pluralism is also different from the concept of diversity. According to Kamali (2009:28), "Pluralism is not the same as diversity. People of different religious or cultural backgrounds may well be present in a place, but unless they actively engage with one another, there is no pluralism. Similarly,

pluralism does not simply aim at tolerance of the other but entails active effort to gain an understanding of the other”.

According to Ryandi (2013:253), there are two definitions of pluralism. Firstly, pluralism is the existence within society of diverse groups, as in religion, race, or ethnic origin, which contribute to the cultural matrix of the society while retaining their distinctive characters. Secondly, pluralism is “No view is true, or that all views are equally true”. From the first definition, it can be seen that tolerance is still held by the community who believe in their own principles. On the other hand, from the second definition, pluralism deals with relativism.

Indonesia as multi-ethnicities and multi-religions requires an education that encourages pluralism values for the students. This is prominent since the conflicts in Indonesia are primarily caused by the existing differences in ethnical background as well as religions. Koentjaraningrat in Widiastuti (2013: 11) states conflicts between ethnicities and religions can be triggered by several factors, at least five factors. They are 1) competition among ethnics in finding jobs; 2) cultural coercion among ethnics; 3) religious coercion among ethnics; 4) one ethnic threatens other ethnics with political domination; 5) custom conflict among ethnics.

Ethnical and religious differences may cause cultural differences. When there are differences on the cultural values, sociocultural values and psycho-cultural values, there will be potential prejudice from one ethnic to other ethnics. Soeleman in Bahari, (2008:3), argues that there are several conditions which cause the raising of prejudice. They are 1) competition among communities; 2) community with tense and poor relationship; 3) there is one group underestimate other groups; 4) frustration which might cause a particular ethnic is blamed for something; 5) there is a conflict about standardized moral or norms among ethnics; 6) there is a situation where the major ethnic underestimates minor community.

Many times, ethnical and religious conflicts are caused by cultural differences which ended in miscommunication (Kusuma, 2014:1-2). One example is a conflict happened in Talang Sari housing. This conflict was steered by difference in ideas, misunderstanding in communication, the existence of affected group and the sensitive feeling. The way to communicate is much influenced by one’s culture such as the language, the norms and the customs.

The implementation of pluralism values to students needs an appropriate media which may influence on how to shape the students’ attitude and behavior. According to Oso & Akhagba (2014:177), media is not free from values. In addition, Awang and Khambali (2015:48) argues that media is one aspect of communication which is very crucial in human life. Therefore, media can influence human behavior, life and norms, thus media is an important factor in shaping human way of thinking, behavior and norms. Dealing with this, Awang and Khambali (2015:48) add that things included as media are film, video, radio, pictures, poster, etc.

Students in elementary school level are easy to understand a concept through pictures. Ma (2016:34) argues that pictures have positive effects for students in learning because by looking at pictures, students will understand a concept of a thing easily and they will remember the pictures easier than remember a string of words as a concept. Thus, the implementation of pluralism values in Indonesia will be more effective if the materials in the teaching learning process are visualized through pictures containing pluralism values.

## Research Methodology

This is a descriptive quantitative research. The objects of this research are pictures as media in the thematic learning book used by the students in the first grade of elementary school. The thematic learning book used is based on Curriculum 2013 published by the National Education Department. There are 222 set of pictures. The types of pictures being investigated are limited to human and objects. Both can be associated (or stereotypical) with certain ethnicities and religions. For example, picture of a girl with veil can be considered in relation with Islamic girl, curly hair is a stereotype of Papuan hair. Furthermore, the images of objects can also be related to certain ethnicities and religions. For example, a mosque belongs to Muslim, ethnical houses can also be investigated their cultural relation with certain ethnicities. On the other hand, any pictures related to numbers, letters, boxes, animals, and plants are excluded from further investigation. They have no meaningful association with certain ethnicity or religion, so that they are lack of pluralism signs. For example, pictures of number have no association with any particular ethnicity or religion, since the same meaning remains the same. Likewise, pictures of letters, boxes, animals and plants are not identical with any particular religion or ethnicity. The collected data are then analyzed in a descriptive statistic way using percentile formula.





## Results and Discussion

The findings of this results show that among the 222 pictures as media in the thematic learning book used by the students of the first grade in elementary schools, 128 pictures (57.66%) are relevant to the values of ethnical pluralism and religious pluralism. Pictures which are relevant to those values include pictures of humans and things. Further discussion about types of pictures is discussed in the next section.

### *Pictures of Human and Pluralism Values*

Pictures of humans are relevant to the values of ethnical pluralism and religious pluralism. Pictures of human which represent those values are 1) pictures of human hair, 2) pictures of human clothes, 3) pictures of human names, 4) pictures of traditional dance.

**Table 1: Pictures of human describing Pluralism**

No	Type	Picture	Description
1	Hair		The image of human hairs shows an ethnical plurality. The curly hair is identical with Papua people, while straight hair is identical with Chinese or ethnics from Western Indonesia.
2	Clothes		The picture of human clothes shows religious plurality. The picture of the veiled girl is stereotypical with the adherents of Islam, while another image (no veil) is stereotypical of non Muslim.
3	Name		The image of human names shows ethnical plurality. For example, Siti is a name which sounds so Javanese.
4	Ethnical dance		The drawn dance shows an ethnical plurality. For example, Topeng dance owned by Betawi ethnic, while Gantar dance owned by an ethnic in kalimantan, and so on.

### ***Pictures of Human Hair***

Pictures of human hair can be used to identify one's ethnic in Indonesia. There are 95 (42.79%) pictures out of 222 showing the shape of human hair. The shape of the hair shows their identity, for example, a person with straight hair is a Chinese, while a person with curly hair is possibly from East Indonesia, such as Ambon and Papua. A person with wavy hair is possibly the Javanese. Thus, it is clear that the shape of hair shows one's ethnical identity in Indonesia.

### ***Pictures of Human Clothes***

Pictures of human clothes in this research are limited to the traditional clothes which are usually worn by different ethnics in Indonesia. That is why human clothes can be used to identify their ethnical characters. Among the 222 pictures in this research, there are 7 (3.15%) pictures show the traditional clothes. Also, there are 68 (30.63%) pictures of clothes here can also be used to identify one's religion. For example, a person with veil is identified as female Muslim, while a person with squared head cover is identified as female priest. Also, for a person wearing yellowish clothes with bald head, he is a Buddhist.

### ***Pictures of Human Names***

Hamid, Abu, & Zulkifley (2015:171) report that in communication between Malay and Non-Malay students, different personal pronouns were used. Such a case is also possible to happen among the Indonesian students. The finding of this research shows that different pronouns or names may show different ethnics. For example, a student from Batak might call their Batak friends using their ethnical name (*marga*). Also a student from Bali has their own names (e.g. *Wayan* and *Ketut*) base on the order of children in their family. Similarly, a Javanese student might call their friend using different way of the Batak or Balinese do. Thus, it is clear that the use of human names is possible to give identification for a certain ethnic in Indonesia. In this research, there are 7 (3.15%) pictures showing human names in the thematic learning textbook.



### ***Pictures of Traditional Dance***

Traditional dance can show a particular ethnic in Indonesia (Sustiawati, 2011:134). For example, the Javanese has a famous traditional dance *gambyong* while the Balinese has *Kecak* as the popular traditional dance. In this research, there are 5 (2.25%) pictures showing traditional dance.

### ***Pictures of Things and Pluralism Values***

Pictures as media in the textbook of thematic learning used by the students of the first grade in Elementary schools are also relevant to the values of religious and ethnical pluralism. The relevant pictures includes 1) pictures of musical instrument; 2) pictures of traditional housing and 3) pictures of prayer rooms/buildings

**Table 2: Pictures of things describing pluralism**

No	Type	Picture	Description
1	Musical instruments	 <p style="text-align: center;">gong      gamelan      sasando suling      rebana      tifa</p>	The picture of the instrument shows the plurality of ethnicity and religion. Images of gamelan musical instruments can be related to Java ethnic, while Sasando can refer to ethnic outside Java. Images of Rebana musical instruments can be associated with Islamic religion
2	Traditional houses		The images of houses show ethnical plurality from various ethnical groups in Indonesia



Gambar tempat ibadah di samping menunjukkan pluralitas agama. Misalnya, gambar masjid distereotipkan identik dengan agama Islam, gambar gereja distereotipkan identik dengan agama kristen, dan seterusnya.

The picture of prayer venues shows religious plurality. For example, the mosque belongs to Muslim for prayer and the church belongs to Christian people, and so on.

### ***Pictures of Traditional Musical Instruments***

Pictures of traditional musical instruments are also relevant to the ethnical and religious pluralism values in Indonesia. Almost every region in Indonesia has distinctive musical instruments which differentiate them from other region. For example, the Javanese has *Karawitan* musical instruments which become the identity of the Javanese. In this research, there are 7 (3.15%) pictures showing the traditional musical instruments. Beside showing the ethnical identity, pictures of musical instruments also show the religious plurality. In Islamic musical arts, there is a set of *Terbangan* which other 5 religion do not have. However, the number of such a picture in this research is only one (0,45 %).

### ***Pictures of Traditional Housings***

Almost every ethnic in Indonesia has their own traditional housing. It gives identity to which ethnic they are. Thus, it can be said that traditional housing becomes the one identity of ethnical plurality in Indonesia. For the Javanese, they have *Joglo* as the traditional form of a house with a particular architecture. Different from Javanese, in Padang, the housing is called *Rumah Gadang* which is totally different from the architecture of *Joglo*. In this research, there is only one picture (0.45%) showing a traditional house.

### ***Pictures of Prayer Rooms/Buildings***

In Indonesia, prayer rooms or buildings have different architecture showing the identity of the religion. Thus, they can be marked to refer to religious pluralism in Indonesia. In this research, there are 2 (0.9%) pictures out of 222 showing the prayer rooms or building.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this research has successfully shown that there are 128 (57.66%) pictures as media in the thematic learning book for the first grade of elementary students are relevant to the ethnical and religious pluralism values in Indonesia, while 94 (42,34 %) pictures are not relevant. The relevant pictures include picture of human and pictures of thing. Pictures of human which are relevant to the values are pictures of human hair, pictures of human clothes, pictures of human names, and pictures of traditional dances. While pictures of thing which are relevant to the values are pictures of traditional musical instrument, pictures of traditional housing and pictures of prayer rooms or building. The most frequent pictures showing ethnical and religious pluralism values in this thematic learning book are pictures of human hair 95 (42,79 %), while the least frequent are picture of traditional housing 1 (0,45 %) out of 222 pictures.

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