

ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' MULTICULTURAL BACKGROUNDS ON DRAMA PERFORMANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how multicultural backgrounds influence drama performances among fifth semester English Department students at University Pasir Pengaraian. This study uses the qualitative methods. The instrumentation of this study such as questionnaires and performance documentation. The research shows how multicultural backgrounds shape students' engagement and perspectives in drama. The key findings indicate that cultural research enriches drama scripts, multicultural experiences enhance character development, and participation in diverse drama performances reduces prejudice and fosters empathy. Inclusive pedagogy and effective techniques ensure equitable participation, promoting inclusion, solidarity, and respect for diversity. Overall, the study highlights the positive influence of multicultural education on students' cultural awareness and attitudes, emphasizing the importance of integrating diverse perspectives to enrich artistic expression and foster an inclusive learning environment.

Keywords: Multicultural Background, Drama Performance, Character Development, Voice Adaptation, Improvisation

INTRODUCTION

Multiculturalism in an academic context is the embodiment of an environment where students from various cultural backgrounds converge and interact. This interaction takes place within universities, which serve as platforms for the unity and integration of diverse cultural groups, ensuring that the rights and social statuses of individuals are respected (Sutiah, 2015). Multiculturalism

is not just a philosophical concept but often perceived as an ideology advocating for the harmony of different cultural entities within an educational setting.

The essence of multiculturalism lies in the presence and interaction of individuals from different nationalities and cultural backgrounds. These backgrounds encompass a range of factors such as family heritage, education, social and

racial background, financial standing, and professional experience. Family heritage, for instance, includes the values, traditions, and experiences inherited from one's family, while education spans both formal and informal learning received by an individual. Social and racial background pertains to aspects like social status, ethnic or racial group membership, and related experiences. Financial standing involves one's economic situation, including income and assets. Professional experience encompasses employment history and career accomplishments. These elements collectively shape a person's background, influencing their worldview and interactions with others. Therefore, multiculturalism is essentially about integrating people with varied nationalities, cultures, and backgrounds, fostering a harmonious coexistence.

Drama, as a form of literary work, plays a crucial role in expressing and exploring cultural diversity. According to Mulyadi (2018), drama consists of dialogues and character actions intended for stage performances, offering an immersive theatrical experience that enriches understanding of diverse cultures and themes. The influence of a multicultural background in drama is

significant, as it reflects students' comprehension and appreciation of diversity through their performances. According to Mavroudis & Bournelli, (2019), drama in education is an approach that utilizes creativity and freedom to investigate social and political issues, such as cultural coexistence, by fostering communication behaviors rooted in universally accepted human values.

In the context of drama performances by fifth semester students of the English Department at the University of Pasir Pengaraian, the interplay between multicultural backgrounds and drama is evident. The performances of dramas like "Beauty and the Beast" and "The Sandbox" provide a platform for students to explore and integrate diverse cultural elements, despite the narratives being rooted in Western culture. Through these performances, students can learn about cultural values, norms, and traditions, finding relevance and depth in the characters and themes presented, thereby enhancing their understanding of cultural diversity.

This study aims to investigate how multicultural backgrounds influence the quality and success of drama performances by fifth semester students. Special attention is given to students from

different ethnic backgrounds, such as Malay, Javanese, Batak, and Minang tribes. Previous research indicates that elements like cultural diversity and life experiences significantly shape students' interpretations and expressions in the performing arts (Azizah & Muslih, 2019; Eripuddin et al., 2022) highlight the impact of multicultural learning on students' social development and drama performance, respectively, suggesting that intercultural learning materials contribute to a deeper understanding of dramatic expressions.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES

2.1. Drama Performance

Based on the collected literature, drama performances encompass a multifaceted pedagogical approach that accommodates diverse learning styles and intelligences. According to Anton and Prochazka (Yuliani, 2020), drama integrates cognitive, emotional, and sensory dimensions, thereby enhancing comprehension and retention beyond conventional teaching methods. This inclusive method fosters individual creativity and collective collaboration, blurring boundaries between personal and shared imaginative realms (Hudson, 2015). Moreover, van de Water (2021) emphasizes the process-oriented nature of

The objectives of this research are twofold: to determine the extent to which multicultural backgrounds influence the quality of drama performances and to identify specific cultural factors that enhance or challenge student engagement in drama. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for researchers, students, and readers, offering a comprehensive understanding of the influence of multicultural backgrounds on drama performances in higher education..

drama, highlighting its transformative impact through active engagement of mind, body, and heart in the creative journey. By embracing drama, educators not only facilitate academic learning but also nurture holistic development through self-expression and communal interaction.

The elements of drama production elucidate its structured yet dynamic nature (Wiyanto, 2002). Scripts lay out the story with dialogue, characters, and themes, while directors bring the performance to life by shaping the setting, managing the cast, and handling details like makeup and costumes. Actors, under the director's guidance, perform on carefully designed stages that combine sound, lighting, and

audience interaction to enhance the drama. This teamwork highlights drama as not only an art form but also an educational tool, providing immersive and expressive learning experiences.

2.2. Multicultural Backgrounds

Based on the literature reviewed, multiculturalism represents a dynamic societal framework that celebrates the coexistence of diverse ethnic and cultural groups Berry in (Celenk & Van de Vijver, 2011). This concept not only underscores the richness of global social landscapes but also fosters tolerance and diversity as catalysts for societal enrichment. In educational contexts, multiculturalism promotes inclusive learning environments where students from varied backgrounds engage in mutual learning and appreciation of different perspectives James A. Banks in (John Wiley & Sons, 2016). This inclusive approach extends to the performing arts, where multicultural backgrounds serve as a wellspring of artistic inspiration and thematic diversity (Maddux et al., 2021). By integrating multicultural elements, performing artists enrich their narratives with broader cultural insights, facilitating deeper audience engagement and fostering

cultural understanding across communities.

The influence of multicultural backgrounds on specific cultural groups such as Malay, Javanese, Batak, Sudanese, and Minang further illustrates how cultural diversity shapes societal dynamics and individual identities. Each group's unique cultural heritage influences daily interactions, language usage, traditional practices, and values (Marzuki, 2017); Reniwati, Noviatry, Aslinda, 2011; Sagala, 2021; Santoso, 2014). This diversity not only enriches cultural exchanges through festivals, cuisine, and art but also contributes to a complex societal identity that values inclusivity and mutual respect. Moreover, multicultural backgrounds play a pivotal role in shaping educational opportunities and skill development, reflecting the impact of cultural diversity on personal growth and community cohesion. Overall, multiculturalism fosters inclusive communities where diverse cultural backgrounds coexist harmoniously, promoting social cohesion and enriching global perspectives on cultural identity and diversity.

2.2. Multicultural Backgrounds Concept

Based on the insights from James A. Banks, a prominent figure in multicultural education, multiculturalism encompasses various dimensions crucial for educational practice (John Wiley & Sons, 2016). These dimensions include content integration, where students incorporate examples and materials from their own cultural backgrounds to enrich their learning experiences and broaden their perspectives. The knowledge construction process emphasizes understanding how cultural contexts shape the creation and interpretation of knowledge, challenging students to critically analyze biases and perspectives

.METHODS

In this study, a qualitative research design was employed to explore the influence of multicultural backgrounds on the participation of fifth-semester students from the English Study Program at the University of Pasir Pengaraian in drama performances. The research was conducted at the university, focusing on students who participated in dramas such as "Beauty and the Beast" and "The Sandbox." Purposive sampling was

inherent in educational content. Additionally, prejudice reduction efforts aim to foster mutual understanding and collaboration among students from diverse backgrounds, promoting inclusivity and respect within educational settings. Equality pedagogy ensures fair and inclusive learning environments by adapting teaching methods to accommodate diverse cultural identities and learning styles, thus empowering students to succeed academically. Ultimately, multicultural backgrounds in education not only facilitate intercultural exchanges that enhance learning but also nurture a deeper appreciation for global realities and diverse perspectives among students.

utilized to select participants based on their involvement in drama performances and diverse cultural backgrounds, ensuring representation across different ethnicities and cultural traditions.

Data collection involves two main methods: questionnaires and documentation. A questionnaire was developed to gather insight into students' multicultural backgrounds, their experiences with dramatic performance,

and perceptions regarding cultural integration in their roles. This questionnaire included open-ended questions to provide detailed responses regarding the influence of cultural background on their drama performance. Apart from that, documentation through video recordings of drama performances is real evidence of student participation and the cultural dynamics that occur during rehearsals and performances.

The data analysis technique uses a qualitative descriptive approach. Researchers analyzed open-ended questionnaire responses to identify themes related to how multicultural backgrounds influence students' engagement and perspectives in drama performance. This analysis aims to reveal patterns in how students integrate diverse cultural elements into their performances, the

challenges they face, and the outcomes in interpersonal dynamics and artistic expression. Drama performance documentation provides visual and contextual data to complement the questionnaire findings, offering a comprehensive understanding of the role of multiculturalism in shaping students' experiences in the dramatic performing arts.

Overall, this mixed-methods approach facilitated a nuanced exploration of the relationship between multicultural backgrounds and drama participation among university students. By combining qualitative insights from questionnaires with visual documentation, the study aimed to contribute to the broader understanding of how cultural diversity enriches educational and artistic experiences within university settings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study investigates the impact of multicultural backgrounds on drama performances among fifth-semester students in the English Study Program at the University of Pasir Pengaraian, focusing on productions of "Beauty and the Beast" and "The Sandbox." The

findings are based on questionnaire responses and performance documentation.

A. Content Integration and Script/Purpose.

Integrating diverse cultural backgrounds into dramatic performances is a multifaceted process requiring research, collaboration, and authenticity. Students emphasized the importance of respectful

collaboration and feedback during rehearsals to ensure accurate and nuanced cultural depictions. This approach not only enhances inclusivity but also aligns with universal values promoted in multicultural education. Challenges include balancing multiple cultures in a coherent narrative, which students address through thorough research and dialogue. Clear and structured scripts facilitate deeper character exploration and cohesive performances, contributing to the authenticity and quality of the production.

B. Knowledge Construction Process, Voice, and Memorization/Improvisation.

The knowledge construction process in character development for drama performances is significantly influenced by students' multicultural backgrounds. Personal experiences and extensive research enable students to create authentic characters, while adapting voice and improvisational techniques enriches their performances. By integrating cultural perspectives, students deepen their understanding of diverse narratives within their group, enhancing the overall quality and dynamics of their dramatic portrayals.

C. Prejudice Reduction and Facial Expression/Body Language.

Participation in multicultural drama performances fosters empathy and reduces

prejudice among students. Collaborating in a diverse environment challenges preconceptions and promotes openness towards cultural differences. Creating an inclusive environment through cultural sensitivity workshops and team-building activities enhances mutual respect and cohesion among group members. Authentic portrayal of cultural traits through facial expressions and body language not only breaks stereotypes but also builds empathy and understanding, contributing to cohesive and impactful performances.

D. Equality Pedagogy and Blocking.

Equity-focused teaching methods and careful blocking strategies are crucial to ensure fair opportunities for students with diverse cultural backgrounds. Teachers and directors use inclusive approaches to assign roles based on skills and encourage clear communication, creating an environment that values cultural diversity. Continuous assessment and adjustment of teaching techniques are necessary to support various learning styles and ensure all students can participate and succeed in drama activities. Strategic blocking enhances the clarity and visual appeal of performances by aligning actors' movements with their characters' intentions and the themes of the play.

E. Empowerment of School Culture and Social Structure and Audience.

Multicultural backgrounds enhance drama performances by encouraging inclusivity, unity, and appreciation for diversity among participants. By incorporating diverse cultural elements, performances not only enrich the story but also foster deeper understanding and respect. Audience involvement confirms the authenticity of cultural portrayals, prompting discussions and reflections that extend beyond the stage. Multicultural drama not only entertains but also educates and motivates audiences to embrace cultural diversity and its richness.

This study aligns with previous research, such as that of (K, 2021), which emphasizes the positive impact of multicultural education on students' cultural awareness and attitudes. Integrating diverse cultural elements into scripts and performances enhances authenticity and enriches the theatrical experience, reflecting universal values of respect and inclusivity. The knowledge construction process, facilitated by

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the comprehensive analysis and findings from this study, several conclusions can be drawn regarding the influence of multicultural backgrounds on

personal insights and research, allows students to develop nuanced character portrayals that resonate authentically with diverse cultural narratives.

Moreover, participation in multicultural drama performances promotes empathy and reduces prejudice by fostering open dialogue and cultural understanding among students. Creating inclusive environments through equity pedagogy and strategic blocking ensures fair participation and enhances overall performance quality. These findings highlight the transformative potential of drama education in cultivating empathy, cultural appreciation, and collaborative skills among students from diverse backgrounds.

In conclusion, multicultural drama performances not only serve as platforms for artistic expression but also as catalysts for social change and cultural appreciation. By embracing diversity and promoting inclusivity, universities can enrich their educational programs and empower students to become more empathetic global citizens.

drama performances among fifth-semester students in the English Department at the University of Pasir Pengaraian. First, extensive cultural research enhances the

development of drama scripts, making them well-written and culturally sensitive, which improves the overall performance quality. Second, multicultural backgrounds significantly enrich character development by allowing students to draw on personal and cultural experiences, promoting empathy and cultural sensitivity. Third, participation in multicultural drama performances reduces prejudice and fosters empathy among students, encouraging open communication and mutual respect. Fourth, the use of inclusive pedagogy and effective blocking techniques ensures equitable

participation and opportunities for all students, enhancing the overall quality of performances. Lastly, the incorporation of diverse cultural elements promotes inclusion, solidarity, and respect for diversity, benefiting both performers and audiences. In conclusion, multicultural education positively influences students' cultural awareness and attitudes in drama, highlighting the importance of integrating diverse perspectives to enrich artistic expression and foster an inclusive learning environment.

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