

## **Primary Students' Perception towards Cultural Differences in The School Environment**

**Yeny Prastiwi(1)**

Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta  
yp252@ums.ac.id

**Dwi Haryanti(2)**

Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta  
Dwi.Harjanti@ums.ac.id

DOI: 10.23917/varidika.v32i2.12055

---

Submission Track:	ABSTRACT
Received: 20 October 2020	<i>This article aims at uncovering how the elementary students' responses to cultural differences. The students as the object of the present research is from four different Islamic schools. In this sense, the students are getting used socialize with homogeneous culture. This research was conducted through participatory action research where the member of the research she is a foreigner – Japanese and student of BIPA (Indonesian Language for foreign speaker) program – introduces her culture to six grade students (eleven to twelve years old children). The research data was collected through questionnaires.</i>
Final Revision: 20 November 2020	
Available online: 24 December 2020	
Corresponding Author: Yeny Prastiwi(1) yp252@ums.ac.id	
Dwi Haryanti(2) Dwi.Harjanti@ums.ac.id	
	<i>The result of the study indicated by the collected questionnaire shows that most of the students: fifty-eight form seventy-seven students like to the introduction of foreign culture, particularly conducted by foreign people. They are happy with the foreign people in their school introducing in Japanese culture, such as short lyrics Japanese song. Students' active participation in class activity perceived as their acceptation or positive manner to foreign culture in their school environment.</i>
	<i>Keywords: cultural differences, BIPA, foreign culture, cultural perception</i>

---

## INTRODUCTION

In its concern of improving the quality of diplomatic relationship with other countries worldwide, the Indonesian government chooses language and cultural diplomacy. Offering scholarships to youngsters around the world namely Darmasiswa Republik Indonesia (DRI) and KNB (Kemitraan Negara Berkembang) (Kemendikbud, 2013). Any youths around the world are allowed to obtain the former relationship as it targets youngsters who are interested to learn Indonesian language and culture for one-year-period. The second is particularly targets youngsters from developing country as it offers not only giving scholarship for learning language and culture, but also scholarship for master degree after the grantee finishing their one-year language and culture program. On the other hand, the acceptance of foreign students (grantees of the scholarships) bring consequences, such as the possibility of cultural clash. Their interaction with the Indonesian people in Indonesian students or neighbors in Indonesia is possibly causing misunderstanding or even cultural clash and lead into conflict.

However, the five pillar Pancasila (five-pillar of Indonesian state) and UUD 1945 (Indonesian Constitution 1945) recommend the ideology of multiculturalism and pluralism. Hence, every Indonesian citizen is supposed to uphold several values within their society, such as tolerance, empathy, and sympathy in their socialization with others. Not only respecting among Indonesians, people have to respect foreigners with their foreign cultures. Due to this reason, the present researchers think that they have to take part in creating the harmony in differences by introducing foreign culture to students at the elementary level. Why it should be elementary level? As one of the pillars of the country building, youngsters need to be nurtured and familiarized with cultural differences. Therefore, this research was conducted to realize this plan. The present researchers then invited one of BIPA students from Japan to get involved in introducing foreign culture; she is young girls at twenties.

Her participation in this research is expected to broaden the primary students' horizon, particularly about Japanese culture. Further, her involvement as the present research agent to promote differences in primary schools can elevate the primary students' tolerance.

## RESEARCH METHOD

To introduce foreign culture, particularly Japanese, in the four elementary schools, the researcher applied participatory action research (PAR) method. As suggested by MacDonald (2012, p.1) that in PAR, "qualitative features of an individual's feelings, views, and patterns are revealed without control or manipulation from the researcher. The participant is active in making informed decisions throughout all aspects of the research process for the primary purpose of imparting social change; a specific action (or actions) is the ultimate goal." Thus,

the Japanese students acting as the member of this research conducted treatment to one class in each school.

The absence of the researcher in giving treatment to the primary students was to avoid interference that it may result of bias in research finding. Then the researcher distributed questionnaires to the students to obtain their perception towards the existence of foreign people in their school and their perception to foreign cultural introduction to primary students at school.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research revealed that bring positive responses from the primary students of the four different religious schools. It showed by the students' positive responses; the students are actively participating the classes of foreign cultural program that all students are present in the classes. The Japanese BIPA student as the research agent began introducing her culture by presenting certain materials. They are Japanese kid song, national Japanese song, and greetings in Japanese language. The research's agent gave the material through presentation and drilling. The research agent presented the material, such as lyrics of kid song, national anthem, in sequential mode. Each presentation of each material before each of the classes followed by drilling the word or sentences of song lyrics and greeting sentences.

Here are the materials being delivered in the classes:

### ***1. Greetings in Japanese language are as follows:***

Japanese people are suggested to utter greetings to others politely (Evergreen 2016). Greeting itself is generally called **aisatsu**. It can be inferred that Japanese culture recommends people to have polite attitude, including sending greets to others. Politeness corresponds to Indonesians who are nurtured to lift up local cultural values. As affirmed by Hariyono (2009) that politeness is part of civilization and civilization is part of culture. Berikut adalah ungkapan-ungkapan yang sering diucapkan saat bertemu orang lain. The research agents taught simple greetings as generally used by people at the first meetings; among new acquaintances. It is hoped that the students can have basic interpersonal skill with foreigners. As suggested by Das and Herrings (2016), ability to send greeting to other people becomes indicator of basic interpersonal skill that one can socialize with new people.

Here are some greetings in Japanese taught to the primary students:

Ohayō gozaimasu.  
おはよう ございます。  
*Selamat pagi.*

Konnichiwa  
こんにちは  
*Selamat siang/sore.*

Kombanwa  
こんばんは  
*Selamat malam.*

Oyasumi nasai.  
お休みなさい。  
*Selamat malam (Selamat tidur)*

Sayōnara.  
さようなら。  
*Selamat tinggal.*

Mata aimashō  
また会いましょう。  
*Sampai berjumpa lagi.*

Hajimemashite.  
はじめまして。  
*Pertama kali berjumpa dng Anda.*

(Dōzo) Yoroshiku (onegaishimasu)  
(どうぞ) よろしく (お願いします)。  
*Mohon petunjuk dari Anda. (Senang berkenalan dengan Anda)*

(Dōmo) Arigatō gozaimasu.  
(どうも) ありがとうございます。  
*(Banyak) Terima kasih.*

Iie, dō itashimashite.  
いいえ、どういたしまして。  
*Tidak, tidak apa-apa.*

(Dōmo) Sumimasen.

(どうも) 済みません。

*Mohon maaf.*

Shibaraku deshita. Ogenki desu ka.

しばらくでした。お元気ですか。

*Sudah lama tidak bertemu ya. Sehatkah Anda?*

Hai, okagesama de, genki desu.

はい、おかげさまで、元気です。

*Ya, berkat doa Anda, sehat.*

Dewa/Ja, Shitsurei shimasu.

では / じゃ、失礼します。

*Baiklah, saya mohon diri.*

Sore ja, mata.

それじゃ、また。

*Kalau begitu, sampai jumpa.*

Itadakimasu.

いただきます。

*Selamat makan/minum.*

Gochisōsama deshita.

ごちそうさまでした。

*Terima kasih atas hidangannya/traktirannya*

## **2. Kids' song & National Anthem**

This research used clips downloaded from *youtube* to introduce kid's song and Japanese national anthem, as seen in the following links:

1. Kid's song :  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k0Dsv0DMJwg>
2. Japanese national anthem :  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JUoPm1xJJak>

Each of the clip referred from the link provides the lyrics using Latin letters, so that the students were able to sing after the clip and the song as they could sing the songs by reading the subtitles. Not only that, the agent of the present research also conduct *drilling* method in teaching the lyrics of the song so that the class can repeat may times. Repetition made the students were familiar with the way of singing and the language as well.

The agent of this research was applying a fun method of delivering the three kinds of materials above: greetings, kids' song, and national anthem. Due to the fun way of acquainted to new culture by the foreign woman (the research agent), the most of the students showed their positive responses as indicated in the *Table of Students' Responses* below:

Primary School	Materials being introduced to students			Like to meet foreign people (the research's agent)	Notes  *Look at the notes beneath this table
	Greetings	Kid's song	National anthem		
1	√	√	√	11 suka, 7 tidak	
2	√	√	√	18 suka, 1 tidak	
3	√	√	√	13 suka, 5 tidak	
4	√	√	√	14 suka, 6 tidak	

*Table 1. Primary students' responses*

- \*Primary School 1 : four of the students did not like the introduction of foreign culture program because they thought that the research agent who delivered the materials in their classes was hardly smiling to them. They perceived that less smile can indicate: (1). The agent of this research was not friendly, but the students also expressed their understanding by stating that her doing so was because of exhaustion in managing their classes; (2). This research agent is type of shy person.
- \* Primary School 2: One of the students in the class in this school did not like the research agent was based on religious teaching that the research agent did wear hijab.
- \* Primary School 3: five of the students in this school stated that they did not like this research agent in their classes because she has different religion. As the school is Islamic school, they would like her if she is a Muslima and wears hijab as the often see women in their surroundings.
- \* Primary School 4: two of the students in the class in this school did like the conduct of introducing foreign culture in their school because they think that repeated after the lyrics of the songs in Japanese language was not as easy as singing Indonesia ones. The other two students in the class in this school did not like the program of introducing new culture because they thought that she was friendly. The other one of the students in the class in this school has the same reason from school 1 and 2. He did not like the research agent in delivering the materials in his class because she was not wearing hijab.

The *Student Response' table* explained that the respondents from the four primary schools stated that they received the three types of material as described above. From this Japanese culture introduction program, it can be seen that the number of students from the four primary schools liked the program, more than the number of students who disliked it.

The small numbers of the students who did like the introduction of Japanese culture in their schools caused by various reasons. Their reasons are: 1. related to their difficulty in knowing Japanese and imitating the songs; 2. In connection with their opinion that the speaker was not friendly; 3. Relating to religious reasons, namely the speaker did not wear a veil/hijab; 4. Relating to the presenter's shy character which influenced her method in delivering the materials.

## CONCLUSION

The questionnaire distributed to the students who were participating in this research in the four religious schools showed that the introduction of Japanese culture through verbal presentation methods and drilling with song clips made most of the students were interested in the presented materials. They actively participated in their class activities. Their activeness was indicated by the students' questions related to Japanese culture to this research agent. Thus, the introduction of Japanese culture in the schools, which lasts for eight days by the BIPA student acting as the research agent can broaden the cultural horizons of the students of the four Islamic schools.

The introduction of foreign cultures, especially Japanese culture, is only one form of cultural differences so that the preservation tolerance value can be embedded from early age. So, with the completion of the implementation of the Japanese culture and language introduction program, it is hoped that the four Islamic primary schools that are the target of the program can continue the introduction of cultural diversity that is wider than the national culture.

## DAFTAR PUSTAKA

- \_\_\_\_\_. (2016). *Belajar Bahasa Jepang*. Retrieved from: <http://bahasajepang12.com/trik-cepat-menghapal-bilangan-bahasa-jepang/>
- Das, A. & Susan C. Herrings. (2015). Greetings and interpersonal closeness: The case of Bengalis on Orkut. *Language and Communication*. Vol. 47.
- MacDonald, C. (2012). Understanding participatory action research: a qualitative methodology option. *The Canadian Journal of Action Research*. Vol. 13 (2).
- Hariyono, P. (2009). *Ilmu Sosial dan Budaya Dasar*. Semarang: Mutiara Wacana.



- Japanese Org. (2014). *Japanese Hiragana*. Japan: Editor. Retrieved from: <http://japanesehiragana.org/>
- Kemendikbud. (2013). *Darmasiswa*. Jakarta: Kemendikbud. Retrieved from: <http://darmasiswa.kemdikbud.go.id/darmasiswa/>
- Koentjaraningrat. (1984). *Kebudayaan Mentalitas dan Pembangunan*. Jakarta: Gramedia.
- Kursus Bahasa Jepang Evergreen. (2016). *Ungkapan Salam/Umum*. Jakarta: evergreen. Retrieved from: <http://kursus-jepang-evergreen.com/index.php/ungkapan/43-ungkapan-salamsapaan>
- Pusaka Indonesia Org. (2013). *Pancasila sebagai Filsafat Bangsa Indonesia*. Jakarta: Pusaka Indonesia Org. Retrieved from: <http://www.pusakaindonesia.org/pancasila-sebagai-filsafat-bangsa-indonesia/>