Intercultural Sensitivity in Indonesian and Japanese Literary Works is the Development of Literary Learning in the Digital Era

Nensy Megawati Simanjuntak1[1], Widya Desary Setia Wardhani[2], Sumartono[3] Arumtyas Puspitanig Padmasari[4], Victor MTL Tobing[5], Atul Kumar[6]

[1,2,3,4,5] *Universitas Dr. Soetomo Surabaya Indonesia*

[6] *Dr. D.Y. Patil B-School, Pune, Maharashtra, India*

Abstract

Intercultural or another term for intercultural is a concept that brings together two or more cultural elements to then be integrated into new knowledge and understanding for each individual or group of people who want to know about the development of foreign cultures. In learning literature, intercultural is needed as a forum to develop global insight and knowledge. Learning literature is not only learning about the nature and content of literary works, learning literature means learning to be cultured and cultivating the culture itself. The data for this study were taken from famous novels from each country. The research data are: A novel entitled "Geisha" by Arthur Golden from Japan and a novel entitled "Cantik itu Luka" by Eka Kurniawan from Indonesia. This study is a qualitative phenomenological study by raising the similarities in culture and the position of women in the two novels used as data. This study aims to explain that there are similarities in culture in Indonesia and Japan that can be observed through learning literature, especially fictional works in the form of novels. This study found that Japanese women and Indonesian women are considered inferior and only tools to satisfy male lust. But behind that assumption, there is strength and politeness in women that makes them valuable and able to rise against the reality of life presented in front of them. Women are not weak creatures, whatever their culture, women are important entities that support the sustainability of human life on earth.

Keywords: *intercultural; literature learning; learners; culture; women*

1. Introduction

Literature is essentially a world of possibilities as a result of the author's reflection and interpretation of life. Through literary works that offer various possibilities, both moral, social, and psychological, people can more quickly achieve a stable attitude that is transformed into mature behavior and considerations. Literature provides space for readers to enter "all kinds of situations" so that readers can place themselves in a broader life than their real situation. Literature values freedom of thought that is represented through the freedom of reading or interpretation of literary works (Deardorff, 2006). Readers are given the freedom to interpret literary works according to their knowledge, insight, and experience. Therefore, diversity of meanings is a necessity in reading literary works, even in a single reader, the meaning at one time and another time will never be the same (Alwasilah, 2004). This is because reading literary

---

[1] *Corresponding Author. E-mail: nensymegawatisimanjuntak1989@gmail.com*
Telp: +62 813-3017-1727

works is a process of meaning that continues to take place in the reader's mind. The diversity of meanings in reading literary works is what is discussed through open dialogue. Literature learning in schools and campuses should return literary works to their essence as a world of possibilities. Literature as a world of possibilities implies that when faced with literary works, readers are faced with various possible interpretations.This seems to be what semiotician Roland Barthes meant by "the author is dead". "The death of the author" is followed by the birth of the reader (Busse, 2000). Thus, it is actually the reader who brings literary works to life through the celebration of diverse interpretations. Therefore, in literature learning, interpretation of literary works does not prioritize right or wrong answers. In literature learning, what is important is the reason underlying the interpretation (Erhard, 2002). In other words, the attitudes and critical thinking of students are the focus of attention.

With the current globalization of mass media, a literary work can be translated into various languages. This situation makes translated literature one of the prose that is in great demand by literature learners (Rahmah, 2018). Translation from foreign language novels to Indonesian in the digital era is greatly assisted by the rapid development of technology. When talking about Japanese Culture, there is one interesting Japanese Culture, namely Inemuri. Inemuri is a Japanese habit of sleeping in public places. Inemuri is a unique phenomenon and a habit of Japanese society. Inemuri is proof of the efforts and hard work of the Japanese people. The purpose of this paper is to explain what Inemuri is, the causes of Inemuri, what is the uniqueness of Inemuri and the benefits of Inemuri (Mulyadi, 2018). In the formation of culture there are basic values that are the main components of that culture. According to Widisuseno (2020) The philosophical analysis method to analyze and find the basic values of life in the cultural behavior of Japanese society from ontological, epistemological and axiological aspects. Ontologically, there are facts in Japanese society that mark patterns of life that rely on the understanding of collectivism. Epistemologically, the practice of collectivist life patterns carries the meaning of the implementation of social punishment naturally and gives the impact of social pressure. Axiologically, the practice of collective life patterns in Japanese society is based on the principles of social ethics to create harmony in life.The diversity of interpretations is a wealth that must be channeled through an open dialogue so that the flow of thought underlying the birth of the interpretation can be understood. That is where the task of literature teachers is, bridging critical dialogue between students. Thus, literature learning not only fosters appreciation of literature, but also fosters an attitude of respecting opinions (Byram, 2021). So far, literature learning in schools has always invited attention, especially because the learning model is considered not to foster literary appreciation activities, but to castrate literature only to the extent of memorizing the author's name, title of the work, or at most to the extent of identifying the intrinsic elements of the work. The evaluation model applied also does not consider the nature of literature as a world in that possibility but is directed at one answer from one perspective, thus ignoring other perspectives. Literature that liberates actually becomes shackling in learning. Literature learning that is carried out in the right way will be able to make a great contribution to solving real problems that are difficult to solve in society (Hofstede, 2010). Literature learning can enable the growth of an appreciation for all things beautiful and humane to be internalized as part of the character of students that will be formed (Miyasari, 2019).

Liberty learning that liberates has long been voiced by writers and literary academics. Professor of literature at Yogyakarta State University, Prof. Dr. Suminto A Sayuti in an article entitled, "Towards. Liberatory Education and Teaching: Just an Introductory Note" in the

November 2000 edition of Sastra magazine voiced the need to consider changing the focus of attention on literature that has so far been shackling from the text to the reader. According to Samsudin (2019), literature should no longer be viewed as an object but rather as an experience and readers should not be placed merely as consumers, but as active exhibitors who bring texts into their mental lives. According to Sayuti, what is important in learning literature is literature as exploration. This suggests that in the process of interpreting literary works, the role of the reader, in this case the student, allows their emotions and intellect to function contributively to awakening literary experiences. Literary texts should be viewed as something problematic so that in classrooms the texts are deconstructed and then constructed (Surastina, 2018).

There are many approaches that can be used in developing literature learning. However, the right approach to use is certainly an approach that is in line with the nature of literature as a world of possibilities and provides students with space for dialogue. One approach that can be used in literature learning is the intercultural approach. The intercultural approach in literature learning places the process of reading and creating literary works by students as a cultural process by considering dialogue between different cultures. According to Bakry (2020:29), interculturalism is a view of cultural diversity that provides support for the ongoing dialogue and interaction between cultures and avoids the tendency of self-segregation in culture. Historically, interculturalism was born as a response to multiculturalism which in many places is considered to have failed in managing cultural diversity and tends to create inclusion of different cultures in society. Multiculturalism, which was initially seen as an ideal model of cultural politics in the midst of cultural diversity, has actually had an impact on the over-emphasis of cultural differences and uniqueness between different cultures.

On the contrary, in interculturalism, cultural differences are not only appreciated, but also understood through interaction and intercultural dialogue. According to (Buse, 2021), interculturalism does promote interaction, mutual understanding, and appreciation among people from different cultural backgrounds. In interculturalism, people from different cultural backgrounds not only build an attitude of mutual respect and see that all cultures have the freedom to keep their cultural heritage alive, but also share it with others. Cultural differences are seen as something positive and productive because they enrich society Interculturalism in the context of literature is interpreted as how various different cultures are understood, assessed, accepted, or excluded (rejected) in one perspective and certain cultural actions (literary writing) so that in the process imaginatively towards and become a certain form of life that is different from the actual reality (Bolten, 2001). According to Salam, there are four perspectives of interculturalism in Indonesian literature. First, Indonesian literature as a process of interculturalization of various cultures. Second, literary works as a textual field of how intrinsically different cultures are positioned, managed, assessed, and then narrated. Third, literary works are placed as writings resulting from contact between cultures, namely the author and a certain culture, a kind of certain "ethnographic" work. Fourth, studying or interpreting literary works from the perspective of the interpreter's culture (Dwi, 2022). The four perspectives of interculturalism in literature are adapted in literary learning. These four perspectives can be implemented in literature learning according to the needs and conditions at school.

2.   Methods

This research is a qualitative research of the phenomenological type. Phenomenology can be interpreted as a study of a person's life experience or a method for studying how individuals subjectively feel experiences and give meaning to the phenomenon. Phenomenology can also limit the generalizability of research results and question its objectivity. This study selected two popular novels as research materials. The two novels are:
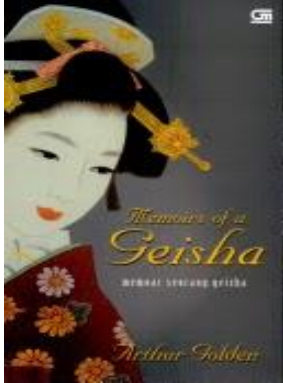
1. Geisha (Japanese Novel) by Arthur Golden

2. Beauty is a Wound (Indonesian Novel) by Eka Kurniawan

The two novels were chosen because they have similarities in several contexts. In addition, both novels are popular novels known to the world and are still legendary novels. This study uses data collection techniques in the form of observation and documentation. Data analysis techniques use narrative techniques. Data validation techniques use data triangulation and expert advice.

3.   Result and Discussion

This study found several things related to interculturality in literature learning. The findings can be observed through the following table 1.

Table 1

Kategori Temuan	Novel "Geisha"	Novel "Cantik itu Luka"
Novel Cover		
The main character	A girl named Chiyo turns into Sayuri	A woman named Dewi Ayu
Main Character's Occupation	Prostitution	Prostitution
Story Contents	Women's struggle to change their fate and get a decent life	The struggle of a woman who wants to be free from her past so that her children do not follow in her footsteps.
Gender Writer	Male	Male

Based on the table, several similarities and differences between Japanese and Indonesian culture can be found through two popular novels from each country. The similarities and differences are explained as follows.

3.1   Novel Cover Page

The cover pages of the novels "Geisha" and "Cantik itu Luka" have similarities and differences. The first similarity in the two novels is the female figure chosen as the face to be displayed on the cover. The woman on the cover of the two novels is considered an important figure because she plays the main character. The second similarity is that the woman on the cover of the two novels wears elegant and polite clothes. The clothes worn are not only elegant and modest but also implement the culture of each country. In addition to showing culture, the clothes are also traditional clothes from each country. In the novel "Geisha", the clothes used are Kimono. Kimono is traditional Japanese clothing. While for the novel "Cantik itu Luka" the clothes worn by the woman on the cover of the novel are Kebaya. Kebaya is traditional clothing from Indonesia. The existence of a culture that the author wants to highlight through the cover page of the novel shows that the author wants to present interculturalism in the cover of their fictional work. Not only that, the author also wants to show the hyperreality that a female character who works as a prostitute is not all dressed sexily and dressed up or flashy, some of them actually dress or have a polite and elegant fashion style. Clothing does not guarantee identity, behavior, someone is good or bad.

The difference between the two popular novels is that each novel raises the identity of the country where the novel is set. The novel "Geisha" raises Japanese culture which can be observed through: traditional Japanese clothing called Kimono, the name of the main character is a Japanese name, namely Sakamato Chiyo, the setting, atmosphere, using cities in Japan. In addition, the author of the novel "Geisha" namely Arthur Golden is a man from the United States. While for the novel "Cantik itu Luka", the author named Eka Kurniawan is a man from Indonesia. In his novel, Eka Kurniawan more specifically raises the background of Javanese culture. Java is one of the big islands and is the center of everything in Indonesia. The clothes worn by the main character in the novel "Cantik itu Luka" are kebaya which are traditional Javanese clothing as well as traditional and iconic clothing from Indonesia. The name of the main character used by Eka Kurniawan in his work is also an Indonesian name, namely Dewi Ayu.

3.2   Main Characters in the Novel

Another similarity in the two popular novels "Geisha" and "Beauty is Wounded" is that they both choose women as the main characters. It's not just any woman who is told in these two works of fiction, the woman who is told is a woman who is full of emotional stories. Not only from poor backgrounds, but also women who have dreams and aspirations for their lives but have to accept the bitter reality because what they want does not match the misfortunes of life that befell the two characters. In addition to the similarities, the difference between the two female characters is that the names attached to them are names that show their identities. The name of the main character in the novel "Geisha" is Sukamato Chiyo, a Japanese name. While the name of the main character in the novel "Cantik itu Luka" is Dewi Ayu, an Indonesian name. In addition, in the novel "Geisha" the main character Sukamato Chiyo is told since she

was little, but in contrast to the novel "Cantik itu Luka", the main character Dewi Ayu is told when she has grown up.

3.3   Main Character's Occupation in the Novel

In addition to the gender of the main character, there are also similarities and differences in the two popular novels in terms of choosing certain jobs played by the two characters. The similarity in work is that both female characters from each novel work as prostitutes. The difference is, Dewi Ayu, the main character in the novel "Cantik itu Luka" works as a prostitute during the colonial period in Indonesia. Meanwhile, Sukamato Chiyo, the main character in the novel "Cantik itu Luka" works as a prostitute because of her family's poor condition and because her family was lied to by someone who employed her. The person is none other than a pimp and not during the Japanese colonial period.

3.4   Story Content in the Novel

The similarities between the two novels in terms of the content of the story are that they both tell the story of a woman's struggle to be free from the shackles of her dark life. A woman who wants to live freely and normally is not like an item that can be sold here and there and is not appreciated. A woman who wants to enjoy life as it is and feel appreciated and loved as she is. The difference between the two is the systematics of the story. Memoirs of a Geisha takes us into the secretive world of geisha, where appearances are paramount; where a girl's virginity is auctioned off to the highest bidder; where women are trained to seduce the most powerful men; and where love is scorned as an illusion. Sayuri's story begins in a poor fishing village in 1929, when as a nine-year-old girl with extraordinary blue-gray eyes, she is sold to a famous geisha house. Unable to bear the life in the house, she attempts to escape. Her actions put her in danger of becoming a servant for life. As she mourns her fate on the banks of the Shirakawa River, she meets Iwamura Ken. Unusually, this noble man approaches and comforts her. Sayuri resolves to become a geisha, if only for the chance to meet him again, someday.

The story of Cantik Itu Luka is set during the colonial era and tells the complex life of the main character Dewi Ayu, a beautiful and exotic woman. Dewi Ayu is a prostitute with a beautiful face. She was raised by her grandparents after her father and mother were expelled because of an incestuous marriage. However, she grew up to be a strong and brave girl. Dewi Ayu's courage was seen when she was captured by the Japanese army. There, she had to sacrifice her purity to help her friends in the shelter. After two years in prison, Dewi Ayu and dozens of other prison girls were moved to a luxury house to become prostitutes. This is where Dewi Ayu's life as a prostitute began, she was forced to fulfill the lusts of the Japanese soldiers at that time. The beginning of the story begins in a city called Halimunda. In that city, Dewi Ayu, who had been declared dead twenty years ago, suddenly rose from her grave. Her resurrection caused chaos and fear among the surrounding community, which even made them run until they fell. It is said that Dewi Ayu died at the age of 51, 12 days after giving birth to her fourth child.

3.5   Intercultural in Both Novels

3.5.1   Use of Traditional Names

From both popular novels, it is known that the names of each main character use traditional names. The novel "Memoirs of Geisha" uses the name "Sayuri". The name Sayuri comes from Japanese, which has a symbolic meaning. Sayuri consists of two kanji characters: (ko), which means small, and (yuri), which means lily. The name Sayuri has the meaning of beauty and aesthetics. Likewise with the name of the main character in the novel "Cantik Itu Luka" namely Dewi Ayu. The name Dewi Ayu is a name taken from Javanese and Malay. The absorption of the meaning for the name Dewi in Javanese means a patient and steadfast woman. In terms of language, the name Dewi is absorbed from the word "Devi" which means a radiant woman. The name Dewi Ayu means a beautiful, graceful, and powerful woman.

3.5.2 Use of Language in Novels

Each of these popular novels was originally written in the native language of the country, namely: Japanese and Indonesian. However, over time, both popular novels were translated into various languages around the world. With the translation into various languages of countries in the world, this novel is increasingly known and recognized by many people.

3.5.3 Cross-Cultural Learning

The existence of two cultures that collide but have similarities is one of the intercultural riches in studying these two popular novels. Japanese culture and Indonesian culture both uphold politeness when presenting cover pages with a background of a woman who is chosen as the main character in the story. Not only politeness, but also upholding the traditional values and culture of each country. One of the values upheld is the struggle for life. The struggle for life of a woman to escape from the shackles and bitterness of life that she feels. One of the cultures upheld is the existence of patrilineal in the social system. Men are considered more powerful, more important, and have a higher degree or position than women.

4. Conclusions

Based on the findings that have been presented in the results and discussion sections, this study can conclude several things, namely:

a. Intercultural is an interesting medium for adopting cross-cultural learning, especially in literature. Learning literature through an intercultural system enriches knowledge and insight both nationally and globally.
b. The similarities and differences found in the two popular novels "Geisha" and "Cantik itu Luka" are proof that the world of literature is rich in culture, ethics, and perspectives.
c. Learning literature is learning that should be mandatory in all educational institutions in the world by promoting local wisdom.

References

Alwasilah, A. Chaedar, (2004). *Cross cultural understanding dalam kurikulum pendidikan bahasa Inggris: Suatu telaah sosiolinguistik edukational Makalah).* Jakarta: IKIP Muhammadiyah.

Asri Yasnur (1992). *Komparasi kemampuan mengapresiasi puisi melalui pendekatan struktural dan pragmatik.* Tesis. Bandung: PPS IKIP Bandung.

Bank, J. A. dan Cherry A. McGee (ed). (2001). *Handbook of Research on MulticulturalEducation.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Bolten Jurgen. (2001). *Interkulturelle Kompeten ze,Landeszentrale fuer Politische Bildung*. Thuringen.

Busse, Günter (2021). *Training Gedichtinterpretation. Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag Domin, Hilde*.

Budi Mulyadi. (2018). Keunikan Budaya Tidur Inemuri Jepang. Jurnal Kiryoku, Jurnal Studi Kejepangan. Vol.2. No.3. https://doi.org/10.14710/kiryoku.v2i3.1-8

Byram, M. (2021). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence. In Multilingual Matters eBooks*. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781800410251.

Byram, M. (2020). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. https://doi.org/10.21832/byram0244.

Deardorff, D. K. (2006). Identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalization. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, *10*(3), 241–266. https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315306287002

Dodd, Carley, H. (1991). *Dynamic of Intercultural Communication*. Wm.C. Brown Publishers, Dubuque/IA/USA.Doppel Interpretation. Frankfur am Main: Fischer Taschen-buch Verlag. Hexelschneider.

Dwi Utari, Amrizal, Yayah Chanafiah. (2022). Cerminan Feminisme Dalam Novel Cantik Itu Luka Karya Eka Kurniawan. *Jurnal Ilmiah Korpus.* Vol. 6 No. 3, 2022. https://doi.org/10.33369/jik.v6i3.27096

Elizabeth Ika Hesti Aprilia Nindia Rini. (2018). Perbandingan Pengungkapan dalam Bahasa Jepang dan Bahasa Indonesia. Jurnal Kiryoku, Jurnal Studi Kejepangan. Vol.2. No.3. https://doi.org/10.14710/kiryoku.v2i3.25-33

Erhard (2002). *Das Fremde das Eigene als Grundkomponenten von Interkulturslität, dalam Alois Wierlacher (Ed.)* Jahrbuch Deutsch als Fremdsprache Band 44 München: Iudicium Verlag, hal. 127-136.

Hofstede, G. H., Hofstede, G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). *Cultures and Organizations*, *Software of the mind. Intercultural Cooperation and Its Importance for survival*. In *McGraw-Hill Books*. http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BB02154491

Iriyanto Widisuseno. (2020). Nilai Dasar Kehidupan Sebagai Faktor Pembentuk Budaya Malu Bangsa Jepang (Perspektif Filosofis. Jurnal Kiryoku, Jurnal Studi Kejepangan. Vol.4. No.1 https://doi.org/10.14710/kiryoku.v4i1.62-71

Liliwer, Alo. (2009). *Dasar-Dasar Komunikasi Antarbudaya*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar. Lickona,Thomas. (1991). Education for Character How Our Schools can Teach Respect and Resposibility.Bantams Books: New York.

Miyasari, T. N. (2019). Ketidakadilan Gender dalam Novel Gadis Pantai Karya Pramoedya Ananta Toer dan Tanah Tabu Karya Anindita Thayf: *Kajian Sastra Bandingan. Jurnal Alaya Satra*. Vol. 15 No.1.

Nurgiyantoro, B. (2015). *Teori Pengkajian Sastra*. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press.

Nuening. (2003). *Konzepte der Kulturwissenschaft*.Stuttgart: J.B.Metzler.

Otey-Franklin. (2009). *Intercultural Interaktion*. London: Palgrave Macmilan.

Purkoni, A., & Qowim, A. N. (2024). Implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka through the P5 Program in Islamic Religious Education Learning at SMP Tahfidz Assyifa Al Islami Parung. *Edu Spectrum.*, *1*(2), 82–91. https://doi.org/10.70063/eduspectrum.v1i2.44.

Rokhmansyah, A. (2014). *Studi dan Pengkajian Sastra*. Yogyakarta: Graha Ilmu.

Samsudin. (2019). *Buku Ajar Pembelajaran Kritik Sastra*. Yogyakarta: Deepublish

Surastina. (2018). *Pengantar Teori Sastra*. Yogyakarta: Elmatera.

Wibowo, D. E. (2011). Peran Ganda Perempuan dan Kesetaraan Gender. *Jurnal Muwazah*, Vol. 3, No. 1.

Yuliani Rahmah. (2018). Metode dan Teknik Penerjemahan Karya Sastra. Jurnal Kiryoku, Jurnal Studi Kejepangan. Vol.2. No.3. https://doi.org/10.14710/kiryoku.v2i3.9-16