
The Role of Non-Indigenous Papuan Teachers in Understanding Literacy in Cultural Diversity for Identity, Power and Social Justice of Indigenous Papuan Students in Senior High School

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ABSTRACT

Papua, with its cultural and linguistic diversity, faces unique challenges in the field of education, particularly at the senior high school level. This study aims to analyze the role of non-Papuan teachers or migrant teachers in understanding literacy, cultural diversity, and its impact on the identity, power dynamics, and social justice of local Papuan students. The findings indicate that the obstacles faced by teachers include a lack of understanding of local culture, language differences, and minimal institutional support. As a result, many local Papuan students feel alienated, less motivated, and marginalized in the learning process. Migrant teachers have the potential to play a crucial role in creating an inclusive educational environment by employing culturally responsive pedagogical approaches. Collaborating with local communities and developing curricula that reflect local values can enhance the sense of belonging and engagement among local students. With strengthened ongoing professional training, teachers can be more effective in addressing cultural diversity and promoting social justice in the classroom. This research recommends the development of culturally-based curricula, intensive teacher training, and the use of technology as tools to bridge cultural gaps. These steps are expected to create a more inclusive education system, empower local Papuan students, and improve the quality of education in the region.

KEYWORDS *Papua, literacy, cultural diversity, migrant teachers, social justice, inclusive education, local student identity.*



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INTRODUCTION

Papua, as a region with rich culture and language, faces serious challenges in education, especially at the high school level. One of the main issues is the obstacles faced by non-indigenous Papuan teachers, as immigrant teachers, in understanding

and teaching literacy and cultural diversity to indigenous Papuan students as local students. This has implications for understanding the identity, power, and social justice of students who come from different cultural backgrounds.

Despite their great potential contributions, immigrant teachers often face significant challenges in the classroom. They may encounter systemic barriers such as a lack of institutional support, cultural misunderstandings from peers, and biases that affect their professional identity (Glock & Huber, 2019a). Additionally, many immigrant teachers report feeling isolated within their schools, which can hinder their ability to interact effectively with students and staff (C. Lee et al., 2021). These challenges demonstrate the need for comprehensive training programs that equip educators with the necessary skills to effectively navigate diverse classroom environments.

Non-native Papuan teachers often lack a deep understanding of the local culture. This gap makes it difficult for them to deliver material that is relevant to the context of the lives of indigenous Papuan students. According to research, the use of a curriculum that does not reflect local values and traditions exacerbates this situation, leaving students feeling isolated and less motivated to learn (O. Jamal & Edowai, 2022). This is worsened by the lack of representation of Papuan culture in textbooks, which tend to be dominated by non-Papuan characters. In addition, there is a risk of marginalizing minority perspectives if the curriculum in the high school is not designed to reflect cultural diversity.

Immigrant teachers often face various challenges in the school environment. They may have difficulty navigating an education system that does not always support cultural diversity. Glock and Huber (2019) note that a lack of institutional support can hinder teachers' ability to provide effective teaching for immigrant and local students (Glock & Huber, 2019a). Additionally, many immigrant teachers feel isolated, which can affect their ability to engage optimally with students and colleagues (C. Lee et al., 2021).

While there are many benefits of multicultural literacy, challenges remain, especially when it comes to teacher training and effective curriculum development. Research shows that many teachers feel ill-prepared to teach in culturally diverse classrooms, so high-quality professional development in multicultural education is critical. Additionally, it is important to strike a balance between providing specific knowledge about the student's culture and avoiding stereotypes or broad generalizations (Parkhouse et al., 2019).

Education in Papua faces complex challenges related to communication barriers between non-native Papuan teachers and indigenous Papuan students. Differences in culture, language, and level of knowledge are the main factors that hinder the learning process. Non-native Papuan teachers often do not have a sufficient understanding of the local cultural context, so they have difficulty

delivering material that is relevant and understandable to indigenous Papuan students.

One of the most significant barriers to communication is language differences. Although Indonesian is used as the language of instruction, many Papuan students speak in their local dialect or language. This creates difficulties in understanding the instructions and subject matter delivered by the teacher. According to Ralahalu (2020), differences in accent and dialect often lead to misunderstandings between teachers and students, where students feel that their meaning is not understood (Ralahalu, 2020).

Cultural differences also contribute to communication barriers. Native Papuan students may have different norms and values compared to non-native Papuan teachers. For example, in the context of social interaction, Papuan students tend to value eye contact as a sign of respect, while teachers from other cultures may avoid eye contact in certain situations (Anwar, 2018). This can lead to further misunderstandings in the teaching-learning process.

The different levels of knowledge between teachers and students are also an inhibiting factor. Many indigenous Papuan students come from inadequate educational backgrounds, so they may not have the same knowledge base as their counterparts from other regions. This creates a gap in understanding the subject matter and can cause frustration for both students and teachers (Gurik, 2024).

These barriers not only affect the understanding of literacy and cultural diversity but also have an impact on the identity, power, and social justice of indigenous Papuan students. Injustices in classroom treatment often arise due to teachers' lack of understanding of the local context, which can lead to discrimination against indigenous Papuan students. In this regard, it is important to develop an educational approach that is more inclusive and sensitive to the local cultural context so that all students feel valued and supported in their learning process.

Papua, a region renowned for its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, faces significant challenges in its education system, particularly at the senior high school level. Previous research highlights the critical role of teachers in fostering inclusive learning environments, yet studies such as those by Glock and Huber (2019) reveal systemic barriers faced by non-indigenous teachers, including cultural misunderstandings and inadequate institutional support. These challenges are compounded by language differences and curricula that fail to reflect local values, leading to student alienation and disengagement (Jamal & Edowai, 2022). While existing literature underscores the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy, there remains a gap in understanding how non-Papuan teachers can effectively bridge these cultural and linguistic divides to promote literacy and social justice among indigenous Papuan students.

The urgency of this research stems from the persistent marginalization of indigenous Papuan students, who often experience lower academic motivation and achievement due to culturally disconnected teaching practices. As noted by Ralahalu (2020), communication barriers between teachers and students exacerbate these disparities, further widening the gap in educational outcomes. The situation calls for immediate attention, as equitable education is not only a fundamental right but also a cornerstone for social cohesion and regional development. Addressing these challenges is critical to ensuring that Papuan students can fully participate in and benefit from the educational system.

This study introduces novelty by focusing specifically on the dual role of non-Papuan teachers as both educators and cultural mediators in Papua's senior high schools. While prior research has explored multicultural education broadly, few studies have examined the unique dynamics of Papua's educational context, where cultural diversity is exceptionally pronounced. By investigating the strategies employed by migrant teachers to navigate these complexities, this research contributes fresh insights into the intersection of literacy, cultural identity, and social justice in a highly diverse setting.

The purpose of this research is to analyze the role of non-Papuan teachers in enhancing literacy and cultural understanding among indigenous Papuan students. It seeks to identify effective pedagogical approaches that align with local cultural contexts and explore how these methods can mitigate power imbalances and foster social justice in the classroom. By doing so, the study aims to provide actionable recommendations for policymakers and educators to create more inclusive learning environments.

This research contributes to the academic discourse by expanding the theoretical framework of culturally responsive teaching to include the unique challenges and opportunities present in Papua's educational landscape. It also offers empirical evidence on the impact of teacher-student cultural dissonance on literacy acquisition and social justice outcomes. Furthermore, the study highlights the potential of non-Papuan teachers as agents of change in promoting inclusive education, thereby enriching the broader conversation on multicultural pedagogy.

The implications of this research are manifold. For educators, it provides practical strategies to integrate local cultural values into curricula and teaching practices, thereby enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes. For policymakers, the findings underscore the need for targeted professional development programs that equip teachers with the skills to navigate cultural diversity effectively. Additionally, the study advocates for systemic reforms, such as the inclusion of indigenous knowledge in curricula, to address long-standing inequities in Papua's education system.

Ultimately, this research aspires to pave the way for a more equitable and inclusive educational framework in Papua, one that respects and celebrates cultural diversity while empowering indigenous students. By addressing the identified gaps and leveraging the potential of non-Papuan teachers, the study aims to foster a learning environment where all students can thrive academically and socially. The findings will not only benefit Papua but also offer valuable lessons for other multicultural regions grappling with similar challenges.

RESEARCH METHOD

This article employs the *literature review* method, which involves analyzing scientific articles, books, dissertations, and other published materials to summarize, describe, and critically evaluate a specific topic or research area. The process includes identifying a research topic, gathering relevant sources, and analyzing their content, focusing on theories, methods, and findings. Key steps also involve classifying findings into themes and synthesizing information to build a comprehensive understanding of the subject.

The final stages of the *literature review* method include writing a structured report with an introduction, literature review, methodology, analysis, and conclusion, ensuring proper citations. Additionally, the validity and reliability of sources are evaluated, and the research's potential contribution to broader linguistic understanding is considered. This systematic approach ensures a thorough and well-supported exploration of the chosen topic.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Immigrant Teachers in Understanding Literacy and Cultural Diversity Among Local Students in High School The growing cultural diversity in high schools, especially in the United States and other multicultural societies, has highlighted the important role that immigrant teachers play in creating an inclusive educational environment (C. Lee et al., 2021). These educators not only bring unique cultural perspectives, but they also serve as vital bridges between diverse student populations and the broader education system. This description explores the contribution of immigrant teachers to the development of cultural literacy and understanding among local students.

Development of Literacy through Cultural Integration in Education

Immigrant teachers often have firsthand experience with the challenges faced by culturally and linguistically diverse students. Their backgrounds allow them to implement culturally responsive teaching practices that align with students' life experiences. Ladson-Billings, 1995's research shows that when teachers integrate students' cultural context into their curriculum, it increases academic engagement

and success. For example, studies show that immigrant teachers who have similar backgrounds to their students can effectively use stories and cultural celebrations to create a more understandable learning environment (Roodsari, 2022).

Literacy is not just about reading and writing; It includes understanding narratives and cultural contexts. Immigrant teachers can facilitate this by integrating culturally relevant material into their lessons. This approach not only helps in the acquisition of literacy but also builds a sense of belonging among students. A study by Abacioglu et al. (2020) emphasized that culturally responsive pedagogy significantly improves the educational attainment of underrepresented minority groups. By acknowledging and validating students' cultural identities, immigrant teachers help bridge the gap between literacy practices at home and in schools (Roelle & Renkl, 2020).

Creating a sense of community is essential for both immigrant teachers and their students. Research shows that when schools create an environment where different cultures are celebrated, this results in better student learning outcomes. Immigrant teachers can play an important role in this process by promoting inclusivity through collaborative projects involving parents and local communities. Such initiatives not only enhance students' academic experience but also strengthen community bonds (Archambault et al., 2023).

The role of immigrant teachers in secondary schools is complex, encompassing literacy development, cultural integration, and community building. Their unique perspectives are invaluable in creating an inclusive educational environment that celebrates diversity. To maximize their impact, it is important for educational institutions to provide adequate support and resources for these educators. Thus, the school can ensure that all students benefit from a rich cultural experience, which will enrich their learning journey.

Literacy development is a complex process and involves more than just reading and writing skills. This process includes critical thinking, comprehension, and the ability to interact with various texts. One effective approach to improving literacy development is through cultural integration in education. This approach recognizes the importance of students' cultural backgrounds and experiences in shaping their learning process. Cultural integration in education involves incorporating students' cultural contexts into the curriculum, which can significantly increase their engagement and motivation. According to research by Alghamdi et al. (2021), culturally relevant pedagogy not only fosters a sense of belonging among students, but also improves their literacy skills by connecting learning with their life experiences (Alghamdi et al., 2021).

This connection between culture and literacy is very important, as it allows students to see the relevance of their education in their daily lives. Furthermore, integrating cultural elements into literacy teaching can help bridge the gap between

students' native languages and the language of instruction. This is especially important in multicultural classrooms where students may come from diverse linguistic backgrounds. As researched by Wang and Goldstein (2020), the incorporation of cultural narratives and local languages in literacy programs can improve reading comprehension and writing skills among students from diverse backgrounds (Wang & Goldstein, 2020). By respecting and integrating students' cultural identities, educators can create a more inclusive and effective learning environment. In addition, cultural integration also encourages critical and analytical thinking skills.

When students engage with texts that reflect their cultural background, they tend to be more critical in questioning, analyzing, and critiquing the content. This critical engagement is essential for developing high-level thinking skills, which are vital for academic success. As noted by Lee and Smagorinsky (2022), students who engage with culturally relevant texts exhibit greater critical thinking abilities and are more proficient in making connections between texts and their own lives (C. D. Lee & Smagorinsky, 2022).

Literacy development through cultural integration in education is a powerful approach that increases student engagement, improves literacy skills, and encourages critical thinking. By recognizing and valuing students' cultural backgrounds, educators can create a more inclusive and effective learning environment that supports all learners.

The Role of Immigrant Teachers in Understanding Local Students' Literacy in Understanding Cultural Diversity, Power Identity and Social Justice in Senior Secondary Schools in Papua

The presence of immigrant teachers in secondary schools has a significant impact on understanding the literacy of local students, especially in the context of power identity and social justice. With diverse backgrounds, these teachers not only bring unique educational experiences, but also perspectives that can enrich the teaching and learning process. Research shows that immigrant teachers play an important role in creating an inclusive learning environment that is responsive to the diverse needs of students.

Building Social Awareness in the Classroom

Teaching for social justice requires teachers to respect and support different ways of teaching, knowing, and seeing, while considering the assets that immigrants bring into the classroom (C. Lee et al., 2021). Immigrant teachers have the potential to build social awareness among students through discussions about identity and social justice. By creating space for open dialogue on these issues, they can help students understand the dynamics of power in society. Research shows that

when students are invited to discuss social issues, they become more critical of their surroundings (C. D. Lee & Smagorinsky, 2022). This not only improves their academic literacy but also social literacy.

Building social awareness in the classroom is an important aspect of education that can help students understand and appreciate the diversity and social challenges faced by society. Through the right approach, educators can create a learning environment that supports the development of students' social and emotional skills, which are critical to forming responsible and empathetic individuals.

Creating a Positive and Inclusive Classroom Environment

The first step in increasing social awareness in the classroom is to create a positive and inclusive environment. This involves promoting respect and empathy among students. According to Blewitt et al. (2021), creating a classroom culture that values diversity and encourages students to listen to each other can increase their engagement in learning (Blewitt et al., 2021). By building an atmosphere where every student feels valued, we can encourage them to share their unique experiences and perspectives.

Integrating Social-Emotional Learning

Social-emotional learning is a key component in developing social awareness. Through self-reflection activities, group discussions about social issues, and role play, students can learn to understand the feelings and perspectives of others. As stated by Wang and Goldstein (2020), the use of cultural narratives in literacy programs can improve reading comprehension and writing skills among students from diverse backgrounds (Wang & Goldstein, 2020). This approach not only improves literacy skills but also encourages empathy.

Using Real-World Examples and Current Issues

Connecting learning with real-world examples and current issues is an effective way to increase students' social awareness. By discussing relevant topics such as social justice, human rights, or climate change, students can see the relationship between their learning and the challenges that exist in society. Lee and Smagorinsky (2022) note that students who engage with culturally relevant texts exhibit greater critical thinking abilities (C. D. Lee & Smagorinsky, 2022). This helps them develop critical thinking as well as analytical abilities.

Collaboration with Community Organizations

Involving community organizations in the learning process can provide students with hands-on experience on social issues. Inviting guest speakers or organizing visits to community service institutions allows students to learn from the

real-life experiences of those around them. According to other research, collaboration with local communities enriches students' learning experiences and encourages their active participation in social issues (Blewitt et al., 2021).

Increasing social awareness in the classroom is an important step towards shaping a more empathetic and responsible generation. By creating a positive classroom environment, integrating social-emotional learning, using real-world examples, and collaborating with communities, educators can help students develop the essential skills necessary to contribute positively to society.

Building Literacy and Social Justice in the Classroom

Literacy is not just the ability to read and write; It also involves an understanding of the social and cultural context in which students belong. Immigrant teachers often have firsthand experience with the challenges faced by students from diverse backgrounds. They can help students understand how their identities relate to larger power structures in society. Another study showed that immigrant teachers can integrate their life experiences to build better relationships with students, thus creating space for discussions about social justice and human rights (Bailey, 2021).

Immigrant teachers often implement culturally responsive teaching practices, which help students feel a connection to the subject matter. Research by Abacioglu et al. (2020) shows that a teaching approach that respects students' cultural backgrounds can increase their motivation and engagement in learning. By using culturally relevant teaching methods, immigrant teachers can help students understand how their identities contribute to their understanding of power and social justice (Abacioglu et al., 2020).

The role of immigrant teachers in understanding the literacy of local students is very important in the context of power identity and social justice in secondary schools (De Los Ríos & Molina, 2020). By integrating personal experiences and culturally responsive teaching practices, they can help students understand the complexities of their identities in society. To maximize this positive impact, it is important for educational institutions to provide adequate support for immigrant teachers so that they can contribute effectively to creating an inclusive learning environment.

Steps to Build Literacy Understanding of Cultural Diversity, Power Identity, and Social Justice Among Local High School Students by Immigrant Teachers in Papua

Building literacy understanding among local high school students regarding cultural diversity, power identity, and social justice is an important endeavor that requires the active involvement of immigrant teachers. These educators bring

unique perspectives that can enrich the learning environment and facilitate deeper engagement with complex social issues.

Integrating Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Culturally relevant pedagogy is essential to creating an inclusive classroom environment. According to Ladson-Billings (2021), culturally relevant teaching practices encourage students to connect their personal experiences with academic content, thereby increasing their engagement and understanding of various cultural perspectives. By integrating materials that reflect students' backgrounds and experiences, immigrant teachers can help students see the relevance of their education in the context of their cultural identity (Ladson-Billings, 2021).

The integration of local cultural materials in the educational curriculum is essential to improve students' cultural literacy. According to Kurniati et al. (2024), good civic education must be able to integrate local values to prepare students to become responsible citizens (Kurnianti et al., 2024). In Jayapura City, for example, about 60% of high school students do not have an adequate understanding of their local culture, indicating an urgent need to improve cultural literacy among the young generation of Papuans (Yektingtyas & Modouw, 2017).

Driving Critical Awareness

Encouraging critical awareness among students is essential to understanding social justice issues. Freire (2020) emphasizes the importance of dialogue in education as a means to develop critical awareness of social inequality (Freire, 2020). Immigrant teachers can facilitate discussions that challenge students to think critically about the dynamics of power and social justice, encouraging them to analyze their roles in the community and society at large.

Building literacy in the classroom is not just about teaching students to read and write; It also involves the development of critical thinking and the promotion of social justice. The integration of social justice principles into literacy education empowers students to engage critically with texts and understand broader social issues that affect their lives and communities. This approach encourages students to become active participants in their learning and become advocates for change. One of the key aspects of building literacy through a social justice perspective is the selection of diverse and inclusive texts. According to research by Gorski and Pothini (2020), the use of diverse literature in the classroom not only improves students' literacy skills, but also helps them develop empathy and a deeper understanding of social issues (Gorski & Pothini, 2020).

By introducing students to a variety of perspectives, educators can help them recognize and challenge systemic injustices, while fostering a sense of responsibility and the ability to act. Additionally, integrating discussions about

social justice into literacy teaching can improve students' critical thinking skills. As noted by Paris and Alim (2020), the practice of critical literacy that focuses on social justice encourages students to question the status quo and analyze the power dynamics present in the text (Paris & Alim, 2020).

Critical engagement with these texts allows students to connect their reading and writing to real-world issues, making their learning more relevant and impactful. Furthermore, creating a classroom environment that values social justice can promote a sense of belonging and community among students. When students see their identities and experiences reflected in the curriculum, they tend to engage more meaningfully with the learning materials. As highlighted by Ladson-Billings (2021), culturally supportive pedagogies not only affirm students' identities but also empower them to use their voices in the fight for social change (Ladson-Billings, 2021).

This empowerment is essential for developing educated individuals, not only as skilled readers and writers, but also as informed and active citizens. In conclusion, building literacy and social awareness in the classroom is essential to develop learners who are critical, engaged, and sensitive to social issues. By integrating diverse texts, encouraging critical discussion, and creating an inclusive environment, educators can empower students to become advocates for social change while improving their literacy skills.

Using Multicultural Teaching Strategies

Multicultural teaching strategies are effective in addressing the diverse backgrounds of students. Research by Civitillo et al. (2022) shows that the implementation of this strategy can significantly improve students' understanding of cultural diversity and social justice. For example, activities that involve collaborative projects on local history or community issues can help students appreciate a variety of perspectives while developing literacy skills (Civitillo et al., 2022).

Learning methods that value cultural diversity can help students understand their identity. An education that pays attention to the local cultural context can maintain a connection with their cultural identity. Therefore, it is important to implement learning methods that include a variety of cultural perspectives, such as community service projects that can increase student engagement in civic activities (Asril et al., 2023).

Engaging Family and Community

Involving families and communities in the educational process enhances students' learning experiences. According to a Curtis, 2021 study, parental involvement in school activities creates a sense of belonging and support for

immigrant students. Schools are supposed to create opportunities for families to participate in cultural events or discussions about social justice, thereby strengthening the relationship between home and school (Curtis et al., 2021).

Inviting families and communities to engage in language literacy learning is essential to promote social justice and enhance students' social capacity, especially in culturally diverse environments. This engagement not only supports students' academic success, but also promotes a sense of belonging and community, which is crucial for their overall development. In culturally diverse classrooms, family and community participation can significantly enrich the literacy learning experience. According to a study by Hill and Tyson (2020), "family involvement in education is associated with improved student learning outcomes, including higher literacy levels and greater social awareness (Hill & Tyson, 2020). When families are actively involved in their children's education, they contribute valuable cultural perspectives, which can enhance the learning environment and make literacy teaching more relevant and meaningful. Furthermore, partnerships with communities can provide additional resources and support for language literacy learning. As noted by Mapp and Kuttner (2021), collaborative efforts between schools and community organizations can create a more inclusive educational environment that recognizes and values the diverse cultural backgrounds of students (Mapp & Kuttner, 2021).

These partnerships can facilitate access to culturally relevant materials and programs, which not only promote literacy but also address social justice issues. Family and community involvement also helps develop students' social capacity by encouraging critical thinking and empathy. When students are exposed to different perspectives through family and community involvement, they learn to appreciate different viewpoints and develop a deeper understanding of social issues. As highlighted by González et al. (2022), culturally responsive teaching that involves family and community involvement encourages students to critically analyze their social context and empowers them to become advocates for social change (González et al., 2022).

This empowerment is essential to form informed and active citizens, who can make a positive contribution to society. In conclusion, involving families and communities in language literacy learning is a powerful strategy to promote social justice and enhance students' social capacity in culturally diverse environments. By encouraging collaboration between schools, families, and communities, educators can create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment that respects diversity and empowers all students.

Continuous Professional Development for Teachers

Continuous professional development is essential to equip immigrant teachers with the skills necessary to effectively address cultural diversity. Training programs should focus on culturally responsive teaching methods and strategies to promote social justice in the classroom (Soylu et al., 2020). This kind of professional development ensures that teachers stay informed about the latest best practices and research in multicultural education.

Building literacy understanding among local high school students in Papua about cultural diversity, power identity, and social justice requires a comprehensive approach involving immigrant teachers. By integrating culturally relevant pedagogy, encouraging critical awareness, using multicultural teaching strategies, engaging families, and providing ongoing professional development, educators can create an inclusive learning environment that empowers all students.

CONCLUSION

This research identifies various challenges faced by non-indigenous Papuan teachers in understanding the literacy and cultural diversity of indigenous Papuan students at the high school level. Non-native teachers often face barriers such as a lack of understanding of local cultures, language differences, and a lack of institutional support. This has implications for the learning process, where indigenous Papuan students feel alienated and less motivated. In addition, the incompatibility of the curriculum with local cultural values exacerbates the situation, creating social disparities and inequities in the classroom environment. Immigrant teachers, despite facing challenges, have great potential to play an important role in integrating culturally relevant educational approaches. Through culturally responsive pedagogy and collaboration with local communities, teachers can build literacy and promote social justice in the classroom. An inclusive approach like this not only increases student engagement but also strengthens their sense of belonging and identity.

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