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## Improving Students' Comprehension About Pluralism Through Narrative Text

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### ABSTRACT

*An understanding about pluralism must be planted since early beginning of childhood. This study aims to improve students' understanding of pluralism through narrative texts. This research is a classroom action research conducted on students of class XI IPA 1 at SMA Negeri 1 Sigaluh, Banjarnegara Regency, totaling 34 students. The level of students' understanding of pluralism was measured using a questionnaire. In addition, to strengthen the implementation of narrative texts in the classroom, the researchers conducted observations and interviews. The results of the research before the action were known that 23% of students had a low level of understanding of pluralism, 29% was sufficient, 41% was good, and only 7% or 2 students were in the high category. Furthermore, the questionnaire analysis in cycle 1 showed that students' understanding of pluralism increased significantly where there were no more (0%) students who had a low level of understanding of pluralism, 35% of students had a level of understanding of pluralism that was sufficient, 48% was good, and 17% was high. Furthermore, significant changes occurred in cycle 2 where 8% of students still have a sufficient level of understanding of pluralism, 64% are good, and 26% are high. The increase is inseparable from social values in the form of understanding related to friendship, unity, mutual respect, respect and care for each other which are contained in the various narrative texts given.*

**Keyword:** Pluralism, Narrative Text, Action Research.

### INTRODUCTION

Indeed, a pluralist state can be a strength, but if it is not accompanied by a good rationale, it can become a threat. The threat of national disintegration is very vulnerable in a multicultural country if sectoral understanding and interests of certain groups are not accompanied by a strong understanding of diversity. Pluralism always has two faces: on the one side it is a strength of integration, on the other side it is

a threat of disintegration (Rahman, 2016). A good understanding of pluralism is a strong foundation to maintain national unity and integrity. As a country that has various cultures, traditions, customs and local wisdom, every element of society must have a high understanding of pluralism and multiculturalism. One of the things that often appears that shows that the understanding of pluralism in Indonesian society is still low is the existence of various conflicts and fights

caused by sectoral egos and the interests of certain groups. Therefore, social problems about multiculturalism and pluralism are still faced by society (Zakiah, 2019).

In the context of education, student brawls often occur in various locations and regions due to the lack of students' understanding of diversity and differences. Students consider certain groups to be stronger than other groups which causes a sense of disrespect and respect for fellow human beings. Especially at the age of adolescence where students tend to have high egocentric feelings and search for identity to tend not to give in. schools as an institution mandated to educate the nation should take part in providing an understanding of religion and should be capable of creating an environment that provides educational opportunities to students to construct harmonious social relations between students of different religion (Sapendi, 2012).

This endangers the sustainability of education in Indonesia. Moreover, the assumption that brawls are a habit that is considered not to be a problem. Therefore, there needs to be an action taken by various related parties, both teachers, parents, school principals, and other policy makers. Teachers should first mind the term 'culture' since it lies at the heart of the concept of intercultural competence (Atmojo & Putra, 2022). The low understanding of pluralism that causes the emergence of an understanding that certain groups are better than other groups can be reduced through various approaches. In the learning process, the storytelling method using narrative text is an alternative that can be given to students to increase students' understanding of pluralism. Storytelling can be a magic to improve students' comprehension about culture and ideas and it will affects students' attitude (Silviyanti et al., 2022). Furthermore, narrative text will improve students' ability in critical thinking skills, it is can be used as a foundation to avoid violence (Suharno & Setyarini, 2021). Children of low age can understand multicultural values well if they use the story method.

Understanding about pluralism must be comprehended by every elements of society. Several research have been conducted relate to pluralism in islamic school (Komarudin, 2020; Nurmalina & Prastowo, 2022; Rahman, 2016). Moreover, study about pluralism implemented in senior high school needs more discussion (Peni & Priska, 2019). There is no specific study which analysed pluralism in the Buddhist religious concern by using certain text. This is the gap that will be accomplished by this study.

The objective of this study is to improve students' understanding about pluralism. Principally, efforts to increase understanding of pluralism can be done in various ways. One way that can be done in the teachings of Buddhism is through English Jataka stories. Jataka stories are a collection of stories of the Buddha in his past lives before becoming a Buddha (Widodo, 2018). Various stories that exist always have moral values that can be instilled in readers and society. The moral values that exist vary widely, including values related to pluralism. The titles of English Jataka stories that have pluralism values include finding a new spring, the mouse merchant, the price maker, and others.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a type of action research. Action is needed as an effort to instill and increase understanding related to pluralism. Furthermore, classroom action research is one type of research that is relevant to solving a problem experienced by a particular study group. The actions taken are in the form of learning by giving and telling narrative texts that contain high moral values and pluralism. Narrative text enables students to communicate and clarify their thoughts and ideas in words (Rajendra & Kaur, 2022). The texts are taken from *Jataka* Stories. This research was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Sigaluh, Banjarnegara Regency in class XI IPA 1, totaling 34 students.

Action research has a number of activities to be carried out which are called cycles. These activities are: 1) planning; 2)

implementation; 3) observation; 4) reflection. Pluralist attitude is a tendency or pattern of behavior of a person relative to pluralism itself, both negatively and positively. A negative pluralist attitude is the tendency of a person's behavior to respond to diversity (ethnicity, race, culture, language and religion) by refusing, destroying, taking anarchic actions and not respecting or respecting this diversity. While a positive pluralist attitude is the attitude of someone who is willing to accept,

appreciate, appreciate and respect the existing diversity by maintaining so as to create a safe, peaceful and conducive atmosphere for others. The data collected in the form of numbers, written statements, oral information and various facts related to the focus of the research being studied. Data collection techniques in this study used questionnaires, observations, interviews, and documentation.

**Table 1. Questionnaire Rubric**

Variable	Indicators	Item Numbers
	Accepting Pluralism	1,2,3*,4,5*
Pluralisme	High enthusiasm of Pluralism	6,7,8,9,10*
	Appreciating Pluralism	11,12*,13,14*,15
	Respecting Pluralism	16*,17,18,19*,20

\* *negative item*

Based on the results of the data analysis, it is known that there is no invalid statement items because the calculated r value is greater than the r table value. Based

on the results of the analysis that has been carried out the reliability value of the questionnaire is as follows:

**Table 2. Reliability Test**

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.816	20

The value of 0.816 indicates that the questionnaire is in the good category according to the predetermined criteria. So that the questionnaire is suitable to be used to collect data.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Pre-cycle

Before being given the action, the researcher gave a questionnaire to find out the extent of students' understanding of pluralism. This is also the basis for researchers in determining the actions to be taken. In addition, it is used to develop various plans so that the actions taken are targeted and effective. The results of the questionnaire in the pre-action phase are as follows:

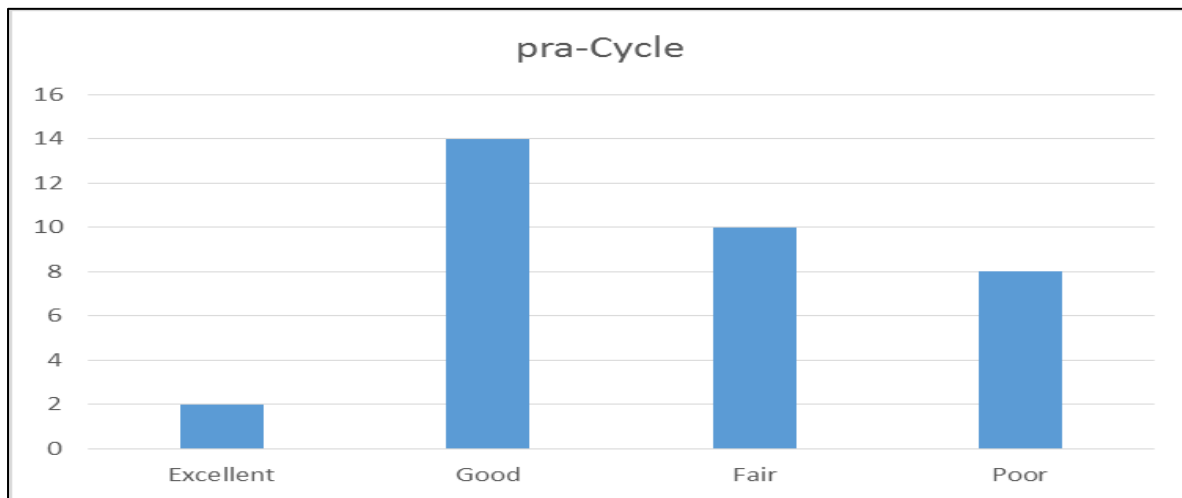


Chart 1. Results of Questionnaire Analysis (Pre-Cycle)

Before the action was taken, it was known that students who had a high level of understanding were still low, there were only 2 students. Furthermore, if looked at the results of the questionnaire, there are still 8 students who have a low level of understanding of pluralism. Therefore, researchers collaborate with teachers to implement narrative texts in learning by providing stories taken from Jataka stories which are classified as narrative texts that have high pluralism values.

### Planning

After knowing the problems that existed in the initial pre-action conditions, researchers and teachers worked together to prepare lesson plans. The things that have been done are: 1) selecting a number of narrative text stories that have a strong moral value of pluralism; 2) make a learning implementation plan; 3) prepare the required learning media such as LCD, laptop, video, speakers, and others; 4) categorizing students who are included in students who have a good, sufficient, and low understanding of pluralism; 5) determine the schedule for implementing actions that can be carried out by both researchers and teachers; 6) create learning materials; 7)

prepare observation sheets; 8) prepare a questionnaire.

### Action

Before learning begins, the teacher prepares various tools and media needed such as laptops, LCDs, videos and narrative puzzles. Learning begins with prayer. After that the teacher checked the attendance of students and as many as 13 students overall entered and participated in learning activities. The teacher explained that the meeting at that time would focus on the moral values contained in the text. Students are asked to focus on the story line and on the message in the story. Before the teacher does the story, the teacher provides text material with the aim of making it easier for students to understand the content of the story. Next, the teacher started to tell the story of the first narrative text entitled Demons In The Desert. The teacher tells the characters that have a storyline up to the moral values contained in it. Every time there is a moral message, the teacher will raise and emphasize his voice in the hope that the students will remember and understand what was conveyed better. The teacher repeatedly says things that might arouse students' feelings to find out more. Not infrequently the teacher also asks students if there are things to be conveyed.

In the Jataka story with the title *Demons In The Desert*, a very important moral value is how differences must be united and not separated so that they become a force that can defeat demons or storms or other obstacles. After the teacher finished telling the story, the teacher continued by playing a supporting video that had moral values similar to the existing Jataka stories. After the video is finished playing the teacher asks students to form groups of 3-4 people. The group must write down the moral values contained in the English Jataka story, besides that the group must also briefly retell the Jataka story that has been conveyed previously. At the second meeting the English Jataka story used was entitled *Beauty and Grey*. The second meeting emphasized on students who have low ability to understand pluralism. The teacher arranges students who have low understanding of pluralism to sit in the front row. Then the teacher asked the group's assignments last week to be presented in front of the class. The teacher appoints a group of students who still have the ability to understand pluralism to move forward. Students explain the existing moral values and retell the previous story a bit. The teacher gives appreciation and reminds the existing moral values and values related to pluralism to always be remembered and applied in everyday life.

Next, the teacher continued the next English jataka story material, entitled *Beauty and Grey*. Previously, the teacher provided material that had been made to help students understand the story. The teacher invites students together to read while interpreting it into Indonesian. As in the previous meeting, if there are sentences that have good moral values related to pluralism, the teacher will emphasize and increase his voice. At the end of the story the teacher adds the importance of mutual respect and respect for everyone regardless of the person's background. In an effort to relate the narrative text to the daily life of the students, the teacher asks one of the students to tell an interesting experience related to the moral values that exist in the text that has been read before. The teacher

appoints students who are in the good category to share their experiences with the aim that these students can provide new understanding that can be remembered by other students. After the student tells the story, the teacher gives appreciation and reinforcement so that each student continues to protect and respect everyone. Before the activity was closed to determine the development of students' understanding abilities related to pluralism, a post-test was conducted by giving students a questionnaire. Students are asked to fill in for approximately 10 minutes then the learning activities are closed.

### **Observation**

Observations are carried out simultaneously with learning activities. Observer is a teacher using an observation sheet that has been prepared in advance. Based on the analysis of the data obtained when the first and second meetings took place, it was found that students paid close attention when the teacher told the stories in the narrative text. There are still some students who pay less attention but it is only temporary and then shows an enthusiastic attitude again. At the first meeting when the video was played, the students looked very enthusiastic and paid close attention. When the English Jataka story was delivered by the teacher, the students looked a little confused at the beginning of the meeting. This is because the teacher does not tell the material which part of the story the teacher is telling.

In addition, at the first meeting during group division activities, it was very clear that students still only joined their closest friends and chose groups based on gender. After the teacher gave an explanation, the students began to understand and took the initiative to replace their group members. During the discussion activities, one group is only dominated by one person while the other members tend to follow what is conveyed by him. At the second meeting it looked better. The students are able to follow the existing storyline and look enthusiastic even though it is not supported by video media. Students

seem to listen carefully to the story conveyed by the teacher. Not infrequently some students also ask questions even though it is only related to translation from English to Indonesian. When the moral values were expressed the students seemed to pay attention well but there were 2 students who were busy with their friends chatting and playing paper.

At the time of appointing students to share their experiences, it was seen that a number of students showed unfavorable behavior such as mocking and teasing. Some students also showed an attitude that did not pay attention to what was conveyed by the designated student. This becomes a note and focus of learning activities in the next cycle. Furthermore, a number of students showed

inattentive behavior in being asked to make an analysis of the moral values contained in the narrative text. At the second meeting, a questionnaire was given to measure students' understanding of pluralism. The students filled out the questionnaire carefully.

### Reflection

Based on data analysis conducted both before the action and after the first cycle, it was found that there was an increase in understanding related to pluralism. Based on the results of the questionnaire analysis, there was an increase from pre-cycle to cycle 1. The presentation of data on increasing understanding of pluralism from both pre-cycle and cycle 1 conditions was as follows:

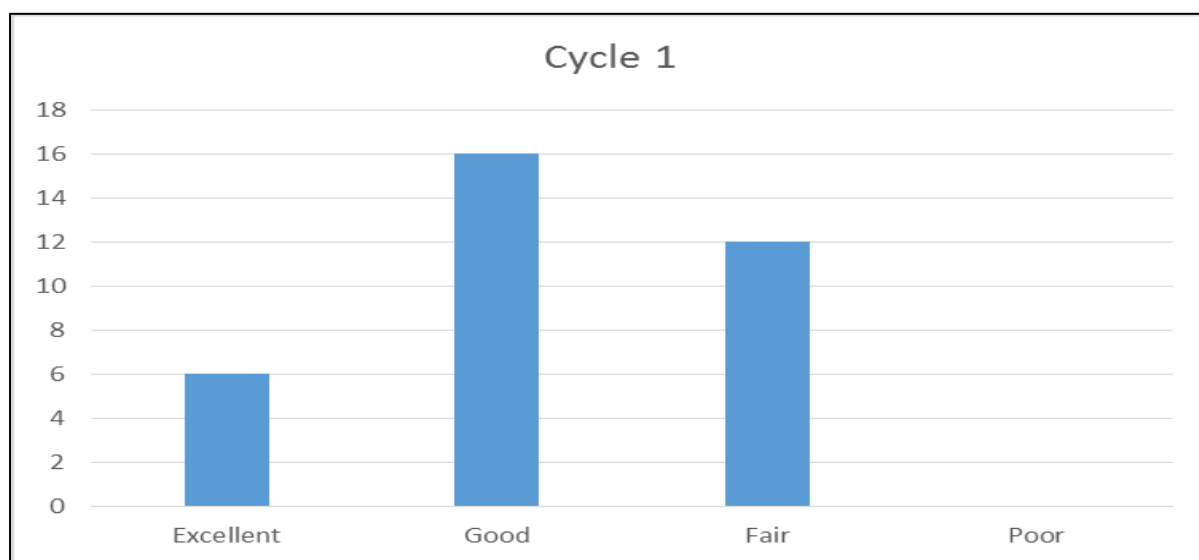


Chart 2. Results of Questionnaire Analysis (Cycle 1)

The result after conducted cycle 1, it can be known that there is no more students who have poor comprehension about pluralism. There is a significance improvement of students having excellent comprehension about pluralism from 2 students become 6 students on the first cycle. The students having good comprehension about pluralism increaseses from 10 to 16 students. However, there are still a number of shortcomings that occurred during the first cycle. Some students still show behavior that does not show respect. In addition, some students also have not

shown high enthusiasm or attention during the learning process. It is supported through the data observation that 30% students still argues in choosing their groups. Moreover, based on the questionnaire it is known that 12 students still have fair understanding about pluralism. At the time of determining the division of the group, some students also still showed behavior that did not manifest a pluralist attitude.

Several things that are reflected need to be improved based on cycle I, namely:

- 1) The attitude of some students who still show a lack of understanding of the concept of pluralism.
- 2) Enthusiasm in participating in the learning of some students who are still not optimal.
- 3) The habit of grouping in certain groups or groups when dividing groups.

However, there are a number of positive things to be noted after the first cycle is carried out, namely:

- 1) The students seemed to understand and were interested in the Jataka stories that were delivered.
- 2) The students showed a positive attitude when the moral values of Jataka stories were conveyed.
- 3) The students are willing to improve themselves after receiving a warning from the teacher.

## Cycle 2

Cycle 2 was carried out because the results of the analysis of cycle 1 showed that there were still various shortcomings in learning, including there were still students who had a low understanding of pluralism. The implementation of cycle 2 focuses on improvements based on the reflections that have been made. The shortcomings found during reflection are used as the basis for learning such as paying more attention to students who have a low understanding of pluralism, supervising students who are still not enthusiastic, increasing the conduciveness and continuity of group discussions, and so on.

## Planning

The planning carried out in cycle 2 is not much different from the first cycle, the difference is in the focus of the action. The planning activities carried out in cycle 2 are: 1) selecting a number of English jakaka stories that have a strong moral value of pluralism; 2) make a learning implementation plan; 3) prepare the required learning media such as LCD, laptop, video, speakers, and others; 4) categorizing students who are included in students who have a good, sufficient, and low

understanding of pluralism; 5) determine the schedule for implementing actions that can be carried out by both researchers and teachers; 6) create learning materials; 7) prepare observation sheets; 8) prepare a questionnaire.

## Action

Meeting 3 begins with being led by one of the students. Next, the teacher gives the material for the English Jataka story that has been prepared previously. Narrative text material at meeting 1 of cycle 2 is entitled the golden plate. The teacher starts the story by reading the title and the characters in it. Next, the teacher tells the narrative text while reminding students to pay attention to the material that has been prepared. As in cycle 1 when there are important moral values the teacher will give a higher emphasis and intonation of voice. The English jataka story delivered by the teacher ends with a closing without conveying moral values. Next, the teacher asks students to form groups independently.

Independent group formation aims to determine the level of student understanding. The group formed consists of 3-4 members. The group's task is to find the moral values that exist in the English Jataka stories that have been delivered by the teacher. In addition, the group's task is to make a summary of the Jataka story in English but using Indonesian. It aims to facilitate the delivery and continuity of the learning process. Presentations were made by groups 1 and 2, each consisting of 3 and 4 people. 1 group delivered their presentation at the next meeting due to limited time. Groups 1 and 2 delivered presentations and continued with questions and answers by the teacher and students. Then followed by a statement of conclusions submitted by the teacher.

Meeting 4 continues meeting 1 in cycle 2. The second meeting begins with a prayer led by one of the students. The second meeting continued with presentations from the previous group. After that, the teacher returned to tell the story of the 4th English jataka, entitled the price maker. The teacher distributes the material to the students



before telling the English Jataka story. The teacher begins the story by reading the title and characters and telling the students to pay close attention. The teacher tells the existing Jataka stories and places emphasis on words or sentences that have moral values, including the value of pluralism.

The teacher allows students to interrupt if there are things to be conveyed. After finishing reading the story the teacher again asked the students to form groups independently but the group should not be the same as the previous group. After the group division is complete, the group's task is to look for moral values and pluralism and relate them to everyday life. The group discussion lasted about 20 minutes and was followed by presentations by all group members. Group 1 presented the results of the discussion and there were questions and answers from groups 2 and 3 as well as the teacher. Group 2 Presented the results of their discussion and only group 1 asked questions. Group 3 presented the results of their discussion and only the teacher asked questions. Then the teacher gives a closing sentence and continues to encourage students to implement the moral values that exist in everyday life. Before the second meeting ends, the teacher submits a questionnaire related to pluralism that must be filled out by students.

### **Observation**

Observation in cycle 2 focused on learning activities and group discussions. Group discussions are important to observe to find out how students appreciate differences in thoughts and opinions. Based on the results of observations, it is known that the learning in the second cycle runs better. Students show high attention during the learning process, especially when the teacher delivers narrative texts. All students seemed to be listening carefully when the teacher told stories with narrative texts. When the teacher started the story the

students were seen preparing the material that had been given previously. When the teacher conveys the existing moral values, the students look carefully listening to the presentation delivered. The moral values that exist in the narrative text given in the second cycle are more varied and have a close relationship with everyday life so that students look easier to accept it.

Significant changes in cycle 2 occurred at the time of group formation. The students looked very open and willing to join any group, there were no students who were in groups and chose to join only their closest friends. Furthermore, when the discussion between groups was running, the students looked enthusiastic. Differences of opinion and thoughts arose during the discussion, but all students gave a positive response. There is no behavior or speech that shows impoliteness or tries to bring down other students, all respect each other and respect the opinions of their friends. Furthermore, during the appointment of who will present the material in front of the class, students also do not seem to throw each other. The students chose to discuss and appointed students who would be able to convey the material, the designated students also showed their willingness to present the points of discussion results. Overall the discussion activities went well. The shortcomings are only limited to students who are still confused to determine their group members.

In the second cycle, another questionnaire was given to determine the increase in understanding of pluralism. Questionnaires were given at the time of the second meeting. The students were very enthusiastic when filling out the questionnaire, no students asked other friends the answers were given all based on the understanding and desires of each student. Based on the results of the questionnaire analysis in the second cycle, the information presented in the following bar chart is obtained:

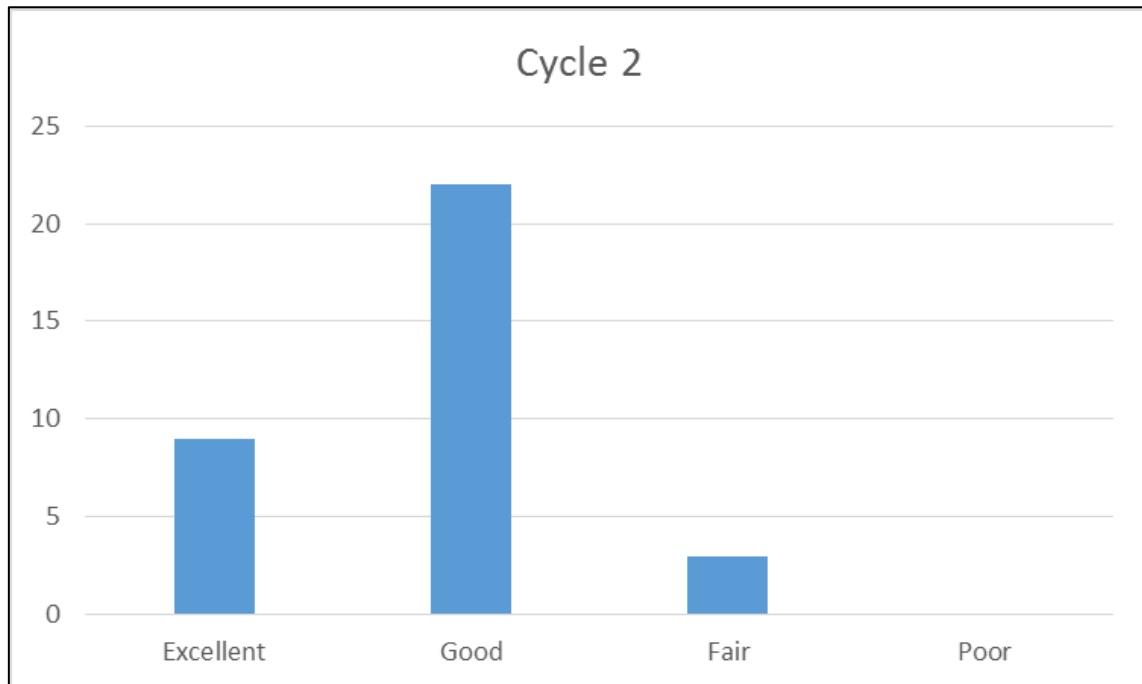


Chart 3. Results of Questionnaire Analysis (Cycle 2)

Based on the questionnaire analysis of the second cycle, it is known that there is a significance improvement of students' comprehension about pluralism. There are 9 students categorised into excellent, while in the group of good comprehension about pluralism it also increases significantly from 16 to 22 students. The significance of this increase occurred because the English Jataka stories used could be well digested by students, especially the existing moral values. Moreover, the variation of existing moral values and the focus of activities carried out by the teacher during the learning process made the increase in understanding that occurred in cycle 2 increase significantly.

### Reflection

Based on the actions and observations made in cycle 2, the overall increase in understanding related to pluralism has increased significantly, marked by the absence of students who fall into the poor category and an increase in students who fall into the very good category. Moreover, the learning process takes place in a conducive manner where all

students pay close attention to each stage of learning activities so that it shows more success in cycle 2. The group discussion activities which became the main component of the learning activities in cycle 2 also showed very good things. The students are able to discuss well by prioritizing the interests of the group rather than just the thoughts of students individually. This shows the most maturity for students who are still in senior high school. Based on these things, it was decided to end the ongoing cycle process. The researcher realized that there was still 1 student who was included in the sufficient category in the level of understanding related to pluralism so that this could be used as a background for follow-up for the next study.

### Discussion

The implementation of English Jataka stories for students is able to improve students' understanding of pluralism. Based on the distribution of the questionnaire, there was an increase in both the pre-cycle conditions, cycle 1, and the last cycle 2. The presentation of increasing student understanding related to pluralism can be illustrated by the following bar chart:

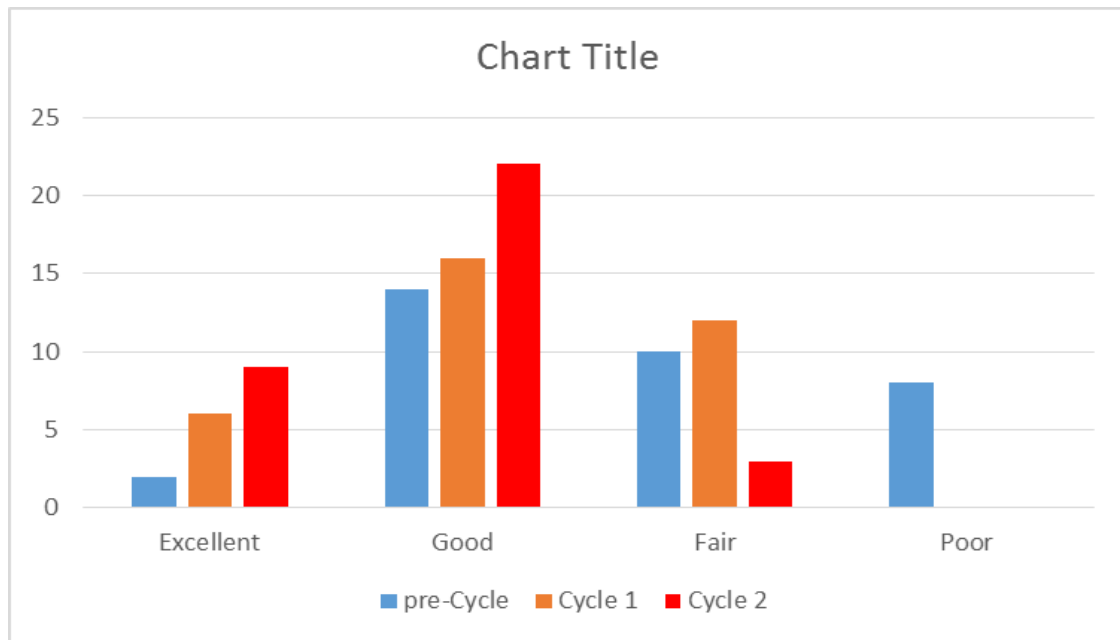


Chart 4. Results of Questionnaire Analysis (pre-cycle, cycle 1, cycle 2)

Increasing understanding of pluralism cannot be separated from the implementation of English Jataka stories that are carried out during the learning process. Jataka stories are very closely related to people's daily lives because they contain teachings about humanity (Widodo, 2021). This statement supports the findings of this study that there are values of friendship, loyalty, unity, togetherness, and others, which values can increase students' understanding of pluralism. Through stories can generate imagination. Imagination in the story is described in a person's thinking which is transformed in a reflection of behavior in everyday life. The proof of imagination and thought can be seen from the actions taken by both deeds and words. Difference becomes the color of respect, gives high respect and encourages unity in diversity (Lestari et al., 2022). There is a connection between Jataka stories that are able to generate imagination with one's thoughts and behavior, meaning that through Jataka stories one can change one's mindset.

Narrative text taken in this study is based on the story life of the Buddha (Jataka). Buddha as a religion is a unity from several parts such as Brahmanis, Jainis, and materialis, however it can unite all of them (Rachmat, 1992). Learning English through

Jataka stories requires a high concentration of students. Students are required to follow the story line, including the characters of the characters in it. This is able to encourage students to identify characters and behaviors that should be imitated and avoided. In addition, the teacher always reminds to implement the values of goodness that exist in Jataka stories in everyday life. Both of these provide a new understanding of students. Students try to continue to spur themselves to take actions with the values that are in them. (Widodo, 2018) reveals that there are social values which, if implemented by readers of Jataka stories, can change the life of a community or society. This opinion strengthens the research findings which through English Jataka stories students' understanding of pluralism can increase.

Social-life of students are still separated based on the minority and majority and it is a serious problem (Setyabudi, 2019). Tradition and culture which is managed and implemented contiously will affects people attitude towards integrity and unity. Speaking of social issues, the Buddhist concept recognizes the terms kalyana mita (a good friend) and akalyana mita (a bad friend). This is the wisdom having by Buddhist people. Local wisdom can be used to

integrate and strengthen integrity and harmony (Maknun, 2020). Moreover, religious values, dialogues, and social interaction is one of tools to build peace and harmony (Saihu, 2021). This becomes the basis for students' understanding in socializing. The things contained in the kalyana and the kalyana mita are principally contained in the Jataka stories. There is a relationship in terms of good values between the Jataka with kalyana and akalyanamita so that students' perspectives on socializing can emerge from the Jataka story. There are at least 4 things that become implications both from the student's perspective on the association or friendship as well as their own association. The four things are: 1) open in thinking; 2) increased self-confidence; 3) strengthening the understanding of togetherness and equality; 4) see the figure or figure of a person based on character. Openness in thinking has meaning in associating students not seeing someone based on their background. Openness in thinking must be based on a good understanding of the boundaries related to religious, social, and polite norms. Norm understanding is used to fortify students from mistaken thinking about a concept. If the wrong thinking continues to be considered correct and carried out by students, it can become a thing that is detrimental to itself.

Furthermore, the change in the way students think at first tends to be shy about starting friendships or associating with certain students begins to show high self-confidence. The low self-confidence of students was initially based on the feelings of the minority and the majority. Religion has a power to create solidarity among equal an unequal faith (Rosyid, 2018). Through the moral values contained in English Jataka stories, students realize that the most important thing is not the amount but what can and has been done. This creates a sense of pride in students. Togetherness is the main foundation when talking about pluralism. Togetherness in this case is togetherness that is carried out in positive ways and produces good things. Moral values related to togetherness and equality contained in the story of Jataka language can

lead students not to become students who are selfish but students who prioritize common interests. The association expected by students is also an association that prioritizes common interests.

Diversity of ethnicity, race, religion and beliefs that at certain social loci has been positioned as a determinant of conflict (Tamrin, 2022). Equality is closely related to one's recognition of his existence. Students will be disturbed and tend not to feel comfortable socializing if in one group there is a conversation that emphasizes one thing more than another. Some unpleasant experiences also underlie students the importance of equality in association. The implementation of equality in the association is able to make people aware to continue to respect and respect others. After the implementation of learning English Jataka stories, students see someone more based on their character, not just their background. Character is very important in getting along. Character is a reflection of the life that has been and will be lived. The humorous character is the character most favored by the students in choosing friends. On the other hand, the most disliked character is the one who is angry or easily offended.

## CONCLUSION

Increasing understanding of pluralism through English Jataka stories can be carried out well because there are moral values that can be easily absorbed and understood by students. In addition, the techniques used by teachers by continuing to emphasize moral values as well as giving appreciation and constantly reminding them to implement them in everyday life can be well absorbed by students. During the learning process students also looked enthusiastic and paid attention to every storyline that was conveyed. The implications of increasing understanding of pluralism on students' associations include: 1) being open in thinking; 2) increased self-confidence; 3) strengthening the understanding of togetherness and equality; 4) see the figure or figure of a person based on character.

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