

## Inserting Local Wisdom in English Material: Strategies and Benefits

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the strategies and benefits of incorporating local cultural values in English language teaching. The type of research used is library research. Data was collected through reference collection from journals, articles, or books related to local culture in teaching. The analysis shows that the use of local cultural values is able to build student awareness of culture, encourage students to love the uniqueness and value of their culture, and improve their understanding of English material. The strategies that English teachers can apply when teaching using local culture are through materials related to products or objects typical of a region, such as using pictures or photos, conducting discussions, making video projects, practicing conversations, group learning, and making podcasts. Furthermore, the benefits that occur when including local wisdom in English teaching include increasing socio-cultural awareness, making students more aware of their culture and familiar materials, developing students' character, improving students' language skills, and increasing tolerance and mutual respect. To be successful in teaching English through local culture, teachers need to design and emphasize learning materials and activities using local culture so that students are more aware of the uniqueness of their culture.

**Keywords:** Local wisdom, English material, strategies, benefits.

### INTRODUCTION

English is one of the subjects studied in many schools in Indonesia. English is a foreign language that is most often encountered in everyday life, where almost every aspect of life is often described in English terms. Even the use of Indonesian in everyday life is often combined with the use of English, which has its own uniqueness in its use. Learning English is challenging because, in the context of Indonesian education, English is a foreign language, not a second language. This will be a little

more difficult to teach because foreign language acquisition is certainly different from second language acquisition. Therefore, the task of an English teacher is not only to teach how students are able to understand English but also so that the language can be used, mastered, and practiced in daily communication for a specific purpose. Of course, this task is not only to provide teaching but also to show how the learning process can be more meaningful so that students have good motivation and interest in

learning to understand English. Teachers need to provide an understanding of enculturation so that students have the ability to understand cultural differences (Taqwa & Sandi, 2019).

Learning English at school is sometimes a difficult thing for teachers to do because of the limitations and problems faced by students, one of which is the background knowledge of the material presented. Sometimes the material explained feels very unfamiliar to students, so they are not able to understand the purpose and objectives of learning. In addition, the guidebooks used by teachers sometimes use materials that are not familiar with the students' conditions, which causes them to have to recognize the situation of the material environment in advance. Sorongan et al., (2014) stated that unfamiliar material sometimes made it difficult for students to get points from the lesson. (Prayuda, 2021) also added the importance of teachers using materials and media that are in accordance with the characteristics of students so that learning can run well. Seeing this it is very necessary for teachers to design learning in accordance with the environmental conditions of students so that the process of implementing learning can achieve the goals to be achieved.

Fun learning is an important key to be able to increase student learning interest. Teachers can arrange and plan the learning process as well and as interesting as possible either through the use of strategies, media, or learning content that makes students more enthusiastic about participating in English learning classes (Prayudha, 2023). By

choosing the right activities, students will be encouraged to carry out learning English with a pleasant feeling. When this pleasant feeling can be felt by students, the implementation of learning will be better and able to increase understanding and develop students' competence in understanding English material. One way that teachers can apply to encourage students to be motivated to learn English is to utilize local wisdom in designing learning materials.

Culture-based learning content will make it easier for students to understand the material presented by the teacher (Ayu Shaleha & Purbani, 2019). Content-based learning is an alternative in designing learning materials that teachers can use so that students become closer to and understand the learning material that is explained when learning. Teachers need to have good knowledge of surrounding cultural material so that they can make it into learning materials using media that are relevant to students' daily lives. Through local cultural content, it will form students' self-awareness regarding environmental issues and the uniqueness of the environment and the surrounding community.

Local wisdom is the uniqueness and wealth that comes from the surrounding culture which is used as an icon, view, or belief from a region. This local wisdom is one that cannot be separated in the lifestyle of the Indonesian people where almost every region has its own uniqueness and cultural diversity that makes Indonesia a multicultural country. Through the formation of culture-based materials, it is hoped that students will be able to recognize and love this culture so that its

sustainability and preservation will not be eroded by the times. Sulistiyo et al., (2021) states that local wisdom is a local idea that has been embedded and become a habit of a particular community. Moran (2001) also added that this culture can be in the form of product, perspective, person and practice of a particular society.

So it can be seen that by incorporating elements of local wisdom in English teaching materials is able to bring students closer to the local culture that surrounds them so that it makes it easier for students to understand the conditions of their socio-cultural environment. In this study, researchers try to reveal the strategies and benefits of using local wisdom in learning English at school. Through this research, the researcher hopes to provide new insights to readers regarding the importance of using local wisdom-based content to increase socio-culture awareness in learning English and then to facilitate and bring students closer to culture and improve their understanding of English for the better.

## **METHOD**

The current study is library research. Library research is presented in easy-to-understand language and refers to the theoretical concept approach and examples of its application (Evanirosa, 2022). In this study, the researcher studied various reference journals, books and the results of previous similar studies that were useful for obtaining a theoretical basis for the problem to be studied. The researcher focuses on the topic of using local wisdom in teaching English based on benefits and strategies. Library

research should use library reference sources that use primary sources, derived from the results of scientific research reports, research seminars, and research journals.

Primary sources or references are references derived directly from the source, as opposed to the opinions of primary sources cited by others in a written work. In this research, the researcher collects documents from related research articles about local wisdom in English teaching from books, national and international journals. The data that has been obtained will be described to get related data (information) on the strategies and benefits in English teaching to enhance students interest and motivation in learning.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Local culture is one of the characteristics of a region. This culture can be in the form of objects (products) or non-objects (perspectives, practices, beliefs) where each of these cultures has an important influence on a society. This culture is the creation of a society (Tajeddin & Teimournezhad, 2015). In the context of this study, local wisdom can be integrated into English learning materials, where teachers can design and design learning through the integration of local values in their teaching so that they can encourage students to get closer to the context of learning materials.

Through the integration of cultural values into English learning content students are expected to be able to better understand socio-cultural awareness in their surroundings. There are no specific techniques for implementing culture-

based learning in English classes, but teachers can incorporate local wisdom into various learning activities (Harley, 2014). The strategies or activities that teachers can apply in incorporating learning materials using local culture are as follows:

### **Inserting pictures or photos**

Teaching English can be done with a variety of interesting activities. Teachers can choose and determine what kind of content they want to include in learning. The teacher is the main key in building and forming an interesting class so that all responsibilities and determinants of learning direction can be arranged and planned as well as possible by the teacher. In this case the teacher can include pictures or photos related to local culture. Whether it's festivals, rituals, ancient buildings, tourist attractions, icons from a region or can put pictures of animals and traditional food to students (Prayudha, 2020).

Students are asked to be able to understand the picture or photo then the teacher can give teaching instructions as to what they want to do. For example, when the teacher teaches about descriptive text, the teacher can use famous places from an area, for example Fort Marlborough, which is located in Bengkulu City, or can use Lake Tes, which is located in Lebong district. The teacher can display the picture in front of the class and ask students to describe the picture either from their own experiences or from their knowledge of the place. Aprianto & Muhlisin (2022) said that teachers need to use interesting pictures or videos to attract students' learning interest. From this activity the

teacher can provoke students to think spontaneously and critically about opinions about the description of the place. Through this activity students will understand more about the conditions and characteristics of typical buildings from an area in their area so that the teacher will only monitor and provide input on student explanations.

In addition to asking students to be able to explain a description of the characteristics of a place or other object, the teacher can ask students to give opinions about a belief, tradition or traditional event that is often carried out in a certain culture in their area, for example at the Bengkulu Ark event the teacher can ask students' perceptions about what they know about the event in English. This learning pattern not only asks students to understand culture but the use of expressing opinions in English will also increase. Through this strategy students will be more motivated to understand things they know relatively well in constructing English in conveying something.

### **Practice conversations about culture**

English class needs to continue to support speaking activities. This is done so that students are able to convey their aspirations and opinions on something in the use of English. By carrying out activities that encourage speaking skills, the English teacher will see how far students are able to master the language. One of the activities that can be done is to practice English conversation. Students have concerns in speaking practice so it is necessary for the teacher to help them get used to practicing speaking (Hakim &

Syam, 2019). The conversational dialogue can be adapted to cultural material where students can role-play about something, for example playing the role of tourists and tourists, asking directions, or explaining something (food, dance, folk songs) using English.

Through this cultural material students will practice understanding culture and English at the same time so that they can create individuals who are ready to become good tourist guides. Through this learning experience the teacher will train students how to deal with international tourism situations, in addition to preparing students to become individuals who are ready for global situations. This conversation activity will certainly continue to be a good habit for students where they will understand a condition that they are likely to face in the future. Therefore, teachers should be able to encourage students to have good understanding of culture and English.

#### **Discussion about local culture**

One of the other activities that can encourage students' speaking and critical thinking skills is through discussion activities. This discussion activity will train students in conveying something in the use of English (Sulistiyo et al., 2021). This discussion activity can be carried out by providing themes or topics related to culture, for example discussing the use of Basurek batik clothes (batik clothes typical of Bengkulu province) at school, or discussing Lemea (special food of the Rejang tribe). Things like this by including elements of local culture will provide new insight to students about the reasons behind the culture being

carried out and of course there is a need for an increase in the use of English. All of these discussion activities can be carried out by asking students to use English so the teacher needs to instruct students in advance to provide preparation regarding the vocabulary and language they need to use before starting a discussion.

#### **Making video project**

To make students improve their speaking skills, critical thinking and self-confidence, the activity of making cultural content videos using English can be applied in the classroom (Prayudha 2022). This activity will train students in expressing their opinions through the use of technology in the classroom. The use of video-making activities really helps students to be more courageous in practicing speaking (Le, 2018). Therefore, the English teacher can provide themes for what students should do in making videos so that students have knowledge in making videos. Students will have the courage to appear in conveying their answers and opinions through the messages they convey using English from the results of the videos they are working on. In addition to increasing students' understanding of culture and English, this activity will also make students produce products in the form of videos which can later be watched and evaluated so they can make and produce better English videos.

#### **Group learning**

Another activity that can be done is to emphasize collaborative learning (Bohari, 2020). Just like discussions and or making videos, several other group activities can also be applied

by the teacher to improve students' understanding of English. For example making infographics, mindmapping and outdoor learning. These activities can be used by teachers to support student learning in groups to get to know each other and understand and appreciate any differences that exist (Prayudha & Solihah, 2023). Through this group activity the teacher can ask students to exchange understandings about various cultures, carry out problem solving, and ask students to be able to convey what they get from the culture-based learning earlier so that students' critical thinking skills, English and collaboration skills can develop.

#### **Making podcast**

Just like other activities, here the teacher can give assignments to students both individually and in groups in making podcast assignments. Students will become more used to it if given repeated training (Siregar, 2021). It could be in the form of a voice note about the cultural understanding they know or explaining a cultural element in English using a voice message. This activity will train speaking, listening, and students' ability to compose a sentence so that when the implementation process is carried out well, students can become more aware of their ability to convey cultural understanding in using English. The English teacher must be a good facilitator and supervisor when all these activities are carried out by students. Students are not only told to do assignments but the teacher must provide an evaluation and revision of every activity carried out while learning English. By understanding what happened during

the lesson, the teacher can assess the extent to which students are progressing in improving their English language skills.

The activity above is a small example that teachers can apply in teaching English through local wisdom. Teachers must have extensive skills and knowledge in developing various activities by incorporating cultural elements so that students are able to become more interested in learning and loving their culture. Furthermore, when teachers carry out various learning activities using local wisdom, there are several benefits that occur, including:

#### **Improving socio-cultural awareness**

Culture is a product of a society. Where this implementation occurred centuries ago and continues to be carried out and preserved to this day. By providing materials based on local wisdom, it will give the younger generation a sense of love and concern for the uniqueness of their region. Through activities carried out in the classroom by using and utilizing local cultural materials, teachers can encourage students to have social-culture awareness. Students will become more sensitive to the socio-cultural life around their environment and will give them habituation about the importance of this culture to be preserved (Adlis, 2022). By having a good understanding of this culture, students can preserve and introduce this culture to everyone, especially when they are able to use English, they are able to introduce this culture internationally. By having good socio-cultural abilities, students can

become individuals who have broad and diverse insights so that they can have a good attitude of tolerance and respect for differences in their environment.

### **Students to be more aware about their culture**

Learning by incorporating local culture will definitely return to provide information about the culture around them. Incorporating local culture means that students will look back at the uniqueness that they may or may not have known before so that it will provide information about that culture. Local culture has an attachment to the users of that culture (Cahya & Syafrizal, 2022). Therefore, when this culture is taught, students will usually become more aware of the wealth they have. Students become more understanding and concerned about cultural issues that develop around them so that an understanding of the uniqueness of this culture can be properly preserved. Furthermore, the teacher needs to emphasize what kind of culture must be brought into teaching so that students can become more understanding and masterful of understanding that culture. When students have a good understanding of the culture, it will be easier for them to express opinions in explaining the culture (Evenddy et al., 2022).

### **Easy to understand English material because it is familiar**

When the learning materials used are easy for students to understand, they will have no difficulty understanding the characteristics and uniqueness of what they will explain. Familiar material will make it much easier for students to develop their understanding (Huda Shofyana et al.,

2022). The thing that needs to be considered is how they will convey the message using good and correct English. Teachers need to provide direction and guidance so that students are able to express these explanations well in English.

### **Improving English skills**

When teachers can use material that is relevant to students' lives, students will find it easier to grasp the goals of the lesson. Various learning activities that have been through while studying will make students more accustomed to preparing their understanding of that culture. This will certainly increase their understanding of the use of English (Adiatmana & Hasan, 2022).

These activities will encourage and familiarize students to continue to develop their ability to communicate in English. In addition, the cultural material that they are relatively good at will make it easier for them to develop the ability to think about the cultural concept so that they will only compose good sentences in conveying what they want to convey. Kurniawati & Malasari (2022) said that through various learning activities students can practice language skills both speaking, listening, reading or writing. The teacher needs to get used to these activities being carried out in the classroom so that students are able to continue to improve these language skills for the better.

### **Encourage students to be more tolerant and appreciative**

By teaching cultural material, it means that the teacher prepares students to be able to openly understand different cultures. The use of cultural content will certainly

provide new insights for students to respect these cultural differences (Indrawati et al., 2022). Students will become more aware of every cultural difference and make them able to respect and appreciate each different culture. The use of this cultural content will also teach students about the values, messages, and rules that apply to a particular area so that it can make students more tolerant and have an attitude of respect for one another.

### CONCLUSION

The values of local wisdom are very important to learn and emphasize on students so that they can recognize, know and preserve the cultural diversity and uniqueness that exists in a region. In learning English it is important for teachers to be able to incorporate elements of local culture so that students can better understand the material in the use of English.

English teachers need to understand the conditions of the surrounding environment so that students are better able to learn English. Through fun learning the teacher can encourage students to be interested in participating in all learning activities in the classroom. Teachers can apply various strategies and benefits when using local wisdom so that they can easily help students understand the material presented or studied. Furthermore, recommendations for teachers can choose and design local cultural content that is appropriate to the circumstances and conditions of students so that learning can be carried out properly. Future researchers can try to conduct research on cultural influences in increasing students' awareness in improving their understanding and mastery of English.

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