

Interconnecting language to culture: Building a local wisdom-based activity book for English teaching of primary schools in Indonesia

*Santhy Hawanti¹, Lia Mareza², Lutfi Istikharoh³, Dewi Santri⁴, Novan Andriyanto⁵, Nur Aisyah⁶

^{1,2,3}Dept. of English Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto, Central Java, Indonesia

^{4,5}Student, Magister of English Education Program, Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto, Central Java, Indonesia

⁶Student, The Dept. of English Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto, Central Java, Indonesia

Abstract

The aim of this project was to integrate the learning process in Banyumasan culture for designing and evaluating the local wisdom-based Students' Activity Book (SAB) for basic English instruction in Indonesia. This study has a number of steps, including need analysis, design, expert validation, and field testing, utilizing a Research and Development (R&D) approach based on Borg and Gall's model. Three main themes originate from the analysis of the results: pedagogical effectiveness, product feasibility, and needs analysis and cultural relevance. Teachers, according to starting polls, believe that local culture should be incorporated into English learning materials because textbooks that only emphasize Western culture often discourage students from learning the language. Expert validation showed an agreement rate of 88 percent, indicating that the Students' Activity Book was appropriate to be used. The materials, including local stories such as The Legend of Baturraden and traditional foods like mendoan, were considered ideal supports for both language and cognitive development among young learners. The field trial also showed that students using the book achieved a higher N-Gain score (0.72) than those in the control group (0.45). These findings suggest that connecting English learning with students' cultural background makes learning more meaningful and effective. This study offers a glocalized model that combines global English learning with local identity in line with the Kurikulum Merdeka, and highlights the importance of local wisdom in improving language skills while preserving cultural pride.

Keywords: Local wisdom, English Language Teaching (ELT), primary education, Kurikulum Merdeka, cultural identity

Article History: Received 19 Jan 2026, Final revision 1 Jun 2026, Published 8 Jun 2026

Introduction

Recently, English proficiency in Indonesia has shifted from being an additional skill to a necessity for the nation to connect with the global community (Fitriati & Rata, 2020). Starting in the 2027/2028 school year, students in Elementary Schools or other equivalent schools throughout Indonesia will learn English as a compulsory subject. This step is taken to foster global communication skills from an early age, while expanding opportunities for Indonesian children to adapt and compete in an increasingly connected world. Nonetheless, the teaching of English in elementary schools (*Sekolah Dasar*) is facing a significant pedagogical challenge due to Western-centric instructional materials being more widely used at this level, which leads to students' cultural disjuncture (Ndura, 2004; Putri et al.,

*Corresponding author: **Santhy Hawanti**, Address: Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto, Jalan K.H. Ahmad Dahlan, PO Box 202, Dukuhwaluh, Kembaran, Banyumas, Central Java, Indonesia 53182. Email: santhyhawanti@ump.ac.id. ©2026 Leksika. All rights reserved.

2025), alongside standard textbooks that tend to highlight foreign context at the expense of marginalizing students' local identities and lessening their interest in the subject (Suryati, 2015). The cultural distinctions highlight the important need for appropriate English Language Teaching (ELT) materials that support both language competencies and the inclusivity of Indonesian local wisdom. Hence, a local wisdom-based activity book that connects the gap between global language demands and the preservation of national cultural values, ensuring that early language acquisition is both contextual and meaningful. The incorporation of local wisdom into ELT could help teachers adjust their classroom practices to capture students' attention and interest.

Despite the increasing focus on English proficiency, ELT at the elementary level in Indonesia has a glaring pedagogical gap: it is not culturally relevant, with materials centered on a Western context, such as snow and foreign landmarks that are removed from the lived experience of Indonesian students, especially in rural and traditional areas where students have difficulty connecting abstract foreign concepts to their immediate environment. (Setyono & Widodo, 2019). In fact, research indicates that when learners do not see themselves in their learning materials, their motivation and engagement sharply drop (Lie, 2017). Therefore, teaching linguistic mechanics without cultural contextualization does not lead to effective communication, and resources need to be developed to bridge this gap (Gao, 2021).

According to pedagogical research, meaningful learning occurs when new linguistic input is linked to a learner's schema (Shin & Crandall, 2014). To facilitate learning, instructional content must be highly relevant to students' cultural, social, and personal worlds (Azitoni, 2023), allowing young learners to integrate new information into their lived experiences and to internalize linguistic structures and their authentic use in real-world scenarios (Meara, 2007). Primary school students are still developing cognitively and emotionally, so their immediate environment is the main lens through which they view the world.

English Language Teaching (ELT) can incorporate folklore, traditional games, and regional rituals to help students make the connection between the global character of English and their local cultural experiences. Incorporating local culture into English Language Teaching (ELT) helps students utilize English as a meaningful tool to express concepts relevant to their own sociocultural background, enhances their communicative ability, and lessens their concern about learning a foreign language (Fitriati & Rata, 2020). Teachers in Indonesian primary schools connect students' everyday experiences with the worldwide function of English through traditional games, folklore, and local customs. Because teachers base their courses on students' prior cultural knowledge and experiences, this approach embodies the tenets of culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2018). As a result, pupils become more engaged in class activities and improve their language abilities. Teachers foster a positive learning environment that supports students' successful language acquisition and fortifies their sense of cultural identity when they teach English in familiar circumstances (Suryati, 2015).

The gap between students' sociocultural experiences and classroom contents that appear foreign or culturally distant is known as cognitive distance. Students find the content less meaningful, more abstract, and difficult to comprehend as a result of this gap (Kline, 1993). Students may thus believe that the educational process is unrelated to their everyday life (Kramsch, 1993). The cognitive disparity could be a notorious hurdle for the English learning in Indonesia, where the identities of the students

are strongly shaped by local customs and community beliefs. Students may dislike and feel cut off from English as a foreign language if English Language Teaching (ELT) is unrelated to their daily lives (Canagarajah, 2003). Hence, connecting the cognitive lag using local wisdom is very important in building a basic relationship between learners and target languages.

When teachers deal with a new language intake for students' early knowledge and experiences, learning becomes more relevant (Crandall and Shin, 2014). When learners can utilize the language to communicate their own experiences and understand how the subject matter relates to the daily lives, they learn English more effectively. Hence, local wisdom like; customs, beliefs, tales, and rituals have a role as the basic instruction. This method creates learning as a process extending both language proficiency and cultural identity, making the students feel English is not something weird anymore. Furthermore, this approach preserves local cultural values while assisting students in developing global communicative ability (Suryati, 2015).

Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) is one of the effective strategies to overcome cultural disparity in language classes (Huong, 2025). CRT supports teachers to make students feel comfortable in the classroom despite their cultural back grounds, so the learners feel more emotionally and cognitively connected to the lesson. This approach helps teachers create an English classroom in Indonesia which accepts and acknowledges the cultural identities and backgrounds of the learners. Current studies have proved that CRT makes the students more confident to speak English, improves their oral proficiency, and increases student engagement. Teachers must use local knowledge with CRT ideals to create English instructions which are both culturally relevant and powerful.

Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) is one of the effective strategies to solve cultural diversity in language classes (Huong, 2025). CRT encourages teachers to include students' cultural backgrounds into the learning process to assist pupils feel more emotionally and cognitively connected to the material. This approach helps teachers create an English classroom in Indonesia that respects and acknowledges the cultural identities and backgrounds. Recent studies have shown that CRT increases student confidence when speaking English, improves speaking skills, and increases student engagement. Teachers must use local knowledge with CRT ideals to make English instruction both culturally relevant and powerful, If they want to preserve their feeling of national identity in navigating global debate. Many English instructional resources continue to underline Western-centric content in spite of this policy's mandate, making it challenging for pupils to engage with the language via their own cultural lens (Setyono & Widodo, 2019). However, there are still significant implementation gaps. By linking local knowledge with global English proficiency, the disconnection focuses on how vital it is to create more educational resources that run the aims of Kurikulum *Merdeka*.

According to recent research, the learners exposing any culturally relevant information have higher levels of intrinsic motivation than those who struggle with culturally foreign content. This phenomenon emerges when local materials reduce affective filters, making learning experiences more relevant, meaningful, and cognitively accessible (Krashen, 1982). In Indonesia, where the people speak English as a foreign language, the linguistic competency and communicative confidence of the learners have very well increased when local wisdom is accommodated (Huong, 2025). These findings suggest that a curriculum that affirms students' sociocultural identities fosters a highly engaged learning environment that encourages more successful second language acquisition.

Improving students' language proficiency alongside with simultaneously preserving and promoting their cultural heritage is the aim of integrating local knowledge into English Language Teaching (ELT). As an example, empirical research regionally carried out in Nias shows including local content into English instruction promotes students' cultural identities without impeding their ability to communicate in the target language (Telaumbanua, 2024).

Students can make connections between academic material and their sociocultural reality through the more immersive learning experience provided by the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach. To minimize anxiety of a foreign language learning, this alignment fosters an inclusive and emotionally secure learning environment. Higher levels of student involvement and academic resilience produce CRT's favorable impact on the learning environment, according to recent studies (Azitoni, 2023; Ilham et al., 2025). These tactics make the creation of activity books based on local wisdom a crucial instrument for achieving a well-rounded, contextualized, and successful language instruction.

The development of educational resources integrating local knowledge within the various pedagogical paradigm is increasingly explored in current literature and science. The creation of a Student Activity Book (SAB) that directly integrates elements of indigenous culture, such as *Banyumasan* folklore, traditional games, regional festivals, and vernacular vocabulary (the local language), into language activities is one of the greatest interventions. With regional folklore, the first textual sources assist the learners understanding the written texts and critical thinking abilities, while planned discussions about regional food festivals offer a genuine setting for spoken communication. Incorporating traditional games and mini-projects on local customs also enhances vocabulary acquisition and practical writing proficiency.

Integrating local knowledge into English language training is an effective technique to connect the students' cultural background to the course materials. Teachers can employ Culturally Responsive Pedagogy to help students improve their language skills while maintaining their cultural identity by accommodating original knowledge, practices, and values into the English curriculum (Ulviani, 2025). This approach is also parallel with *Kurikulum Merdeka* in Indonesia, emphasizing education that is relevant to students' daily lives and cultures. The current research aims to reduce cognitive distance and increase English learning engagement among Indonesian elementary students by developing an activity book based on local wisdom in response to this desire.

Method

To create and validate a Students' Activity Book (SAB) for teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at the primary level using *Banyumas* local wisdom, this project employs a Research and Development (R&D) strategy (Fayrus & Slamet, 2022). Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation build up the ADDIE paradigm applied in this study (Aldoobie, 2015; Szabo, 2022). The following phases are how the researchers used the model.

1. Needs Analysis

identifying learners' profiles, instructional deficits, and local *Banyumas* wisdom components that should be integrated.

2. Design & Prototyping
Creating the objective of learning culturally and connecting the learning objectives to the activity book.
3. Development & Expert Validation
Converting imagery into a working SAB and putting the content through a thorough evaluation by media and linguistic specialists.
4. Implementation
Performing a small-scale classroom trial to see how the materials are used in a real-world situation.
5. Evaluation
Ensuring a final revision based on stakeholder input and conducting a pre-or post-evaluation to gauge the SAB's efficacy.

Design options, such as topic selection, task types, instructional scaffolding, and layout ergonomics, are based on recognized principles for ELT materials (Tomlinson, [2011](#)) and strict evaluation procedures to guarantee the quality of material production. Before becoming widely used, this system used classroom-based assessments and iterative prototyping to guarantee a clear alignment between learning objectives and pedagogical activities.

Ten English teachers participating in semi-structured interviews and questionnaires through the analytical phase of this study identify pedagogical flaws in the current teaching materials and determine each student's specific learning needs. Getting the target audience's demands in a methodical way is a crucial first step in producing effective content (Primary et al., 2023). As a result, this phase provides information about the language and cultural limitations of the recommended Student Activity Book (SAB).

Based on the analytical step, the design and development process focus on expertly integrating *Banyumas* local knowledge into ten topic areas. These units also take several subjects such as "The Legend of *Baturraden*," "I Like *Mendoan*," and "Shopping at *Pasar Wage*." To support interactive and conversational language learning, the design includes exercises like writing assignments, creative sketching, and group play. This variation ensures that the content adheres to established notions in early learner teaching by emphasizing student involvement and pertinent context (Tomlinson, [2011](#)).

At the final development phase, the first prototype is created and then subjected to a thorough Expert Validation process. Two experts in instructional design and English Language Teaching (ELT) reviewed the Student Activity Book (SAB) using formerly recognized rubrics. The examination uses four main components, namely, content compatibility, linguistic accuracy, visual organization, and instructional presentation. The revision step was carried out in accordance with expert guidance, simplifying challenging language and instructional words to ensure that the content was developmentally suitable for primary school kids.

In the last phase, a limited study with a pretest-posttest control-group design was carried out to empirically evaluate the effectiveness of the product (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Participants in the study included a control group (n = 25) and an experimental group (n = 27). This pre-post-control group design was used for a single five-week educational cycle. Under the guidance of the teacher, the experimental group used SAB while the control group kept using the same content. In order to preserve fidelity, teachers receive a quick orientation and learning advice that includes a checklist of essential assignments, deadlines, and assessment artifacts. Following every class, the instructor fills up fidelity

logs detailing the extent of the subject matter, modifications made, and assessments of student participation.

Descriptive statistics for survey responses were used to examine quantitative data, and an independent sample t-test with a significance level of $p < 0.05$ was used to assess the effect on students' English competence. Additionally, the N-Gain analysis was used to assess the extent and significance of a specific change in learning outcomes, providing accurate measures on the pedagogical impact of the Student Activity Book (SAB).

Because the use of intact classes might introduce selection bias and undermine causal claims, the author of this research assesses baseline comparability, examines model assumptions, and supplements hypothesis testing with impact sizes and N-Gain to indicate practical significance. This limited trial serves as proof-of-concept for future work plans that call for multi-site research and longitudinal follow-up.

Results and Discussion

Several key concepts parallel with contemporary educational theory and practice are highlighted in the creation of a Students' Activity Book (SAB) for English Language Teaching (ELT) based on local expertise. In addition to being a cultural requirement, this study presents a strong argument for integrating local knowledge into ELT materials as a teaching strategy that helps bridge the gap between students' unique cultural contexts and global English norms. The relevance and effectiveness of this development are supported by a number of significant theoretical positions and empirical findings.

The initial result of survey, which showed 100% agreement among English teachers about the necessity of incorporating local wisdom into ELT materials, underscored the importance of culturally relevant content in language instruction. Recent research on English language instruction highlights growing concerns about the "culture-free" nature of many textbooks used in Indonesian classrooms. Various studies indicate that when ELT materials do not consider local culture, students may feel culturally alienated, which can lead to disengagement and worse learning outcomes (Setyono & Widodo, 2019). The idea adding local knowledge to English teaching materials contextualizes learning and boosts students' engagement; and it means they are supported by this study. According to this theory, content with a local context serves as a cultural bridge, enabling seamless and succeeded learning by lowering the cognitive load (Kline, 1993). This technique helps students focus on verbal production rather than battling with unfamiliar cultural concepts, therefore making the learning process more relevant and interesting.

The SAB is created to make English learning interesting, developmentally appropriate, and culturally grounded for Indonesian primary learners by methodically introducing *Banyumas* local wisdom into task sequences. Four evidence-based pillars inform the design:

1. TEYL foundations for children to learn best through short, multisensory, interaction-rich activities (stories, songs, games, projects) with clear goals and abundant input and scaffolds.
2. Task-Based pedagogy for beginners as foreground input-based and heavily scaffolded tasks that lead to light production and simple projects, a pathway shown to be feasible and effective with young/beginner learners.
3. Learning-sciences alignment to make sure that activities are designed to activate prior knowledge (schema theory) and minimize extraneous cognitive load (clear visuals, integrated instructions,

reduced split attention), so that limited working memory can focus on constructing durable language schemata.

4. Policy coherence that the topics and projects explicitly operationalize *Kurikulum Merdeka* flexibility.

To ensure quality, the SAB follows materials development heuristics, explicit objective-task alignment, principled sequencing, iterative piloting, and macro- and micro-evaluation, as recommended in the ELT materials literature. At the content level, embedding local culture also addresses representation gaps found in national EFL textbooks and supports intercultural learning from a locally anchored stance. The Students' Activity Book (SAB) is arranged into five thematic divisions, each precisely planned to bridge linguistic aims with *Banyumas* cultural moorings. The format follows a regular pedagogical flow: starting with a Big Idea and Local Values, proceeding through a Language Focus, and finishing in a Mini-Project that coincides with character growth.

In order to ensure effectiveness, SAB adopts the material development heuristic, explicit task alignment, principled sequencing, iterative piloting, and macro- and micro-evaluation, as proposed in the ELT material literature. At the content level, embedding local cultures also addresses representation gaps in national EFL textbooks and supports intercultural learning from a locally rooted perspective. The Student Activity Book (SAB) published is arranged into five thematic divisions; each is carefully designed to integrate linguistic aims with the anchor of *Banyumas* tradition.

The first unit, Hello from *Banyumas!* introduces the learners to fundamental pleasantries and self-introduction by using local landmarks and maps as the major setting. Its main assignment, Postcard from My Village, encourages kids to draw and describe their surroundings, fostering creativity and global diversity right away. The emphasis switches to transactional language and functional numeracy in the second lesson, Market Day at Pasar Wage (e.g., "How much is...?"). This exercise mixes role-playing between buyers and sellers with actual objects (realia) to replicate the market that students are familiar with in order to promote critical thinking and teamwork. The third lesson, "I Like *Mendoan*," which uses the region's culinary heritage to educate students how to articulate their preferences and dislikes, comes next. Students practiced using adjectives in contextually relevant contexts by using emoji ratings and basic reasoning in the My Snack Review project.

The fourth lesson, The Legend of *Baturraden*, introduces narrative content and basic past-tense signs to improve reading skills. In addition to improving reading abilities, students practise audio recalling and story construction, which fosters moral and ethical values. Traditional Games: Gobak Sodor, the fifth unit, focuses on instructional vocabulary and imperative verbs. Students demonstrate leadership and teamwork while playing in English during the final game session of this course.

These five sections together demonstrate a shift from Western-centered curriculum to Cultural Response Pedagogy. SAB reduced the cognitive gap found in the first needs analysis by focusing linguistic emphasis on local landmarks like *Mendoan* or Pasar Wage. The assignments' progression from the Input and Noticing phases to the Communicative Mini Project guarantees that students do not just commit vocabulary to memory but also modify it to describe real-world scenarios. This method validates the findings (Azitoni, 2023) and (Huong, 2025) which suggests that when students' cultural identities are affirmed through the curriculum, their communicative engagement and confidence grow dramatically. In addition, the close relationship to character building ensures that English programs

assist students become internationally orientated but they keep rooted in their local values and culture.

The early knowledge of the learners and cultural frameworks are manipulated by the inclusivity of folklore area, e.g. the Legend of Baturaden, and *Banyumasan* cuisine, e.g. *Mendoan*, which strengthens their relationship to the learning material. This method also tackles a typical critique of foreign English-language textbooks, occasionally highlight Western-centric topics that may not be applicable to students' daily lives. SAB encourages the students to build a sense of self by reorienting the focus from a global perspective to a local context, which boosts their self-esteem and motivation to learn English. In addition to increasing language competency, Setyono and Widodo (2019) strongly said that utilizing such localized materials fosters a greater sense of cultural pride and belonging. The Culturally Responsive Teaching concept, which suggests that acknowledging and integrating learners' cultural origins into their education results in better academic outcomes and a more inclusive learning environment, further supports this viewpoint (Putri et al., 2025).

The high N-Gain score of the experimental group (0.72) compared to the control group's (0.45) provided strong empirical evidence of SAB's effectiveness in building students' vocabulary and oral proficiency. This significant increase can be attributed to the contextualized, activity-based format of books, which is parallel with task-based language learning (TBLL) theory (Bùi, 2025). Tomlinson (2013) added that educational materials encouraging student participation, such as games, music, and projects, enhance learning by providing a dynamic, multimodal experience. Instead of being passive, the SAB's Let students Play, Sing, and Project Time sections ensure that students actively engage with language through practical tasks. Active engagement has been shown to improve language production skills and long-term memory (Mufidah et al., 2022). By accommodating local information into these tasks, SAB makes language acquisition more approachable and enjoyable, reducing the cognitive load associated with learning a foreign language. The Student Activity Book's (SAB) effectiveness is based on four core design principles that promote optimal language acquisition for young learners:

1. Cognitive Schema Activation and Comprehensible Input

Integrating local pictures and familiar objects is a strategic technique for schema activation. By utilizing the past knowledge of the students, the package reduces the initial decoding cost and provides comprehensive input. Studies in this area have shown that learners can devote more cognitive resources to language processing and less to cultural decoding when they deal with content that is familiar to them. Students may focus on the target English structures in a familiar setting, which improves acquisition efficiency.

2. Scaffolding of Guided Noticing

Each unit uses guided noticing and frame-based production to ensure incremental attention to linguistic forms. This pedagogical sequence does not over-burden the students' cognitive system as it leads them to notice particular language patterns within meaningful and localized tasks. Recent research in ELT materials development highlights the importance of structured scaffolding within a communicative framework for primary learners to build confidence and accuracy simultaneously (Muhammad et al., 2025)

3. Optimization of Cognitive Load

The SAB employs an icon-based layout and embedded instructions to reduce the split-attention effect. The design streamlines visual and textual information and cuts down on extraneous cognitive

load, the mental effort required to navigate the book, and gives more room for germane processing (Fadhillah et al., 2025).

4. Authentic Purpose

The existence of mini-projects related to character building (Husnaini and Parendi, 2022) adds an authentic purpose for language use. Students use English not just for repetition but for actual purposes in the real world such as presenting about local customs or traditional games (Putri et al., 2025). This approach operationalizes the mandates of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* such that language learning facilitates both global communicative competence and national character building.

From a developmental standpoint, the characteristics of activity-based learning in SAB are designed for early learners. According to Samar et al. (2025) children of this age group are mostly kinesthetic learners and language skills develop best through hands-on experiences and social interaction. Kline (1993) determined that the best way to teach language to young learners is to embed it in a physically stimulating social environment to facilitate long-term retention.

The SAB integrates local wisdom into these activities to turn abstract language learning into an experience that resonates with local culture. The 88% expert validation score and the ensuing changes to text size and instruction clarity focuses on the need of inclusive design. These adjustments ensure that the content is suitable for language learning and accessible to students with different cognitive and visual requirements (Tomlinson, 2011).

Moreover, the expansion of SAB serves to implement *Kurikulum Merdeka*. This policy highlights the reciprocal relationship between character education and academic achievement. Husnaini and Parendi (2022) assert that local history is an effective tool for character development because it keeps students preserving their cultural heritage but ready for global conversations. By using *Banyumasan* local knowledge as a medium for ELT, SAB not only fosters language competency but also fosters cultural awareness. According to Sairattain and Thawarom (2022), this approach fosters school age generations who have global spirit. It means that they possess global communication competence but keep true to their local identity.

A ground-breaking educational innovation that addresses the relationship between students' linguistic needs and their sociocultural identities is the integration of local knowledge into the Students' Activity Book (SAB). By providing content that is up to date to their life experiences, such as local *Banyumasan* narratives, the SAB effectively interconnects the gap between worldwide English competence and the local contextual (Supriyono & Dewi, 2017). This approach is parallel with the global movement known as Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, which keeps fostering academic performance; educational materials should affirm students' cultural background (Huong, 2025). To maximize learning outcomes and raise student engagement in basic EFL classrooms, this alignment is essential.

According to Deniz and Kayır (2025), the findings of the study emphasize the importance of using context-based resources to lessen cognitive burden. When students are not burdened with unfamiliar western cultural conceptions, they can learn new linguistic structures more effectively by utilizing their past knowledge. In cognitive linguistics, this phenomenon—known as the familiarity effect—shows that cultural schemata play a significant role in processing input in the target language.

In addition, proving that localized materials are essential instruments for promoting cultural pride and providing character education required by *Kurikulum Merdeka*. This research has significantly advanced the area of ELT. The integration is crucial for the development of Intercultural Communicative Competence, since students utilize English to project their local identity to the outside world without sacrificing their roots (Byram & Grundy, 2002). In the long term, this method offers a viable paradigm for glocalized education where students' sense of national identification is strengthened rather than weakened by language acquisition.

Conclusion

This study developed a Students' Activity Book (SAB) based on local knowledge used in English instruction for students in primary schools. The findings show that incorporating local culture, especially *Banyumas* tradition, into English-language resources is not only beneficial but also essential for learning optimum. Experts agreed that the content and design of language books were useful, with an average validation score of 88%. Furthermore, the pilot study's high N-Gain score told that the SAB improved students' English competence.

This study has significant pedagogical ramifications to develop classroom curriculum. Every teacher in the classroom can assist students to learn English in familiar and meaningful conditions by employing regional narratives, traditional cuisine, and cultural rituals. This approach increases the relevance and interest of language acquisition by keep reducing cognitive load (Al-Hoorie et al., 2023). The study provides a helpful method for developing culturally responsive educational materials, supporting the execution of *Kurikulum Merdeka* in Indonesia.

However, this study has several shortcomings due to the limited access. The study had a somewhat small sample size and only looked at one local environment, *Banyumas*. So, employing larger and more diverse sample sizes, future study should examine the long-term advantages of local wisdom-based materials on students' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) and their comprehension of both local and global cultures. Such studies are needed to make the powerful evidence for the effectiveness of culturally relevant English teaching materials.

References

- Aldoobie, N. (2015). ADDIE Model. In *American International Journal of Contemporary Research* (Vol. 5, Number 6). www.aijcrnet.com
- Arida Mufidah, Mustofa, M., & Ubaidillah, M. F. (2022). The Creation of EYL Textbooks in Indonesia: An Interview Study on EFL Teachers' Perceptions. *Child Education Journal*, 4(3), 186–199. <https://doi.org/10.33086/cej.v4i3.3514>
- Azitoni, R. (2023). Teachers engaging primary school learners of English as a foreign language. *Alford Council of International English & Literature Journal*, 06(01), 01–16. <https://doi.org/10.37854/acielj.2023.6116>
- Bùi, T. B. N. (2025). Task-Based Language Teaching for Primary Students in Vietnam: Potential and Possibilities. *Tạp Chí Khoa Học*, 22(3), 579–589. [https://doi.org/10.54607/hcmue.js.22.3.4813\(2025\)](https://doi.org/10.54607/hcmue.js.22.3.4813(2025))
- Canagarajah, A. Suresh. (2003). *Resisting linguistic imperialism in English teaching*. Oxford University Press.

- Deniz Assoc, Ü., & Kayır Assoc, G. (n.d.). *Culture And Cognition in Learning: How Cultural Backgrounds Shape Educational Processes*. Retrieved www.uksek.org
- Desna Yarlina Telaumbanua. (2024). Teacher Perceptions in Implementing the Curriculum Merdeka. *Sintaksis: Publikasi Para Ahli Bahasa Dan Sastra Inggris*, 2(1), 200–205. <https://doi.org/10.61132/sintaksis.v2i1.367>
- Fayrus, & Slamet, A. (2022). *Model Penelitian Pengembangan (R n D)*. Institut Agama Islam Sunan Kalijogo Malang. ISBN 978-623-6648-27-8
- Fitriati, S. W., Rata, E. (2020). Language, Globalization, and National Identity: A Study of English-Medium Policy and Practice in Indonesia. *Journal of Language, Identity and Education*, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2020.1777865>
- Gao, F. (2021). Negotiation of native linguistic ideology and cultural identities in English learning: a cultural schema perspective. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 42(6), 551–564. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2020.1857389>
- Gay, G. (n.d.). (2001). AACTE Outstanding Writing Award Recipient: Preparing for Culturally Responsive Teaching. In *Journal of Teacher Education* (Vol. 53, Number 2).
- J., Ilham, M., Amal, A., Sahabuddin, R., & Bado, B. (2025). Journal of Innovative and Creativity Menumbuhkan Kreativitas dan Kemandirian Siswa Sekolah Dasar melalui Proyek Kewirausahaan Berbasis Kearifan Lokal Ilmu Pendidikan Program Pascasarjana, Universitas Negeri Makassar. In *Journal of Innovative and Creativity* (Vol. 5, Number 3).
- Huong, N. T. M. (2025). Culturally Responsive Teaching in English Classrooms: Practices, Perceptions and Challenges. *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature*, 13(6), 23–33. <https://doi.org/10.20431/2347-3134.1306004>
- Kline, R. R. (1993). *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*. Oxford University Press. <http://about.jstor.org/terms>
- Lie, A. (2017). English And Identity in Multicultural Contexts: Issues, Challenges, And Opportunities. *TEFLIN Journal - A Publication on the Teaching and Learning of English*, 28(1), 71. <https://doi.org/10.15639/teflinjournal.v28i1/71-92>
- Meara, P. (2007). Lex30: An improved method of assessing productive vocabulary in an L2. *System*, 35(3), 400–401. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2007.06.002>
- Ndura, E. (2004). ESL and cultural bias: An analysis of elementary through high school textbooks in the Western United States of America. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 17(2), 143–153. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07908310408666689>
- Husnaini, H., & Parendi, M. (2022). Teaching moral values through EYL literature: How? *Journal of English Education and Linguistics*, 3(1), 58–63. <https://doi.org/10.56874/jeel.v3i1.791> [accessed Mar 26 2026].
- Primary, M. A., Emilia, E., & Sukyadi, D. (2023). Program evaluation of English language learning for EYL curriculum development in Indonesia: teachers' perception, challenges, and expectations. *Journal on English as a Foreign Language*, 13(1), 314–338. <https://doi.org/10.23971/jeel.v13i1.6068>
- Putri, M. A., Suprpto, I., & Mahendra, Y. (2025). Implementing the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) Learning Model in Indonesian Language Learning in Elementary Schools. *Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pengembangan Pendidikan*, 9(2), 253–262. <https://doi.org/10.23887/jppp.v9i2.93665>

- Setyono, B., & Widodo, H. P. (2019). The representation of multicultural values in the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture-Endorsed EFL textbook: a critical discourse analysis. *Intercultural Education*, 30(4), 383–397. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14675986.2019.1548102>
- Suryati, N. (2015). Classroom Interaction Strategies Employed By English Teachers At Lower Secondary Schools. *TEFLIN Journal - A Publication on the Teaching and Learning of English*, 26(2), 247. <https://doi.org/10.15639/teflinjournal.v26i2/247-264>
- Szabo, D. A. (2022). Adapting the ADDIE Instructional Design Model in Online Education. *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai Psychologia-Paedagogia*, 67(1), 126–140. <https://doi.org/10.24193/subbpsyped.2022.1.08>
- Tomlinson, Brian. (2013/2011). *Materials development in language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ulviani, M. (2025). *Culturally Responsive Approaches to Indonesian Language Instruction: Insights for Inclusive Education*. <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-7526656/v1>