



## **Incorporating Local Culture in English Language Teaching for Papuan Junior High School Students**

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### **Abstract**

Local culture contents can be utilized as a tool by the teachers in teaching English. Therefore, this research aimed to analyze whether Papuan Junior High School's teachers have implemented three ways in a local culture based on teaching English which was proposed by Goldberg and to find out whether the students feel more enthusiastic in learning by using local culture content. Besides that, this study was to investigate and measure the influence of local culture on students' skills before and after using local culture contents in learning English. The data of research were collected from two Junior High Schools in Timika-Papua, Indonesia. They were SMP N 2 and SMP N 8. The method of this research was both quantitative and qualitative. In gaining the data, the researchers distributed the questionnaire to 107 students and interviewed two teachers and two students. After that, the researchers collected the data, identified, and analyzed it by using SPSS 26.0. The findings revealed that Papuan English teachers have used local culture contents in providing the English materials for the students (e.g., using folktales, norms and customs). On the other hand, the development of students' English Skills such as speaking, reading and writing have been improved to be better by using local culture contents in learning English. Furthermore, it could enhance their confidence and motivation in learning English. In addition, it enabled them to enlarge their vocabulary and helped them to be critical in thinking.

Keywords: Local culture, Teaching and Learning English, Papuan Students

### **Introduction**

Culture is an essential factor in human existence. As social beings, people cannot live without others. The way of human life is shaped by culture. According to Samovar, Porter and McDaniel (2007), culture is the things that are related to the ways of someone's life such as thinking, feeling, and acting. Culture encompasses everything that could shape the way of life. It comprises both the individual and the collective dimensions of our lives such as family and environment (Mor & Ashta, 2019). Further, Lin et al. (2018) asserted that culture is something that is complex and

has characteristics that are manifested through language, tradition, customs, beliefs, morals, art, lifestyle, and clothing. Similarly, Bachrach (2014) emphasized that culture comprises attitudes, values, and norms. Besides that, the local culture can be the main triggering factor that motivates someone to make a decision that is different from others (Ucar, 2016). In this case, it can be inferred that the local culture plays a crucial role in human life in shaping and creating the personality, characteristics, mindset, thoughts, behavior, and habit.

In the educational context, it is undeniable that the local culture can influence the way of learning. It could be an essential factor in shaping learning styles. According to Butarbutar, Uspayanti, Manuhutu and Palangngan (2019), "learning style could be determined by the local culture. The learners tend to imitate what that they had seen and known". It means the learning style could be shaped by the environment in which someone lives, either from family or from the places that someone learns. For example, if someone was born and lives with the family in an environment that has a habit of stealing, so the child will learn to steal everything that he/she wants. He/she will grow up with a mindset as a stealer. Meanwhile, if the child lives with a family which hangs on with a habit of writing, he/she will be introduced to learn many things related to writing. His/her mindset and habit will be formed by the situation and the people around him/her. Therefore, he/she will spend much time learning what he/she has seen. Then, the habit can become the favorite thing in his/her life.

In accordance with this, Goldberg (2001) divided local culture-based learning into three ways that were to learn about the culture, learn through the culture, and learn with the culture. Learning about culture refers to providing the materials for the students that contain the diversity of culture and customs that are found in their social life. In other words, learning English about culture relates to the materials that could be learned, permeated, and integrated into students' lives in order to be polite and know how to greet someone of different ages, tribes, environments (Butarbutar et al., 2019). Meanwhile, learning with the culture means the teacher uses the local culture as a medium in the learning process, learning material, subject concepts, and the context of applying the principle of subjects. Whereas, learning through culture refers to the materials or contents that consist of

two different concepts that are traditional and modern styles. It indicates that learning through culture is a comparison of two different perspectives without ignoring nature students' culture.

In such conditions, local culture can be assumed and used as a method of learning. It means the teachers can use the local culture contents to teach the students in order to be more successful in learning English (Zuchdi & Nurhadi, 2019; Fitri, Batan & Mahayanti, 2016). According to Ratminingsih, Budasi and Kurnia (2020), learning English through local culture contents can simplify the materials to be more contextual for the students because the materials are the parts of the students' life. Moreover, Fu (2018) asserts that "using the local culture contents in learning English, can make the learners easier to absorb the materials because they are familiar with those topics and have previous background knowledge of them. The teachers also can be easier to motivate the students in lessons, activities, and tasks from the local culture-based content" (p.59). Furthermore, Prastiwi (2013) and Royani (2013) argue that combining the English materials with the local culture contents can minimize unfamiliarity and enable students to understand better. In other word, by using local culture contents in the process of learning, the students could increase their reading comprehension (Said, Sihes & Yusof, 2018; Haryanti, Inderawati & Eryansyah, 2021). Thus, it could be said that incorporating the local culture contents in the English learning materials can help students to enhance their skills in learning English (Nambiar et al., 2020)

Nowadays, there are several studies investigating the influence of the local culture in learning English. Nurlia and Arini (2017) found that introducing the local culture contents for the students in the English learning classroom could improve their writing skills. When the students understand their culture reasonably well, they will be also ready to construct ideas for their projects and know how to express their writing idea. In line with this, Alakrash, Edam, Bustan, Armnazi, Enayat and Bustan, (2021) pointed out that implementing local culture into writing assessment motivates these students to create more perspectives on familiar subjects and problems in their writings. Furthermore, Wulandari, Vianti and Fiffinova, (2018) in their research at the one of private senior high schools in Palembang, found that local culture materials in English can encourage and motivate the students to be active in the learning

process and enable them to easily comprehend the reading texts. By providing local cultural content in foreign language classes can also be easier to motivate the learner to explore their knowledge more and be more enthusiastic in class (Fu, 2018; Simamora, Saragih & Hasratuddin, 2018). In line with this, Butarbutar et al. (2019) in their study was conducted at YPK elementary school Merauke-Papua, they found that the students were more motivated, energetic, and enthusiastic in learning English by local culture contents. Meanwhile, Alakrash et al. (2021) and Kamilah, Fauziah, Salsabila and Hidayat, (2019) found that the learners who are still at the beginning level can be easier to speak English using local words from their community. It allows them to communicate efficiently. In this case, it could be seen that local culture must be used and developed in learning English. When it is used in the learning process, it will help the students to enhance their skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

In this study, the researchers tried to investigate whether the Papuan English teachers have used local culture contents in order to develop students' English skills such as speaking, reading, and writing. The main reason why the researchers investigated it because most of the researchers only focus on the utilization of local culture contents in improving students' reading skill (see Wulandari et al., 2018; Haryanti et al., 2021; Said et al., 2018; Ratminingsih et al., 2020; Fu, 2018; Royani, 2013; Garth-mccullough, 2008). Meanwhile, there is only one study that explore about the importance of using local culture contents toward the development of students' writing skill (Nurlia & Arini, 2017) and speaking skill (Kamilah et al., 2019). Furthermore, this study also provides the results about how local culture contents can enlarge students' confidence and motivation in learning English. In addition, this study was conducted in the Papuan context because there is inequality of educational level. It can be seen from The Education Gini Index Calculation Result shows that in 2018, The Papuan province is the highest educational inequality out of 34 provinces in Indonesia and the literacy in Papua is the lowest (Robertson et al., 2018; Harahap et al., 2020). Therefore, it is better to conduct this study in order to give an overview of the situation in Papua. Thus, this research aimed to analyze whether Papuan English teachers have implemented and used local culture contents in providing the

learning materials for the students or vice versa. Besides that, this study was to investigate and measure the influence of local culture on students' English skills.

### **Research Methodology**

In collecting the data, the researchers used mixed method which consist of qualitative and quantitative. The data were integrated by the researchers in both qualitative and quantitative approach in order to provide a better understanding. In this study, the researchers conducted the research from two Junior High School in Timika-Papua, Indonesia by using simple random sampling. In this case, the participants were chosen randomly based on their willingness to participate in this study. The participants of this study were 2 English teachers and 107 students which encompassed 37 students of SMP N. 8 and 70 students of SMP N. 2 Timika-Papua, Indonesia.

In obtaining the data, the researchers used two types of research instruments namely questionnaire and interview. The questionnaire was in a Likert-scale questionnaire which was from 1 to 5 degree. The degree of the agreement consisted of, "strongly disagree (1)", "disagree (2)", "neutral (3)", "agree" (4)", "strongly agree (5)". In the interview section, the researcher used semi structure interview. Distributing the questionnaire, the researchers used google form platform because of the pandemic. In addition, the researchers collected the data from questionnaire and it was tabulated in the form of descriptive statistics and presented it in the form of percentages. The results of interviews were poured into the structured paragraph and the researchers identified and analyzed it.

In analyzing quantitative data, the researchers collected the data in the form of number in an excel file. After that, in order to measure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, the researchers used Statistical Package for the Social science (SPSS26.0). Then the data were analyzed by using Descriptive analysis used to obtain mean and standard deviation values. The mean score of agreements ranges from "1.00 to 2.33" (low), 2.34 to 3.67" (moderate) and "3.68 to 5.00" (high). The results of interviews were poured into the structured paragraph in order to support the results of questionnaire.

## Findings and Discussion

### Findings

This research aimed to analyze whether Papuan English teachers have used local culture in designing the learning materials. Besides that, the researchers wanted to investigate whether Papuan Junior High School students have got the benefit of using local culture in their learning materials. However, before discussing more of the findings, the validity and reliability of the instruments in this study need to be examined first in order to give a viewpoint regarding the advisability of the questionnaire.

### The validity and reliability of questionnaire

The validity of the questionnaire was measured from the data results of the questionnaire by using SPSS For Windows Version 26.00. Based on the rules in measuring the validity of instruments, the score of R Count should be more than the score of R Table in order to be valid. In this research, there were 15 statements that had been measured to find out the validity. After measuring and examining the items of the instrument, the results showed that statements 1 to 15 were valid. The score of R Count was around 0.342 to 0.841 and the score of R Table was 0,230. It implied that the score of R Count > R Table, so, it can be stated that all statements were valid and could be used in this research.

The method which was used to measure the result on the reliability of the instruments was the Cronbach Alpha Test ( $\alpha$ ) method. According to the rules of this method, If the score of Cronbach Alpha is more than 0.6 then the instruments are reliable. The coefficient score ranges from 0 to 1. If the result is closer to 1, so the instruments are better and reliable. In this study, the reliability of the instrument was tested using the SPSS program. The reliability result could be seen in Tables 1 and 2.

**Table 1:** Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	107	100.0
	Excluded	0	.0
	Total	107	100.0

**Table 2:** Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.907	15

Based on the variable reliability test in the table above, it can be seen that the questionnaires that were used in this study have a good level of reliability. The score of Cronbach's Alpha was more than the Cronbach's Alpha Standardization. Therefore, it implied that the questionnaires were reliable and feasible to be used in this research.

### Using local culture contents for teaching English

This study aimed to investigate whether Papuan English teachers have used local culture contents in providing English materials for the students. The results of questionnaire can be seen in the following table.

**Table 3:** Participants' Responses

Code	Statement	Scale					Total Score	Mean
		SA	A	N	D	SD		
LC1	My English teachers should know more about local culture	22 20.56%	59 55.14%	23 21.50%	3 2.80%	0 0%	421	3.93
LC2	My English teachers have designed the learning materials based on the local culture approach.	29 27.10%	48 44.86%	22 20.56%	7 6.54%	1 0.93%	418	3.91
LC3	My English teachers have integrated local culture in providing the materials.	33 30.84%	53 49.53%	19 17.76%	2 1.87%	0 0%	438	4.09
LC4	My English teachers have used local culture in teaching.	23 21.50%	59 55.14%	18 16.82%	7 6.84%	0 0%	419	3.92
LC5	There is no benefit in learning English by using local culture.	11 10.28%	38 35.51%	34 31.78%	20 18.69%	4 3.74%	353	3.30
Total		118 22%	257 48%	116 21.68%	39 7.29%	5 0.93%	2049 100%	3.83

From table 3 above, it can be seen that 22% of participants' responses were strongly agreed, 48% agreed and 21.68% chose neutral, whereas, 7.29% disagreed with the statements and 0.93% of participants' responses were strongly disagreed. Hence, it implied that the majority of the participants agreed that their English

teachers have used and integrated local culture contents for teaching English. The total score of each item was very high. It can be seen from the average the mean score which was 3.83. Thus, the results of all the statements could be categorized into high categories.

The statement LC3 revealed that Papuan English teachers have integrated local culture in providing the English materials for the students (80.37%). Moreover, the results also showed that 76.64% of the students admitted that their English teachers have used the local culture in the process of teaching (LC4). Besides that, there were 71.96% of them claimed that their teachers usually design and provide learning materials that encompass the local culture contents (LC2). These findings were also supported by two teachers in the interview section. One teacher asserted that:

“Local culture is very important in learning English. I can feel the benefit of it. My students’ ability can develop gradually when they learn English by using local culture contents. Therefore, I usually try to design my materials in teaching based on the local culture approach such as telling the Papuan folktales, norms and customs. By using local culture content, I designed the learning process in various ways such as playing games, singing, discussion in small groups, and so on.”. (T1)

Furthermore, another teacher also added her perspective and experience related to learning English through local culture. She argued that:

“I perceive that learning English can be more difficult for the Papuan students. In order to make the process of learning becomes interesting for the students, I personally tend to use the material which they are familiar with. In this context, I use local culture contents to boost their motivation and interest in learning English. My students can understand well the materials if it related to their lives”. (T2)

From these statements, it can be seen that Papuan English teachers have used local culture contents as the appropriate strategy in teaching English.

### **The Benefit of local culture contents in learning English**

The use of local culture contents could bring a significant impact for the development of students’ skills. The results of questionnaire can be seen in the following table.

**Table 4:** Participants’ responses



Code	Statement	Scale					Total Score	Mean
		SA	A	N	D	SD		
LC6	Local culture needs to be learned	60 56.07%	43 40.19%	4 3.74%	0 0%	0 0%	484	4.52
LC7	Local culture should be taught in the classroom.	50 46.73%	40 43.93%	7 6.54%	3 2.80%	0 0%	465	4.35
LC8	Local culture must be integrated into learning materials	30 28.04%	45 42.06%	26 24.30%	6 5.61%	0 0%	420	3.93
LC9	English materials should contain local culture values.	33 30.84%	58 54.21%	14 13.08%	2 1.87%	0 0%	443	4.14
LC10	Learning English by using local culture is very useful for students	23 21.50%	57 53.27%	21 19.63%	6 5.61%	0 0%	418	3.91
LC11	The learning materials will be more understood if it encompasses local culture.	21 19.63%	46 42.99%	30 28.04%	10 9.35%	0 0%	399	3.73
LC12	Learning English by using local culture makes me richer in vocabulary and critical in thinking.	21 19.63%	52 48.60%	19 17.76%	15 14.02%	0 0%	400	3.74
LC13	Learning English by using local culture will enhance my speaking, reading and writing skills.	25 23.36%	49 45.79%	24 22.43%	8 7.48%	1 0.93%	410	3.83
LC14	By using local culture in English materials, I will be more enthusiastic and feel motivated in the learning process.	21 19.63%	53 49.53%	21 19.63%	11 10.28%	1 0.93%	403	3.77
LC15	Learning English with local culture materials makes me more confident in learning.	22 20.56%	60 56.07%	21 19.63%	3 2.80%	1 0.93%	420	3.93
Total		306 28.60%	510 47.66%	187 17.48%	64 5.98%	3 0.28%	4262 100%	3.98

From table 4, it can be seen that there were 96,26% of participants agreed that local culture needs to be learned (LC6). Meanwhile, 90,66% of them admitted that local culture should be taught in the classroom (LC7). Furthermore, 85,05% of them also responded that they agreed with the LC9 statement which was English materials should contain local culture values. In addition, there were 70% of them agreed that local culture must be integrated into learning materials. Thus, based on their responses to these statements, it can be seen that most of the participants agreed that local culture contents were very important to be learned. In other words, the participants perceived that local culture contents should be integrated into English materials in order to be successful in the learning process.

From the statements LC10 to LC15 regarding the benefit or advantages of learning English by using local culture contents, the majority of the participants responded that they agreed with the concept that learning English by using local culture content could be useful in enhancing their English skills (LC10). There were 74,77% of participants agreed with it. Furthermore, 62,62% of them also perceived that the learning materials will be more understood if it encompasses local culture (LC11). Besides that, 68,23% of them agreed that learning English by using local culture made them become richer in vocabulary and critical in thinking (LC12). This finding was supported by one of them. She clarified that:

“Based on my learning experiences, I found that learning English by using local culture contents is very beneficial for me. When I learn local culture in the context of English subjects, I can permeate the materials correctly. It means I can understand the learning materials because it is related to my culture and of course, I am very familiar with the culture. Another important thing that I got is, I can know deeper about my culture and I definitely can increase my English vocabulary”. (St1)

In this case, it can be seen that local culture needs to be integrated into English materials because the students are familiar with it. Hence, the students can get the benefit of it such as richer in vocabulary, critical in thinking and understanding the contents of learning.

From the statement LC13, there were 69,15% of the participants who agreed that learning English by using local culture can enhance their speaking, reading and writing skills. Meanwhile, 69,16% of them agreed that by using local culture in English materials, they will be more enthusiastic and feel motivated in the learning process (LC14). In addition, there were 76,63% of them agreed with the statement that learning English with local culture materials, they will be more confident in the learning process (LC15). These results of the questionnaire also were supported by two students in interview section. One student confirmed that:

“Learning English by using local culture is very helpful for me. By using this strategy, I can be more confident in speaking and reading. I also become more active in the classroom”. (St3)

Another student also asserted that:

“Learning English through local culture contents makes me love English. I feel motivated and enthusiastic in learning when my

teacher talks about local culture. it brings the good impact for my English skills. To be honest, my English skill such as speaking, reading and writing has been improved by using local culture in learning English". (St2)

It indicates that learning English by using local culture contents, the students can improve their English skills. Besides that, they were more enthusiastic in learning English.

### **Discussion**

In this part, the findings will be discussed to find out whether the Papuan English teachers have used local culture contents in the process of teaching the Junior High School students. Besides that, the findings will be discussed to reveal the advantages of learning English by using local culture contents. After that the findings will be compared to other previous studies regarding this topic.

Statements LC1 to LC4 showed that the teachers have used local culture contents in teaching Papuan Junior High School students, it can be seen from the average of mean score which were at high level (3.83). From the participants' responses in the questionnaire, they admitted that their English teachers have used local culture contents in providing the learning materials for teaching them. Meanwhile, the teachers also confirmed that incorporating local culture contents for teaching Papuan students could give positive impact for improving students' skills. These findings were similar to Nambiar et al. (2020). According to them, the teachers will be able to increase students' skills by using local culture contents. On the other hand, these findings were different with Haryanti et al., (2021) which found that many English teachers in Palembang rarely used local culture contents in providing reading materials for the students. Therefore, the students could not comprehend the texts appropriately.

Furthermore, the findings from the statement LC6 to LC9 revealed that most of the participants agreed that local culture contents were very important to be learned. The mean score from these statements were 4,23 which could be categorized into high level. Thus, it indicated that the participants perceived that local culture contents should be integrated into English materials in order to be understood. This finding was similar to Royani (2013). In her research, she found that

learning English by using local culture content could make the learning contents would be understandable for the learners. The same thing was also found by Ratminingsih et al. (2020). They found that using local culture content in learning English, the learning materials could be more contextual. Therefore, it can be seen that Local culture contents were very important to be learned and taught for the students. It should be considered as a strategy or method by the teachers for designing learning materials.

In addition, based on the participants' responses from statement LC10 to LC15, it was revealed that most of them admitted that learning English through local culture contents were very useful in increasing their English skills. This was supported by the results of the mean. From these statements, the average of the mean score was at high level (3.81). Thus, it indicates that incorporating local culture contents into English materials could enable the students understand the materials. According to Fu (2018), the students will be able to comprehend the texts and understand the learning materials if it contains the local culture contents. This thing can occur because they are familiar with it and they have previous knowledge of it. furthermore, their confident will be shaped gradually to be better. In accordance with this finding, Butarbutar et al. (2019) also found that learning English by using the local culture contents could make the students become more enthusiastic and motivated in the learning process. Besides that, by using local culture in learning English, it could improve the students' writing skills (Nurlia & Arini, 2017), speaking skills (Alakrash et al., 2021; Kamilah et al., 2019). It also can enable the students in comprehending the texts (Wulandari et al., 2018).

### **Conclusion and Suggestion**

Based on the findings, it could be concluded that learning English by using local culture contents is more effective. By using this strategy, it could give a good impact not only on the students' ability but also on the teachers' strategy in teaching English. The students could improve their English skills such as speaking, writing and reading. They also could be more critical in thinking, richer in vocabulary, more enthusiastic in learning English. In addition, they could learn by having fun because the materials were familiar to them, even though the materials were

provided in English. Meanwhile, the teacher could find the appropriate strategy in teaching the students. The teachers also should be able to use local culture in teaching their students. Besides that, by using this strategy, the teachers could motivate the students in order to be more successful in learning English. Thus, learning English by using local culture is the best method or the appropriate strategy in enhancing students' skills.

This research was limited to two Junior High Schools in Timika, Papua and it did not involve all students from those schools. Moreover, this study did not cover the influence of local culture contents toward the development of students' listening skill. Therefore, future researchers could use a large number of participants and investigate this topic by adding listening skill in order to obtain more valid data. Furthermore, future researchers could investigate this topic in higher level of education such as Senior High School or even University level.

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