



Assistance in the Creation of Local-Based English Learning Materials for Elementary School Teachers

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Abstract: This study focuses on supporting elementary school teachers in developing locally-based English learning materials that are contextual and culturally relevant. The program was designed to enhance teachers' understanding and skills in integrating elements of local culture into English instruction, thereby promoting more engaging and meaningful learning experiences. Using a participatory approach, teachers were involved in workshops and collaborative sessions to produce and test these materials in classroom settings. The findings indicate an improvement in teachers' competence in designing culturally grounded materials and an increase in student motivation and engagement. Additionally, the initiative contributes to the preservation of local cultural values while enhancing the quality of English education at the elementary level. Challenges encountered included limited reference materials and balancing linguistic content with cultural representation. These findings highlight the need for sustained mentoring and the establishment of a collaborative teacher community to support the ongoing development of contextualized learning resources

Keywords: Teacher Mentoring, Teacher Competence, Cultural Preservation, Contextual Learning

1. INTRODUCTION

English language skills are becoming increasingly important in the era of globalization because this language serves as an international communication tool that allows individuals to compete globally (Sahnan, 2024). According to Robi'ah & Yunansah (2023) in the context of primary education, English language proficiency is a very important foundation to prepare students for future challenges, both in continuing education and in professional life. However, the implementation of English learning at the elementary school level still faces various challenges, especially for teachers. One of the main obstacles is the limited number of learning resources, such as books or teaching materials that are relevant to the needs of students. In addition, according to Kurniawan & Wijayaningsih (2024), many elementary school teachers have not received adequate training in compiling and developing

effective and interesting English learning materials.

In this situation, locally-based learning materials are a relevant alternative to help students understand English concepts more easily (Soamole, 2022). This approach not only makes students feel closer to the material being taught, but also supports the preservation of local cultural values. According to Adam et al. (2022) by integrating elements of local culture into learning, students can be more emotionally connected to the material, thereby increasing their motivation to learn. Therefore, the development of locally-based learning materials is a strategic solution that is able to answer the needs of English learning at the elementary school level while strengthening students' cultural identity (Sudartini, 2012).

The importance of locally-based learning materials in increasing student engagement has been widely discussed in

various studies. According to Febriani & Sya (2022), locally-based materials provide a more familiar and relevant context for students, so they are more motivated to learn and easier to understand the material. For example, a study by Andrian (2024) showed that the integration of local cultural values into teaching materials is able to increase students' interest in learning because they feel that the lessons have a direct relationship with their daily lives. In addition, this approach also supports the preservation of local culture, which is one of the challenges in the current era of globalization.

Various approaches in the creation of English learning materials have been applied before. In general, conventional methods often use standard materials that do not take into account the social or cultural context of the students, so they sometimes feel far removed from their experience. On the other hand, a locally-based approach has been developed by adapting learning materials to reflect a particular culture, tradition, or geographical situation. For example, creating a folklore-based module or using vocabulary derived from the student environment can make learning more interesting and meaningful. This approach has proven to be more effective in increasing student engagement, especially in areas with rich cultures but rarely represented in national curricula.

Primary school teachers face a variety of challenges in providing relevant and contextual English learning materials to their students. One of the main problems is the difficulty of finding learning materials that are appropriate to the local context (Sujarwo & Sari 2020). The materials available on the market are often generic, adopting themes and content that less reflect the culture, environment, or daily life of students in a particular area. This causes students to find

it difficult to understand the material due to a lack of connection with their experience.

This gap is further exacerbated by the fact that the needs of students in different regions often differ, depending on their cultural, social, and geographic backgrounds. For example, students in rural areas may need more materials that integrate local elements, such as daily activities, folklore, or local traditions, to make it easier for them to understand English concepts. Unfortunately, most of the learning materials available are not designed to meet these specific needs, making learning less effective and less engaging for students. Therefore, efforts are needed to bridge this gap by developing locally-based learning materials that are more relevant, interactive, and in accordance with the characteristics of students.

The main objective of this mentoring program is to assist primary school teachers in producing culturally relevant English learning materials. Locally based materials not only bring students closer to the cultural context they are familiar with but also make learning English more meaningful and engaging. In addition, the program aims to improve the quality of English learning in primary schools by providing teachers with new knowledge and skills that they can apply in the classroom. This mentoring is also designed to provide technical training to teachers, so that they are able to integrate local cultural values into teaching materials. Thus, this program not only enriches students' learning experience, but also strengthens teachers' professional competence in creating learning materials that are contextual and based on local culture.

The program is designed using a participatory approach that actively involves teachers in every stage of the learning material creation process. Through this approach, teachers not only become

beneficiaries, but also play the role of partners who contribute directly to producing relevant and contextual materials. The scope of mentoring includes three main stages, namely training to improve teachers' understanding and skills in compiling locally-based materials, the preparation of teaching materials that are in accordance with the needs of students and local cultural values, and trials of the implementation of these materials in the classroom to ensure their effectiveness in supporting English learning at the elementary school level. This approach is expected to empower teachers while improving the quality of the teaching and learning process in a sustainable manner.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with an implementation method in the form of a mentoring program. The main focus of this method is to describe the process, results, and impact of mentoring in the creation of locally-based English learning materials for primary school teachers (Braun, 2006). Here are the steps used in this study:

1. Research Design

This research is designed as action-based research that involves teachers directly in the process of making materials. A participatory approach is used to ensure that teachers are not only the object of research, but also active partners in each stage.

2. Location and Research Subject

The research was conducted in elementary schools in a specific area, taking into account the availability of teachers who are willing to be involved in mentoring programs. The research subjects consisted of several English teachers who taught at the elementary school level.

3. Research Stages

This research is carried out through three main stages:

- **Training:** Teachers are provided with training on the creation of locally-based learning materials, including material design principles, local cultural integration techniques, and the use of existing resources.
- **Material Preparation:** Teachers actively prepare learning materials with the assistance of the research team. This stage includes identifying student needs, adjustments to the curriculum, as well as incorporating local elements into the material.
- **Trial and Evaluation:** The material that has been compiled is tested in the classroom to observe its effectiveness. Evaluations are carried out through observations, interviews, and questionnaires to collect feedback from teachers and students.

4. Data Collection Techniques

Data is collected through the following techniques:

- **Observation:** Observe the training process, material preparation, and implementation in the classroom.
- **Interviews:** Conduct in-depth interviews with teachers to understand their experiences during the mentoring program.
- **Documentation:** Collect documents in the form of materials produced, training modules, and field notes.
- **Questionnaire:** Get feedback from students regarding the effectiveness and attractiveness of learning materials.

5. Data Analysis

The data was analyzed qualitatively using descriptive analysis techniques. The researcher identified the main themes from the observations, interviews, and documentation to provide an overview of the success of the mentoring program.

6. Success Indicators

The success of this program is measured through several indicators, including:

- Improving teachers' ability to compile locally-based materials.
- The availability of learning materials that are relevant and interesting to students.

Positive responses from students to the material implemented.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of the mentoring program shows an increase in the understanding of elementary school teachers regarding the importance of integrating local culture in English language learning. Previously, most teachers still used teaching materials that were generic and less relevant to the local context of students. Through training sessions, group discussions, and case studies, teachers began to realize that local culture can be an effective bridge to facilitate students' understanding of foreign language concepts. Materials that are close to students' daily environment have been proven to increase their involvement in the learning process.

In addition, teachers are also beginning to be skilled in identifying elements of local culture that can be used as a source of teaching materials. These elements include local folklore, community traditions and customs, and the vocabulary of objects in the student's environment. By incorporating these local elements into the learning materials, teachers not only enrich the teaching content but also indirectly contribute to preserving the local culture. This ability is an important first step in realizing contextual, relevant, and meaningful English learning for elementary school students.

Teachers' abilities not only improve in recognizing local cultural elements, but also develop in terms of compiling teaching materials based on that context. After participating in mentoring, the teachers managed to design simple learning materials that explicitly included elements of local

culture. For example, some teachers create everyday dialogues that feature typical situations in the student environment, such as conversations about traditional markets, traditional ceremonies, or regional games. Materials like this are not only easier for students to understand, but also able to foster a sense of belonging to their local culture.

Furthermore, there has been a significant increase in teachers' ability to design interactive and contextual learning activities. Teachers begin to develop tasks that involve students' hands-on experience, such as role plays, group discussions, and simple projects related to their daily lives. This kind of activity helps students to relate the use of English to their reality, making the learning process more enjoyable and meaningful. Thus, this mentoring has encouraged teachers to create learning that is not only informative, but also inspiring and relevant to the world of students.

The high enthusiasm of teachers during the mentoring process is also a positive indicator of the success of this program. Teachers show active participation in each session, both in discussions, material preparation practices, and when sharing teaching experiences. This is influenced by the relevance of the material developed because the material is closer to the students' daily lives, the teacher feels easier and more confident in compiling it. When teachers see that the material they create can be applied directly in the classroom and receive a positive response from students, their enthusiasm for innovation increases.

In addition, the participatory approach used in this program also contributes to increasing teachers' sense of ownership of the mentoring process and results. Teachers are not positioned as recipients of information alone, but as active partners who contribute to designing teaching materials. Their involvement from the initial

stage to implementation makes them feel valued and trusted for their competence. This feeling strengthens the teacher's internal motivation to continue to develop abilities and create learning materials that are better, sustainable, and in accordance with the characteristics of their students.

The positive impact of this mentoring is also reflected in the suitability of the material with the characteristics of the students. The material developed by teachers becomes easier to understand because it uses local contexts that are familiar to students, such as places, characters, activities, and habits in their surroundings. For example, the use of traditional food names, regional locations, or local folklore in dialogue and practice makes students feel close to the material being studied. This directly helps them in understanding English vocabulary and structure more quickly and naturally.

The connection between the material and the daily life of students also has an impact on increasing participation in the classroom. Students become more active in answering questions, participating in discussions, and participating in learning activities because they feel that what they are learning is relevant and meaningful. A sense of emotional closeness to the content of the material also encourages students' confidence to use English in a context they understand. Thus, a locally-based approach not only facilitates students' understanding, but also builds a stronger spirit of learning in them.

The effectiveness of the implementation of locally-based materials in the classroom is also clearly seen through the results of the experiments carried out. Students show a significant increase in motivation and participation when using the materials that have been compiled by the teacher. They seem to be more enthusiastic about learning, ask more questions, and be

more active in completing the tasks given. This condition suggests that material that is close to their daily lives not only helps with comprehension, but also arouses an interest in learning that may have been less noticeable before.

Learning also becomes more lively and fun. An interactive classroom atmosphere is created because students feel that the material being taught is relevant and "close to them". When students are able to relate lessons to personal experiences or the surrounding environment, they become more emotionally and cognitively engaged. This shows that the use of a local approach in learning English is not only academically effective, but also supports the creation of meaningful and enjoyable learning experiences. The success of this implementation reinforces the importance of this kind of mentoring to be implemented sustainably in other elementary schools.

In addition to having a positive impact on the learning process, the use of local-based materials also contributes to the preservation of regional cultural values. The materials created by teachers not only serve as a tool in English language teaching, but also as a means to introduce and preserve the local culture to students. For example, folklore, local traditions, or community habits raised in teaching materials become an effective medium to reintroduce cultural richness that may have begun to be marginalized by the current of globalization.

More than that, this assistance helps build new awareness among teachers that learning foreign languages does not have to ignore local wisdom. In fact, by incorporating elements of regional culture in English learning, a balanced learning space is created between global language mastery and appreciation of local identity. Teachers begin to view local cultural values not as obstacles, but as a force that can enrich the learning process. This awareness is an important

foundation in shaping critical and inclusive attitudes towards culture in an ever-evolving global era.

Although this mentoring program has many positive impacts, the implementation process is inseparable from challenges. Some teachers still have difficulty designing materials that balance English content and local cultural elements. They need to consider how to incorporate meaningful cultural content without sacrificing language structure and learning objectives that fit the curriculum. This difficulty is mainly felt by teachers who are not used to compiling material independently or do not have experience in developing contextual teaching materials.

In addition, the limited references or models of locally-based teaching materials are also an obstacle in itself. Many teachers feel that they do not have enough examples or guidelines in compiling material that combines these two aspects in harmony. As a result, they have to put more effort into exploring ideas and customizing content independently. This condition shows the need for continuous support, both in the form of advanced training, provision of learning resources, and collaborative forums between teachers to share good practices in compiling locally-based teaching materials.

Overcoming the various challenges that exist, the mentoring program still makes a significant contribution to improving the professional competence of teachers. One of the most tangible impacts can be seen in the aspect of pedagogic competence, especially in terms of innovation and development of teaching materials. Through ongoing training and mentoring, teachers gain new insights and skills to design learning that not only meets curriculum standards, but is also relevant to local conditions.

Along with the increase in understanding and skills, teachers also showed increased confidence in compiling

contextual teaching materials. They become more creative and brave to try new approaches that are closer to the student experience. This confidence also strengthens the role of teachers as learning facilitators who are adaptive and responsive to local needs, thus having a positive impact on the quality of the overall teaching and learning process.

To maintain the sustainability of the positive impact of this mentoring program, further support is needed from various parties, especially from the government and related educational institutions. Advanced training is needed so that teachers continue to develop their capacity to develop creative and culturally relevant teaching materials. In addition to training, the provision of resources such as sample materials, guides, and access to locally-based references is also an important aspect that needs to be considered to support the effectiveness of implementation in the field.

In addition, the establishment of a teacher community forum that focuses on the development of locally-based materials can be a strategic step to strengthen collaboration between educators. Through this forum, teachers can share experiences, ideas, and the results of the development of materials they have created and tested. Such communities can also serve as spaces for collective discussion and reflection in responding to contextual learning challenges, as well as a forum for ongoing innovation in English language education in primary schools that value the rich local culture.

4. CONCLUSION

Assistance in the creation of locally-based English learning materials for elementary school teachers has proven to be effective in improving teachers' understanding and ability to develop teaching materials that are relevant to the

cultural context and daily lives of students. Through a participatory approach, teachers not only become more creative and confident in designing learning materials, but also able to integrate local cultural values so that learning becomes more interesting and meaningful for students. The implementation of local-based materials in the classroom has succeeded in increasing student motivation and participation, while also preserving the cultural richness of the region. Despite challenges such as limited references and a balance between language and cultural content, the program makes a positive contribution to the professional competence of teachers. Therefore, continuous support from relevant parties as well as the formation of a community of teachers is needed to ensure that the development of locally-based materials can continue and have a broad positive impact on English learning in primary schools.

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