

## ENGLISH MATERIALS-BASED JEPARA LOCAL WISDOM; THE EFFECT ON STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION

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### ABSTRACT

This research analyze the effect of English materials based on Jepara Local wisdom on student's reading comprehension skills. The test was conducted at one of junior high school in Jepara in the 7 grade class. The method that use is quantitative true experimental method with random sampling. The pre-test result indicated there is no statistically significant differences between the control group and the experimental group, as substantiated by ( $p = 0.122$ ); means that the degree of comprehension among students in both groups was comparable. The Findings indicated that the experimental class demonstrated a more significant enhancement, exhibiting an average augmentation of 11.23 in comparison to the control class. This enhancement is align with schema theory, which maintain that when learners integrate new information with their prior knowledge and cultural frameworks, their understanding is enhanced. The results emphasize the necessity of context-specific educational resources in fostering student motivation and engagement, consequently upholding the principles of culturally relevant pedagogy. The analyst asserts that further research should prioritize extended teaching durations in relation to persistent consequences and improved proficiency.

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### INTRODUCTION

Currently, the educational materials designed for the English language are predominantly influenced by external cultural dynamics, thereby diminishing their relevance to the cultural backgrounds of the students. The pedagogical materials utilized within educational usually derived from state textbooks less constrained incorporation of local wisdom. Although these educational resources are essential for developing foundational language skills, they insufficiently capture the cultural multiplicity of Indonesia and infrequently provide content that is culturally meaningful for the students. At one of junior high school in Jepara, a significant gap in student participation is evident during reading instruction when the instructional materials do not align with their

cultural setting, which in turn precipitates a decline in academic achievement. This phenomenon may arise from the insufficiency of educational resources in aligning with the genuine experiences of learners, thereby leading to a reduction in motivation and engagement in the educational process (Mubarak et al., 2022). The integration of local wisdom into educational materials has the capacity to augment cognitive comprehension and foster positive social attitudes, while concurrently cultivating cultural sensitivity and character development from an early stage (Uge et al., 2019). Furthermore, in the framework of English language education, the incorporation of local wisdom into reading resources is frequently neglected, resulting in a disjunction between learners and their cultural heritage. The disconnection not only inhibit the linguistic advancement of learners, but it may also reduce their sense of identity and belonging, thereby highlighting the urgently need for the integration of culturally relevant content that related with their backgrounds and lived experiences (Husain et al., 2021). Integrating such local wisdom content can foster a more inclusive learning environment, enhancing both academic achievement and personal growth by validating students' cultural narratives and promoting a sense of pride in their heritage (Ottu et al., 2024).

Irwan et al., (2019) state an excessive emphasis on foreign cultures may diminish students' appreciation of local values and identity, ultimately impacting their sense of cultural pride. In addition Sinamo et al., (2021) say, the globalization era has magnified the decline of societal and ethical values by reducing the importance of local wisdom. Therefore, the integration of local wisdom into educational frameworks is essential for the enhancement of pedagogical practices and the nurturing of future generations (Nurzen et al., 2022; Pitana et al., 2011). The integration of local wisdom can be manifested through various cultural elements, encompassing folklore, traditional culinary methodologies, historical heritage, and sites of cultural significance (D. Wulandari et al., 2020).

Jepara is broadly esteemed as the 'City of Carving' and is rich in diverse local wisdom insight. The inhabitants of Jepara harbor a rich repository of folklore, performing arts traditions, tourist destinations, and traditional culinary practices, which can be assimilated into educational resources to augment learning experiences (Fajrie et al., 2024; Taufan et al., 2023). The folklore of Jepara, represented through narratives like *Baratan*, conveys moral and ethical doctrines that justify introduction and preservation. Vacation spot such as Kartini Beach, Karimunjawa, and the Kartini Museum offer valuable insights into the cultural and historical importance unique to Jepara. Furthermore, Jepara's traditional culinary delights, including *Pindang Serani* and *Horok-Horok*, can be integrated

into educational resources as representation of the region's social and cultural identity. The integration of these components of local wisdom into educational resources, particularly within literacy activities, possesses the capacity to foster an appreciation for and awareness of local culture, while simultaneously enriching students' understanding and moral development (Sinamo et al., 2021). Through the integration of Jepara's local wisdom within the educational framework, learners may cultivate an enhanced comprehension and appreciation of the area's identity and cultural significance (Arifin et al., 2020). Educational establishments function as structured entities dedicated to the dissemination of knowledge and represent fundamental components of societal frameworks (A. Y. R. Wulandari et al., 2020). Consequently, it is imperative for these institutions to acknowledge and incorporate the cultural nuances and distinctive attributes of the communities that envelop their operational contexts (Anoum et al., 2022). The integration of local wisdom within educational resources possesses the capacity to enrich the educational experiences of learners, preserve regional cultural heritages and practices, and cultivate a substantial connection between formal education and everyday life (Lubis et al., 2022). Furthermore, the incorporation of local wisdom into the educational curriculum facilitates the safeguarding of cultural heritage, fortifies regional identity, and cultivates a sense of national pride within the youth demographic (Merina et al., 2023).

Nurdiana & Amelia, (2017); Dana & Dyah Aminatun (2022) suggested that reading involves more than just recognizing words and includes the active process of interpreting the text's fundamental meaning. There exist intrinsic factors, including insufficient motivation, constrained lexical resources, and challenges in comprehending syntactic structures, which impede learners' capacity to read and interpret textual material, alongside extrinsic factors such as inadequate parental involvement, restricted availability of educational resources, and limited opportunities for practical application (D. Wulandari et al., 2020). The proficiency in reading represent a critical element in the acquisition of the English language. The act of reading surrounded not only process of translate written language, but also the critical examination, interpretation, and assessment of its content. The understanding of the written material also necessitates the examination, interpretation, and assessment of the information conveyed (Villanueva, 2022). In educational contexts, the skill of reading represents an essential tool for learners to broaden their vocabulary, elevate their grammatical awareness, and raise their intellectualize capabilities. The practice of reading is consider as an essential skill within

the realm of English language learning (Imbaquingo & Cárdenas, 2023). Inderawati et al., (2022) state that reading comprehension is fundamentally associated not just with the competence to recognize and interpret words and sentences but also with the skill to identify contextual distinctions and extract meaning. The incorporation of materials that are relevant and familiar to students' experiential backgrounds can substantially enhance their reading comprehension (Uspayanti & Marnina, 2024). When learners engage with literature that is both recognizable and captivating, such as narratives rooted in Jepara's local wisdom, they are predisposed to cultivate a greater degree of interest and intrinsic motivation. This synthesis may also stimulate students to exhibit increased attentiveness to intricate details, consequently augmenting their cognitive comprehension abilities (Wastuti et al., 2021).

The researcher carefully scrutinized the prevailing literature to corroborate this inquiry. Khairiyah et al., (2021) established that reading materials informed by local wisdom functioned as an effective mechanism to augment comprehension skills among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, specifically in relation to students' grasp of lexical elements, while also enhancing their ability to infer and identify principal concepts across diverse texts. Furthermore concerning this pedagogical resource, indicating the potential of reading materials grounded in local wisdom to engender pedagogical implications that can be seamlessly integrated into EFL educational contexts, particularly for second-grade students at MAN 1 Bau-bau. Barella (2020) illustrated that the integration of local wisdom as an educational materials in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching framework promotes and evidences that this asset encompasses comprehensible vocabulary, thereby facilitating students' interaction with textual content more. The incorporation of local wisdom demonstrates that it not only enhances student participation, but also cultivates a deeper interest and comprehension of the academic content, which ultimately results in elevated scholarly performance as well as proficiency in language acquisition. Tuminah et al., (2022) with incorporating culturally relevant narratives that related to student's lived experiences, the educational process becomes progressively more accessible and enjoyable. This approach not only strengthens linguistic skills but also nurtures a significant appreciation for cultural heritage, consequently inspiring students to explore their inherited backgrounds while simultaneously advancing critical thinking and empathy through a variety of perspectives. By incorporating regional narratives within the educational framework,

teachers can establish a more immersive and significant learning atmosphere that enables students to know their identities and cultural heritages (Novita et al., 2020).

This research sight to explore the possible improvements in students' reading comprehension skills by the integration of local wisdom within English teaching materials, also motivated a deeper understanding of both linguistic components and cultural contexts. By conducting a comprehensive examination of the relationship between local wisdom and English language, the researcher want to investigate the impact of materials that more relevant with student's cultural backgrounds on their reading comprehension. The assessment of students' reading comprehension will be conducted both prior to and subsequent to the implementation of these instructional materials, with a focus on delineating the specific effects on reading capabilities. The materials employed in this study will be sourced from "Kartini & Jepara; Local Content In English Teaching Materials" (Mubarak et al., 2024). This study aspires to contribute the advancement of English educational materials that are realted to local cultural contexts and effectively foster improvements in students' reading comprehension through the use of contextually relevant materials. This study aims to analyze the the effectiveness of English educational resources informed by the traditional knowledge of Jepara in the development of students' reading comprehension skills.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study utilized quantitative method with a true experimental design to systematically assess the impact of English educational resources informed by Jepara's cultural heritage on the reading comprehension skills of learners. The population in this research comprised seventh-grade students of one of junior high school in Jepara, who were selected through a random sampling technique. The sample consisted of 92 students, who were categorized into validity trial class, control class, and an experimental class and . The validity trial class was tasked with evaluating the appropriateness of questions pertaining to the local wisdom materials prior to their dissemination to the control and experimental class. The experimental class received the intervention involving the implementation of English materials based on local wisdom, whereas the control group utilized conventional curriculum resources.

The research started with observations, subsequently, developed the assessment instrument also formulated the test questions, which were subsequently validated through expert evaluation and a validity assessment. The intervention was executed over

the course of three separate sessions. Each session was allocated a duration of 80 minutes. Following the administration of treatment across three sessions. This investigation encompasses two variables that require thorough analysis namely the independent and dependent variables. The independent variable in this research is associated with the influence of locally sourced reading materials, while the dependent variable is related to the improvement of students' reading comprehension skills. The dataset was analyzed through the application of SPSS software version 25.0 which included assessments of reliability, normality, homogeneity, and independent sample t-test evaluations. Then summarized by utilizing both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Results

#### Pre-Test

**Table 1.** The table of Normality Test

No	Class	Kolmogorov-smimov		
		Statistic	df	Sig
1	Control	.163	30	.040
2	Experiment	.1201	30	.200

The normality test of the control group ( $p = 0.40$ ), while the experimental group data ( $p = 0.200$ ).

**Table 2.** The table of Homogeneity Variance

No.	Class	Levene Statistic	Df1	Df2	Sig
1.	Based on Mean	6.495	1	58	.013
2.	Based on Median	5.965	1	58	.018
3.	Based on Median and with adjusted df		1	45.862	.019
4.	Based on trimmed mean	6.355	1	58	0.14

The analysis of homogeneity executed through Levene's test yields a significance value of 0.13, which is above the alpha level of 0.05, signifying that the variance identified between the control and experimental groups is homogenous.

**Table 3.** The table of Group Statistic

No	Class	N	Mean	Std Deviation	Std Mean
1	Control	30	62.70	7.6	1.400
2	Experiment	30	65.30	8.63	1.863

Control Group: Mean = 62.07, Standard Deviation = 7.29 Experimental Group: Mean = 65.30, Standard Deviation = 8.63.

**Table 4.** The Independent Sample T-Test

No	Class	F	Sig	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Equal variances assumed	.542	.464	-1.568	58	.122
2	Equal variances not assumed			-1.568	56.434	.123

The p-value, represented as sig (2-tailed = 0.122), is greater than the standard significance level of 0.05, implying no statistically significant difference between the two groups before the treatment. Based on the Mean: Significance = 0.47, Based on the Median: Significance = 0.66, based on the Trimmed Mean: Significance = 0.6833.

#### Post-Test

**Table 5.** The table of Normality Test

No	Class	Kolmogorov-smimov Statistic	df	Sig
1	Control	.143	30	.123
2	Experiment	.181	30	.014

The p-value associated with the control group (0.123) and the p-value for the experimental group (0.14) both exceed the threshold of 0.05, thereby suggesting a normal distribution of the data.

**Table 6.** The table of Homogeneity Variance

No	Class	Levene Statistic	Df1	Df2	Sig
1	Based on Mean	0.51	1	58	.822
2	Based on Median	0.29	1	58	.865
3	Based on Median and with adjusted df	0.29	1	45.862	.865
4	Based on trimmed mean	0.67	1	58	.769

Based on the Mean: Significance = 0.51, Based on the Median: Significance = 0.29, Based on the Trimmed Mean: Significance = 0.67. The p-values exceed the threshold of 0.05, the data exhibits homogeneity, indicating that both groups possess comparable variance.

**Table 7.** The table of Group Statistic

No	Class	N	Mean	Std Deviation	Std Mean
1	Control	30	71.7	6.59	1.20390
2	Experiment	30	82.5	6.08	1.14162

Control Class: Mean = 71.37, Standard Deviation = 6.59; Experimental Class: Mean = 82.50, Standard Deviation = 6.08. The average score of the experimental class (82.50)

reveals a statistically significant enhancement when juxtaposed with the average score of the control cohort (71.37), signifying a notable improvement.

**Table 8.** The Independent Sample T-Test

No	Class	F	Sig	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Equal variances assumed	.051	.822	-6.369	58	.000
2	Equal variances not assumed			-6.369	57.837	.000

The calculated t-value is -6.369, with degrees of freedom (df) being 58, and the significance level (2-tailed) is 0.000, accompanied by a mean difference of -11.13. The p-value (0.000) is inferior to the threshold of 0.05, it can be concluded that this result possesses statistical significance.

## Discussion

### Pre Test

The pre-test's findings indicate that both of the control group and the experimental group have similar levels of reading comprehension skills, which is align with the non-significant results obtained from the t-test. This equivalence in performance implies that any advancements seen in the post-assessment can be linked to the intervention rather than to any pre-existing differences between the two groups. The assessment of homogeneity corroborated the hypothesis that the two cohorts exhibited equivalent variance in their reading comprehension capabilities. The findings related to reading comprehension was considered statistically non-significant, thus reinforcing the integrity of the research methodology utilized. The assessment of normality utilizing the statistical distribution of the experimental group and the control group demonstrated adherence to a normal distribution. The computed difference scores produced a Cohen's d value of (0.405), emphasizing the postulate that any augmentation in post-test scores would be an immediate consequence of the implemented intervention.

### Post-Test

The results of the post-test revealed a notably significant enhancement within the experimental group, thereby substantiating the efficacy of reading materials grounded in local wisdom in augmenting students' comprehension abilities. The independent sample t-test elucidated that the experimental group exhibited a statistically significant superiority over the control group, evidenced by a mean difference of 11.13 points, aligns



with the outcomes of investigations conducted by (Calamassi et al., 2022). Son, (2024) proposed that individuals have cognitive schemas that assist in the organization and interpretation of information; for instance, when learners are exposed to novel information, they link it to their pre-existing knowledge to enhance comprehension and memory retention. The engagement levels of students function as an essential factor in academic success, as the extent of interest and involvement displayed by students can signify favourable learning results (Schnitzler et al., 2021). Reimers et al., (2020) posits that reading comprehension is markedly shaped by prior knowledge. When learners engage with materials that reflect their cultural context, they are capable of activating established cognitive frameworks, or schemas, thereby facilitating the interpretation and retention of information (Jumriani et al., 2021). Prior knowledge plays a crucial role in enhancing reading comprehension by facilitating the construction of situation models, reading proficiency, and shaping the manner in which readers assimilate and extract the textual information (Punkasirikul, 2020; Smith et al., 2021)

Amalia et al., (2022) indicate that the combination of diverse media, encompassing the practice of writing in parallel with batik, the utilization of artistic imagery, and the integration of folklore, substantially enhances the engagement and cultural relevance of the learning process. Furthermore, this pedagogical approach facilitates children's comprehension of words, as it is contextualized within their familiar cultural framework (Pudjiati & Mawarni, 2023). Laila et al., (2021) indicates that the integration of local wisdom within educational materials markedly enhances the literacy competencies of primary school pupils. Educational resources that incorporate regional knowledge, encompassing traditional cuisine, indigenous attire, folklore, tourist sites, customs, and historical figures from the Minangkabau society, significantly enhanced the reading and writing capabilities of elementary school pupils (Damayanti et al., 2020). The utilization of these materials rooted in local wisdom proved to be more efficacious than conventional instructional resources, as they fostered comprehension and engagement while simultaneously preserving cultural heritage. Unlike conventional reading materials, which often focus on foreign cultural contexts, local wisdom-based texts bridge the gap between students' prior knowledge and new information, making comprehension more intuitive and engaging (Juanda et al., 2025). Texts that lack relevance to students' cultural practices or traditions, will engender challenges in comprehension, engagement, and self-regulation (Sihombing & Nguyen, 2022). The difficulties associated with self-regulation are connected to students' inadequate understanding of the content being read, which

complicates their ability to monitor their comprehension and employ strategies intended to illuminate the text's meaning (Krismayani & Menggo, 2022)

Caingcoy (2023) emphasizes the critical role of culturally responsive pedagogy, which encompasses cultural acknowledgment, the cultivation of affirmative relationships, and the modification of instructional approaches. When students engage with texts rich in local wisdom, they are more readily able to relate to the content, thereby facilitating a deeper engagement with the reading experience (Brondízio et al., 2021). By incorporating the cultural elements specific to Jepara into the reading materials, this research aligns with the principles of environment-based learning, which posits that educational experiences are rendered more effective when situated within a framework that is both culturally and contextually pertinent (Khairiyah et al., 2021). Students' cultural identity within the formal education paradigm i.e. when students encounter representations of their own cultural heritage in educational resources, it fosters a sense of pride and belonging, thus enhancing cultural appreciation and awareness (Laila et al., 2021; Nasir & Asis, 2020). By embedding local wisdom into educational practices, educational institutions can play a pivotal role in cultural preservation while concurrently enhancing academic achievement (Damayanti et al., 2020; Uspayanti & Marnina, 2024).

This research outcomes have a restrictions necessitate in-depth examination. The analysis performed within a singular educational institution may impede the external validity of the results when applied to alternative geographical settings or pedagogical frameworks. Subsequent academic inquiry could expand the sample size and incorporate educational institutions from diverse cultural contexts to evaluate the wider implications of these results. Furthermore, this investigation predominantly depended on quantitative metrics (such as test scores), which provided significant insights yet may not comprehensively encapsulate the qualitative experiences and perceptions of students. The authors suggest that future academics should implement qualitative techniques, including student interviews and the observation of classroom interactions, to elucidate the complex relationship between the incorporation of local wisdom and factors such as motivation, engagement, and critical thinking. Additionally, it is proposed to introduce a prospective dimension to examine the long-term ramifications associated with the utilization of culturally integrated educational resources. Future researchers may also consider implementing longitudinal studies to evaluate the sustainability of the advantages conferred by educational materials grounded in local wisdom over time and their impact on broader linguistic competencies beyond mere reading comprehension.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The integration of Jepara local Wisdom into English reading curricula has emerged as an exceptionally efficacious pedagogical strategy, significantly enhancing students' reading comprehension proficiencies. The findings obtained from this investigation highlight the paramount significance of cultural pertinence within the educational milieu, illustrating that when learners interact with material that resonates with their lived experiences and possesses inherent meaning, they demonstrate heightened motivation, augmented comprehension, and superior academic achievements. This research contributes to the extant literature that advocates for the incorporation of localized and culturally pertinent curricula within the domain of language instruction. These findings underscore the essential necessity for curricular innovation, professional development for educators, and additional scholarly inquiry to preserve local cultural heritage and identity, whilst simultaneously promoting students' linguistic competencies and overall academic success.

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