

Integrating Local Culture Into English Teaching Materials: An Analysis of Teachers' Needs in Islamic Junior High Schools

Utary Rustam^{1*}, Kalsum², Wahyu Rustam³

Institut Ilmu Sosial dan Bisnis Andi Sapada, Indonesia¹

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Parepare, Indonesia^{2,3}

Email: utaryforcampus@gmail.com¹

ABSTRACT

Integrating local culture into English language teaching has been widely recognized as a means of enhancing students' engagement and cultural relevance in learning. This study investigates English teachers' pedagogical, resource-related, and professional development needs in integrating local culture into English teaching materials in Islamic junior high schools in Indonesia. Employing a descriptive qualitative design, the study involved semi-structured interviews with eight English teachers. The interview protocols were informed by three theoretical frameworks: Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), Funds of Knowledge, and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP). Data were analyzed thematically through systematic coding, category development, and theme refinement. The findings reveal three interrelated needs. First, although teachers recognize the pedagogical value of local culture, they experience difficulties in translating cultural content into communicative instructional practices, indicating limitations in their pedagogical content knowledge. Second, teachers face restricted access to culturally relevant resources, particularly materials representing Bugis culture, which constrains the effective utilization of their funds of knowledge. Third, despite strong motivation to integrate local culture, teachers report limited access to targeted professional training, underscoring the need for CRP-informed professional development. The study highlights the importance of sustained institutional support and collaborative professional learning opportunities to strengthen culturally responsive English teaching practices in Islamic secondary education.

Keywords: *culturally relevant pedagogy; English language teaching (ELT); Islamic junior high schools; local culture integration; teachers needs.*

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received
Oktober 20, 2025

Revised
November 11, 2025

Accepted
December 12, 2025

How to cite

Rustam, U., Kalsum, & Rustam, W. (2025). Integrating local culture into English teaching materials: An analysis of teachers' needs in Islamic junior high schools. *Pedagogy: Journal of English Language Teaching*, 13(2). 223-246
DOI: 10.32332/joelt.v13i2.11845

Journal Homepage

<https://e-journal.metrouniv.ac.id/index.php/pedagogy>

This is an open-access article under the CC BY-SA license <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>

INTRODUCTION

English language learning in the era of globalization aims not only to develop linguistic competence but also to serve as a bridge for understanding cultural diversity (Byram, 2008). However, the dominance of Western cultural content in English teaching materials often neglects local contexts, potentially eroding students' cultural identities (Baker, 2015). This phenomenon raises critical questions about how educational resources can balance global demands with the preservation of local values. In Indonesia, where cultural diversity is a national asset, integrating local culture into English language teaching (ELT) has become an urgent necessity (Renandya, 2018).

Globalization has solidified English as a lingua franca, yet it has also sparked concerns about cultural homogenization. UNESCO (2017) emphasizes that multicultural education is key to safeguarding cultural uniqueness amid global influences. Similar concerns have been documented in other countries. For instance, a recent study in China demonstrated that many English-language teaching textbooks continue to emphasize international and source cultures rather than local cultural perspectives. It limits students' opportunities to engage with their own cultural context in English instruction. (Lo, 2025 and Zhang, 2025). Moreover, research in Indonesia comparing

global and local EFL textbooks found that foreign cultural content, such as texts about Thanksgiving or Halloween which lack relevance to students' daily lives, still dominates, which constrains intercultural communicative competence and undermines relevancy for Indonesian learners (Noni & Kencana, 2023). This creates a disconnect between the learning materials and the socio-cultural realities of Indonesian learners.

Indonesia's Merdeka Curriculum (2022), introduced by the Ministry of Education and Culture, highlights contextualized learning rooted in local culture. A study conducted by Agus, et al (2019) showed how effective local wisdom-based teaching material can improve students' creativity in writing. Also, integrating local wisdom into the learning material can enrich students knowledge about their own culture as well as help the students to understand the ELT texts easier (Dwi, 2020). However, its implementation faces significant challenges. Teachers often lack adequate resources and training to adapt materials that align with regional cultural contexts. Decontextualized materials can easily diminish student motivation. Thus, integrating local culture is not merely a pedagogical issue but also a determinant of learning effectiveness that highlight the need for a systematic approach to empower teachers.

Teachers' specific needs in localizing materials remain underexplored. Borg (2015) argues that educators require structural support, including curriculum guidelines, training, and access to cultural resources. Darma, et.al (2025) found that teachers face challenges to embed local cultural elements in ELT due to limited resources and insufficient teacher training. Similarly, Nurteteng et.al (2025) reported that in contextualizing ELT materials with local culture, resource constraints remained an obstacle. However, studies by Richards (2015) indicate that many teachers lack confidence in modifying materials due to limited knowledge of local cultural elements. A study by Lie (2017) in Central Java found that 70% of teachers struggled to identify relevant local cultural elements for ELT materials. This gap underscores the misalignment between curriculum policies and teachers' practical capacities.

The role of government and educational institutions in providing professional development is equally critical. A sustained teacher training programs can enhance pedagogical competencies (Moodie. 2017). Inderawati et.al (2022) have demonstrated that targeted teacher training can support the development of English teaching materials that embed local cultural content. However, in Indonesia, most training focuses on general methodologies, neglecting material development rooted in

local culture. A recent review by Tantri et.al (2024) revealed that the integration and development of EFL classroom materials based on local culture further underscores growing consensus on the necessity of institutional policies and training for sustainable integration of local culture in language education.

There are at least three main theories used in this study, namely Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), Fund of Knowledge (FoK). And Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP).

Lee Shulman introduced Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) in the 1980s in response to the low professional status of teachers compared to other professions. PCK was considered the "missing paradigm" in teaching research because previous research had only focused on general pedagogy or content, not both. The concept emerged from efforts to enhance teacher professionalism in the U.S. and elevate teaching's status as a respected profession.

Fundamentally, PCK is defined as the unique knowledge teachers possess, which is an amalgamation or integration of subject matter knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. PCK includes a deep understanding of what to teach (content) and how to best teach it (pedagogy) to specific students in specific contexts. Shulman emphasizes PCK as a form of content knowledge that encompasses the

most relevant aspects of the teachability of the material (Shulman, 1986).

PCK is recognized as the core of teachers' professional knowledge. To bridge the gap between general pedagogical knowledge and content knowledge, teacher education needs to explicitly teach PCK. Collecting and documenting expert teachers' "wisdom of practice" related to topic-specific PCK is valuable for teacher education guidance and materials (Loke, et al, 2015). The integration of technology has also given rise to the concept of Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPCK).

Broadly, PCK has several key characteristics as follows; 1) It is complex and difficult to articulate by its owner because it is tacit; 2) It is integrated (its components are interrelated, overlap, and operate together, forming knowledge that is distinct from the sum of its parts); 3) It is continuously evolving with teaching experience and teacher reflection; 4) It is contextual (dependent on students, materials, and situations); 5) It is only meaningful when applied in teaching practice.

There are two main elements of PCK identified by Shulman (1986), they are : Knowledge of Representation and Knowledge of Students and Learning Difficulties. The first one is the teacher's ability to present key concepts in the material using effective forms, such as

analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, and demonstrations, in a way that students can easily understand. In addition, the second one can be defined as the teacher's understanding of students' preconceptions and misconceptions, the learning difficulties they experience on specific topics, and the strategies to overcome these difficulties.

The PCK Development Model is a cyclical process involving teachers' PCK growth. It is called Pedagogical Reasoning and Action (PRA) (Loke, et.al, 2015), consist of; 1) Comprehension: Teachers understand the purpose, structure, and ideas of the material in depth; 2) Transformation: Teachers interpret the material, prepare it, select it, represent it, and adapt it to student characteristics; 3) Instruction: Implementing the plan in the classroom, including management and interaction; 4) Evaluation: Checking students' understanding and evaluating learning; 5) Reflection: Reflecting on performance and student responses; 6) New comprehension: Consolidating a new understanding of materials, students, and teaching for future improvement. This process is not always linear.

The second theory is Funds of Knowledge theory, pioneered by Luis Moll, Carlos Vélez-Ibáñez, James Greenberg, and their colleagues in the late 1980s and early 1990s, offers a transformative perspective on the cognitive and cultural resources

learners bring to the classroom (Moll, et.al, 2001).

This theory's core concepts center on recognizing that every individual, especially those from working-class backgrounds or groups often considered "minorities," has a rich and valuable reservoir of knowledge, skills, and expertise. This reservoir is developed through active participation in the social, cultural, and occupational practices of one's household and community. These practical, contextualized knowledge cover areas such as agriculture, trade, household finance, traditional medicine, construction, and cross-cultural social navigation (Moll, 2005). They are not deficiencies but significant intellectual capital. Funds of Knowledge theory emerged as a critical response to the deficit approach that dominated education at the time. This approach tended to underestimate the capacity of students from certain backgrounds by focusing on what they did not know rather than their potential.

The foundation of FoK is heavily influenced by Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1978), which emphasizes that learning is a social process closely linked to culture and life experiences. Moll and his team's research (2001) found that students develop and share such knowledge through social interactions within families and communities, which forms the basis of their ways of thinking and problem-

solving. An important finding is that schools often ignore or trivialize this valuable knowledge because they only consider formal academic knowledge to be valid. Thus, FoK challenges traditional knowledge hierarchies and opens the door to teaching approaches that better value the cultural diversity and experiences of students.

In the context of English language education, FoK has strong practical implications. The theory requires teachers to actively and respectfully learn about their students' lives outside of school, going beyond assumptions and stereotypes. Teachers must be like "mini-researchers" who build rapport with students and their families to identify the knowledge, skills, traditions, stories, and language resources (such as bilingualism) that comprise students' FoK (Moll, 2001). This deep understanding forms the basis for designing relevant learning experiences. Students' knowledge, such as information about family businesses, traditional arts, migration experiences, or special skills, can serve as meaningful starting points for teaching reading, writing, speaking, and listening in English (Zipin, 2009). Examples include writing personal experience narratives, discussing literary themes related to students' culture, and creating research projects on local practices. This approach makes language learning more

contextualized, increases motivation, and validates students' identities.

For English language education, especially in Indonesia, which is very rich in cultural and linguistic diversity, FoK theory offers a relevant and empowering framework. This approach aligns with efforts to value local languages and the archipelago's rich culture as integral parts of the knowledge students bring with them. By recognizing and building on students' FoK, English teachers can create classrooms where students learn English and use the language to express their identity, share their heritage, and engage critically with the world (Moises, 2014). FoK encourages a shift from teaching language as mere skill transmission to empowering multicultural literacy development. The language-learning process becomes a two-way street that mutually enriches students and teachers while building awareness of the relationship between language, culture, and power in society.

The third theory is Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP). It is an approach to teaching that deliberately incorporates students' cultural backgrounds, life experiences, and languages into the learning process (Gay, 2002). It stems from the belief that all students are capable of achieving when their cultural identities are respected in the classroom (Gloria, 2021). CRP was born in response to traditional methods that often

ignore student diversity. Teachers must acknowledge that students' cultural backgrounds influence their learning processes. Consequently, CRP is not merely an additional technique; rather, it presents a novel perspective on teacher-student interactions within a pluralistic society.

In practice, CRP is realized through various strategies. Teachers employ a variety of teaching methods, including group discussion and storytelling, to accommodate different learning styles (Sharroky, 2017). Students' local language is recognized as a valuable asset to learning English, rather than an impediment (Sara, et.al, 2017). Assessment is conducted fairly through the use of portfolios or projects, rather than solely relying on written exams. The institution has extended an invitation to the student body, encouraging their participation in the selection of learning topics with the objective of enhancing their relevance. Critical discussions concerning bias in teaching materials or social issues are also encouraged. Furthermore, the institution has initiated cooperative endeavors with parents and communities to integrate local wisdom.

CRP is important for teaching English because language and culture are inextricably linked. Teachers can use Indonesian culture to help students understand cultural concepts in English. Students learn through authentic texts from various English-speaking countries, not

just the United States or the United Kingdom. This trains students in cross-cultural communication skills, which are essential in the global era. The textbooks are designed to showcase diversity and address social justice topics, which makes the material directly related to students' lives and motivates them more (Bonny, 2013).

Some effective strategies for implementing the CRP in the EFL classroom include choosing literatures from Asian or African authors instead of just Western ones (Shin, 2018). Teachers can assign tasks that analyze local issues in English, such as the impact of tourism or environmental conservation. Collaborative projects with students from other countries via digital platforms also effectively promote real communication. Media such as digital stories can be used to document local traditions in English. Arts such as drama and songs can be used as a medium of cultural expression while practicing language. Development of teaching materials that combine international sources with the Indonesian context is also important.

The previous studies show that the integration of local culture in English teaching material has a positive impact on students' motivation, understanding, and cultural awareness. However, further research is needed to explore more specifically the needs of teachers in the

integration process, especially in a specific regional context such as Sidrap.

Sidenreng Rappang Regency is an area that still maintain and preserve its local culture. This culture is not only alive in everyday life, but is also often displayed in school and community activities. Sidrap has various culture such as traditional foods like Palekko, Lilla Tedong and Beppa Pasok, traditional dances such as Tari Padduppa, and handicrafts that are often used in traditional events such as weddings. These cultures have great potential to be used as English teaching materials in schools. By choosing Sidrap as the research location, it is hoped that the results obtained will truly reflect the existing local conditions and potential.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on identifying the specific needs of teachers, consisting of three main components namely pedagogical needs, local cultural resources needs, and professional training and support, in integrating local culture into English teaching materials at the junior high school level.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to examine English teachers' needs in integrating local culture into English teaching materials at the junior high school level. Qualitative descriptive research is particularly suitable for

exploring participants' perspectives and contextualized practices in natural settings, allowing for rich and nuanced descriptions of phenomena that are not easily captured through quantitative measures (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This approach enabled an in-depth exploration of teachers' pedagogical practices, resource constraints, and professional development needs related to culturally grounded instruction.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and non-participant classroom observations, which are commonly used to gain comprehensive insights into instructional practices and teachers' lived experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). During classroom observations, the researcher adopted a non-interventionist role to document teaching activities related to cultural integration. Observational data were systematically recorded in field notes focusing on key classroom interactions and instructional strategies.

The participants consisted of eight English teachers from three Islamic junior high schools in Sidrap, including five teachers from a private Islamic junior high school and three teachers from two private Islamic boarding schools. Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), involving data condensation through coding, data display through thematic categorization, and conclusion drawing

with ongoing verification. Constant comparative analysis was employed to ensure consistency between emerging themes and the original data, thereby enhancing analytical credibility.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

These findings contain teacher's needs divided into three aspects, as follows:

Pedagogical Needs

The pedagogical needs of teachers in integrating local culture into English teaching are closely related to the theoretical framework of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK). According to Shulman (1986), PCK encompasses teachers' understanding of subject matter content, delivery strategies, and adjustments to student characteristics. There are 4 points of pedagogical needs will be elaborated in this aspects.

Teachers' Understanding of Bugis Culture in the Context of ETM

The interview results revealed that teachers need to understand local culture and be able to select and package relevant cultural content into meaningful teaching materials for students in order to integrate local culture into English language learning. Most respondent teachers indicated that they have good knowledge of Bugis cultural elements and see great potential in incorporating these values into

English language teaching. This is an important starting point for developing a more contextualized and grounded approach to learning.

Some teachers mentioned specific cultural elements they found relevant. For example, Respondents 3 suggested using traditional houses, clothing, and culinary specialties, such as barongko and burasa, as reading materials or writing assignments in English. Respondent 6 added that folktales, such as the Nene Pakande story, and wedding traditions, such as mappacci, can be used for reading comprehension or procedural writing exercises, because they contain sequences of activities with strong cultural significance.

Some teachers have gone beyond merely recognizing the culture and have also taken the initiative to link it with communicative learning approaches. Respondent 1 stated that "our ancestors were more inclined to tell stories. " This effort demonstrates creativity in adapting local cultural practices into learning methods that cater to students' characteristics. Additionally, Respondent 8 mentioned that students' daily lives, such as eating together, respecting parents, and living together, could be used as contexts for learning basic vocabulary and sentence structure. She said: "I teach vocabulary about family members while lightly explaining the Bugis family structure." This indicates that teachers are aware of the

need to create learning experiences that reflect students' everyday realities.

The Relevance of Current ETM to Students' Cultural Background

The results of the interviews show that most teachers feel the current English teaching materials are not fully appropriate for students' cultural contexts, particularly Bugis culture. Some teachers explicitly stated that the materials do not reflect local values and customs. For example, Respondent 6 revealed: "Our students learn about Christmas, Thanksgiving, or Winter, while many of them have never seen snow or experienced Western culture before."

Some teachers mentioned that the materials should bring students closer to their environment to make them easier to understand and appreciate. Respondent 4 explained: "Some topics are quite close to their daily lives, such as daily activities or school. But there are also materials that feel foreign, especially those related to other cultures, such as traditions in Western countries"

Some teachers also expressed the need to review the content of the teaching materials. For example, Respondent 1 said "I think some materials are appropriate, but we still need to review them in relation to the needs of our culture. Like what should be maintained and what is no longer relevant".

However, not all teachers have an in-depth understanding of the relationship between teaching materials and local culture. Respondent 3 stated "It's not too deep because recognizing English requires seeing examples from other countries. Therefore, it's influenced by widespread discussions outside the local area."

Teachers' Skills That Need Further Development to Integrate Bugis Culture into ETM

Based on the interviews, the teachers realized that they need to develop a number of skills to effectively integrate Bugis culture into English language learning. These skills include mastery of the local culture, adaptation of teaching materials, and pedagogical ability to deliver engaging materials to students. In addition, skills in developing and adapting teaching materials are an important focus. Respondent 5 revealed, "I feel that I need to improve my ability to create or adapt teaching materials that contain local culture in an English format." Meanwhile, Respondent 6 added that "I need to hone the ability to convert cultural content into simple and communicative English, without losing the original meaning." This shows that teachers face challenges in developing materials that remain authentic to the local culture, but can be delivered in a language that is appropriate to the students' level.

The use of culture-based learning media is also a concern for some teachers. Respondent 7 stated that she would like to develop "creative teaching materials based on local culture, either in the form of text, visual media, or collaborative activities," while Respondent 8 emphasized the need to create "visual media that is interesting but still in accordance with the ability of our students who are still in the stage of recognizing basic vocabulary."

Some teachers also highlighted the need for skills in designing relevant and communicative learning activities. Respondent 2 mentioned that "reading and listening skills can be developed and linked to English," so that students not only understand their culture but also strengthen language skills. Respondent 1 emphasized that using the Bugis language in the teaching process can help students emotionally connect with the material. "Our learners, especially those in the Bugis area, tend to connect more when we use Bugis as the language of instruction for English."

Teachers' Experience and Needs Regarding Training on Local Culture Integration in ETM

Based on the results of the interviews, all respondents stated that they had never attended training or workshops specifically discussing the integration of local culture, particularly Bugis culture, into English

language teaching. Nevertheless, all respondents agreed that they urgently needed such training to improve their abilities as educators. Most emphasized the importance of training in developing teaching materials appropriate to the local cultural context. Respondent 1 said, "I've never been, and I really need the workshop." Similarly, Respondent 2 said, "Never. I need it to link cultural materials and English skills."

Other teachers highlight that this kind of training is important not only from a technical teaching standpoint, but also as a means to introduce local culture to students through English. Respondent 3 said "Not yet, but it is very much needed so that, in the future, we can become teachers or tutors who introduce our culture and expand students' knowledge through English."

Some teachers also expect that the training should not only be theoretical, but also provide practical strategies that can be directly applied in the classroom. Respondent 6 expressed her hope that this kind of training is not only theoretical, but also provides practical examples, such as lesson plans, local culture-based teaching materials, and teaching strategies that can be directly applied in the classroom.

In addition, Respondent 8 added an important dimension of the training being relevant to the local context, including the pesantren environment. She stated that "I also hope that the training takes into

account the pesantren context, so that religious values can be inserted without making the material heavy."

Finally, diversity in understanding and applying cultural integration shows the pedagogical challenges that still exist. This underscores the need to bolster pedagogical skills, particularly in analyzing materials, designing culturally based learning activities, and adapting teaching content to students' social realities.

Therefore, teachers' pedagogical needs extend beyond mastery of local culture. They need support in the form of capacity building to select, develop, and implement engaging, culture-based teaching materials. Integrating English language learning with local culture strengthens students' language competence and can also strengthen cultural identity and preserve local wisdom. Therefore, improving teachers' pedagogical skills is essential to realizing learning that is academic, contextual, relevant, and meaningful.

Resource Needs

The second need that emerged from the research findings is the need for local cultural resources to be used for learning purposes. This need is closely related to the concept of a Fund of Knowledge which emphasizes the importance of exploring and utilizing students' and their communities' knowledge as a foundation

for learning (Moll, 2001). There are 3 points will be explained in this aspect.

Utilizing Local Stories, Songs, and Daily Practices in Bugis Culture for ETM

The fifth is utilizing local stories, songs, and daily practices in Bugis culture for ETM. Most respondents claimed to have incorporated elements of Bugis culture, such as folktales, moral values, and daily habits, into English language learning activities. However, the extent to which these elements were utilized and the manner in which they were integrated varied.

Respondent 1 said that she used Bugis moral values in English language learning activities. He said, "I have done that when using Bugis moral values in English learning."

Respondent 5 also shared his experience using folklore and local customs. He explained that in a descriptive text session, he used Nene Pakande folklore. "when I used that, the students seemed more enthusiastic because they were familiar with the content."

Respondent 8 also utilized local customs in learning. She said, "For example, when teaching vocabulary about daily routines, I ask students to explain their activities at the cottage using simple English." She also mentioned using the tradition of *mappatabe'* when teaching the expression of asking for permission.

Although still in the early stages of teaching, Respondent 7 has tried to incorporate local culture through simple projects. She explained she once asked students to make posters about their favorite Bugis traditions in English. The response was quite positive.

Meanwhile, Respondent 4 has not specifically utilized stories or songs, but she has tried to link the meaning of expressions in English and Bugis. She gave the example, "I explained that the word excuse me in English has the same meaning as the word *tabe'* in Bugis."

Only Respondent 2 said that she had never considered or incorporated local culture into English language learning. She answered briefly, "Never, and it has never occurred to me."

Cultural Values of Bugis Society That Enrich English Teaching Materials

Based on the results of the interviews, most teachers said that Bugis cultural values have great potential to enrich English language learning, particularly by strengthening character and fostering a close learning context. Teachers mention several values such as Respondent 1 stated that "cultural and noble values, such as Tudang Sipulung, through which our ancestor reached consensus on important decisions can be incorporated into learning activities." Respondent 2 added that "the value of gotong royong and togetherness

can be emulated to instill positive values that are relevant to students' life."in addition, The value of politeness is also important. Respondent 4 linked the use of English expressions to local values: "I once told students that the word excuse me in English has a similar meaning to *tabe'* in Bugis," and the students began using it when asking for permission in class. Moreover, respondent 8 mentioned that values such as respect for parents and responsibility for duties are closely related to the life of *santri* and can be used in simple English sentences such as "We respect our parents" or "We help each other."

Teachers' Needs in Exploring Bugis Cultural Elements for ETM

Based on interviews, Teachers identified the availability and access to local cultural resources as an important need in the process of integrating Bugis culture into English language teaching. The result showed that, although teachers have basic knowledge of Bugis culture, they experience difficulty exploring, selecting, and processing these cultural elements due to limited references, supporting media, and relevant learning resources. Respondent 2 said that "a lack of reading resources and interactive videos is the main obstacle to enriching the materials." This presents a challenge when designing effective and structured teaching materials based on local culture.

Some teachers revealed that teaching materials containing local cultural content are limited in quantity and quality. The absence of cultural values-based learning materials in English poses a significant obstacle to develop teaching materials. Respondent 5 stated "I need simple and relevant reference sources about Bugis culture, such as short stories, descriptive texts, or videos in the local language that can be used as teaching materials." In addition, Teachers need reference sources that are easy to understand and appropriate for students' ability levels. Respondent 8 expressed a similar sentiment that "I need simple teaching materials that incorporate local culture into English, especially for the primary level." Reliance on foreign culture-based teaching materials means teachers must make adaptations, which often takes extra time and effort.

Another important finding in this aspect is the need for collaborative support. Teachers realize that exploring the richness of local culture is not something that can be done individually. Therefore, they emphasized the importance of cross-field collaboration among English teachers, local culture teachers, and cultural experts. Respondent 1 emphasized the importance of direct engagement with indigenous communities. He said "We need to have joint discussions with indigenous leaders and people who are more involved in that

world because we sometimes have difficulty interpreting these things."

Initiatives such as forming a working team to develop teaching materials based on local culture are considered strategic because they produce materials that are culturally authentic and in accordance with a communicative pedagogical approach. Respondent 6 suggested that "We can create a team to explore the potential of local culture and adapt it into English teaching materials." The need for discussion forums and ongoing coaching was also mentioned. Respondent 7 said that "I need guidance from senior teachers, simple reading materials about Bugis culture, and a space to experiment in the classroom."

There was also a concern about the need for technical training and examples of ready-to-use materials. Respondent 4 stated that "What I need most are training sessions and workshops, as well as examples of teaching materials integrated with local culture to serve as inspiration and reference."

Additionally, some teachers emphasized the importance of innovating learning techniques to stay relevant to the current generation of students. Respondent 3 emphasized that "it is incomplete when we teach without considering and summarizing new teaching models for students."

Overall, the findings confirm the need for three main aspects of local cultural resources; Bugis culture-based teaching references in a suitable English language learning format, cross-field collaboration to extract valid and relevant cultural content, and the development of representative and attractive learning media. Without fulfilling these three aspects, integrating local culture into English language learning will be difficult.

Training Needs

The most prominent need is for training or professional development, particularly in integrating local culture into English language teaching. This finding is relevant to Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP), a principle that emphasizes creating a learning environment responsive to students' cultural backgrounds while promoting academic achievement and critical awareness (Gay, 2002). There will be 3 points elaborated in this aspect.

The Importance of Integrating Local Culture into ETM

Most teachers reported that integrating local culture into English learning is very important. They believe this approach helps students understand the material better and strengthens their cultural identity and values. Respondent 1 stated, "By involving culture, learners will not be directly exposed to negative things

that may contradict the cultural values we believe in." This demonstrates the role of local culture as a value filter in foreign language learning. Respondent 2 emphasized the importance of integrating local culture so that children can learn a foreign language while remembering their own culture and relating to the provided material. This suggests that students' emotional connection to learning materials can enhance their understanding and interest in learning.

Similarly, Respondent 5 stated, "Students will feel closer and be more actively involved if the teaching materials reflect their environment." According to him, this approach not only supports the preservation of local culture but also boosts students' confidence in learning English. In addition, Respondent 8 concluded that this approach is useful, especially for students who find English difficult. She said that "If the lesson content is closer to their daily lives, they are more willing to speak or write. Additionally, it strengthens their identity as santri and as part of Bugis society."

Challenges Faced by Teachers in relating with ETM to Bugis Local Culture

The interviews revealed that teachers encounter various challenges when integrating Bugis local culture into English language learning. One of the main obstacles mentioned was the lack of

relevant references and reading materials. Respondent 2 briefly stated, "Lack of materials and reading resources," while Respondent 1 added that "Translation and reference of Bugis language books into Indonesian because I often have philosophical questions, but sources are limited, even online."

Additionally, some teachers face the obstacle of a lack of in-depth understanding of Bugis culture. Respondent 4 admitted, "I am not deeply familiar with Bugis culture, so it is difficult to determine which parts are suitable for teaching materials. I also find it difficult to find English equivalents for Bugis cultural terms." Similarly, Respondent 3 said that "there are many values in Bugis culture, but we need to understand them further so that we can teach them in English."

Additionally, limited class time and the burden of the formal curriculum are also significant obstacles. For example, Respondent 5 said, "The limited time in class sometimes makes it difficult for me to develop my own materials from scratch." Similarly, Respondent 6 said that "the biggest obstacle, in my opinion, is limited time and resources. Creating local, culture-based materials takes time and creativity."

Also, teachers who are new to the profession face challenges due to doubts and a lack of guidance. Respondent 7 said, "I sometimes feel that I lack references. I also doubt whether I have conveyed Bugis

cultural values correctly in English.” Moreover, Respondent 8 discussed the dual challenges of limited teaching materials and divided learning time. She explained that “I often have to create my own examples of sentences or activities that are culturally appropriate. I often doubt whether the English structures I create are correct.”

Support Expected by Teachers to Integrate Local Culture into ETM

Most teachers said they need concrete support to effectively integrate Bugis culture into English language learning. , Respondent 2 said, "Currently, I have not seen any form of support from the school."

The most commonly mentioned form of support was training or workshops. Respondent 4 emphasized that “What I need the most is training or workshops. I still don't really understand how to integrate Bugis culture into English language materials.” Support from cultural figures and firsthand experience were also considered valuable. Respondent 1 emphasized the importance of "bringing in experts or cultural figures who can provide training and proposed study tours to historical sites related to local culture.”

Respondent 8 suggested that the training should consider the context of each school, including pesantren environments, which have distinct religious and cultural values. She added that “It is important to

involve pondok teachers, such as those who teach morals or Kitab, in designing lessons that incorporate English, local culture, and Islamic values.”

Overall, the need for professional training and institutional support shows that strengthening teachers' capacity depends on more than just individual motivation. Planned, collaborative, and practice-oriented interventions are necessary to ensure that the integration of local culture into English language learning extends beyond ideas and is realized in actual classroom practices. These interventions can improve learning quality and preserve students' cultural identity.

The results of this study show that teachers' needs for pedagogical knowledge, cultural resources, and professional training are deeply interconnected and collectively shape their ability to implement culturally grounded English language teaching. Teachers' awareness of Bugis culture and their attempts to relate it to classroom practices reflect a developing form of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), where teachers integrate content and teaching strategies to make learning culturally meaningful (Shulman, 1986). However, this pedagogical awareness is constrained by limited access to culturally relevant teaching materials, indicating a gap in how teachers harness local cultural resources in instruction. From a funds of knowledge perspective, community

practices, local stories, and daily habits represent valuable cultural assets that can enhance language learning when systematically integrated into teaching (Waddington, 2024). At the same time, the expressed need for targeted training aligns with research on culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP), which emphasizes structured professional development to help teachers translate cultural awareness into effective instructional practices (Rima et al., 2024). Together, these perspectives suggest that culturally responsive English teaching emerges most effectively when pedagogical knowledge, cultural resources, and training support operate in a mutually reinforcing way.

Teachers in this study function as cultural mediators rather than passive users of local culture, as they deliberately select and contextualize Bugis cultural elements to support English teaching. By linking traditional storytelling and students' daily practices to communicative tasks, teachers align language instruction with learners' lived experiences, a practice shown to enhance relevance and engagement in ELT contexts (Hidayati et al., 2024). This mediating role reflects the principles of culturally responsive pedagogy, in which teachers bridge cultural knowledge and language objectives to create meaningful learning experiences rather than treating culture as an instructional add-on. Previous studies

also indicate that such strategic integration of local wisdom strengthens learners' connection between language use, identity, and context, supporting both linguistic and affective engagement (Najib et. al, 2025).

Bugis cultural resources demonstrate strong potential as funds of knowledge for enriching English teaching; however, their classroom use is constrained by limited access to structured, culture-based instructional materials. Although teachers identified folklore, moral values, and daily practices as meaningful learning resources, the absence of validated references and institutional support creates a gap between cultural potential and pedagogical implementation, a challenge similarly reported in community-based ELT contexts (Alexon et.al, 2024). The need for collaboration with cultural practitioners and fellow educators further suggests that transforming local cultural knowledge into teachable content requires collective material development rather than individual effort. From a funds of knowledge perspective, sustainable cultural integration requires accessible resources and collaborative material development.

Although teachers recognized the importance of integrating local culture into English teaching, most lacked formal training in culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP). As a result, CRP was implemented intuitively rather than systematically.

Participants emphasized the need for practical guidance, including ready-to-use materials, lesson examples, and instructional strategies that align cultural content with language learning objectives. This gap between recognition and practice aligns with findings from Indonesian ELT contexts, where limited theoretical grounding and institutional support constrain effective CRP implementation (Najah et al., 2025). Studies on teacher professional development further indicate that CRP requires sustained, context-sensitive in-service training that equips teachers with actionable pedagogical competencies rather than surface-level awareness (Maulana et al., 2025). Therefore, in-service training is essential for bridging teachers' cultural awareness and their capacity to implement culturally responsive English teaching in meaningful and sustainable ways.

CONCLUSION

This research confirms that integrating Bugis local culture into English language learning is necessary for creating meaningful learning experiences. Through Pedagogical Content Knowledge, Funds of Knowledge, and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, teachers can play a strategic role in connecting the local and the global.

Among the three aspects identified, training and institutional support emerge as the most urgent needs. The absence of

targeted professional development from educational authorities has led teachers to rely primarily on limited online resources. Teachers expressed a clear need for authentic cultural materials, practical modules, and direct training involving cultural practitioners. The limited research on teachers' competencies and training required for cultural integration also highlight significant opportunities for further academic investigation.

Despite existing challenges, teachers in Sidrap demonstrate strong motivation and initiative in exploring local culture as a learning resource. With appropriate support, this approach has the potential to develop into a learning model that strengthen students' cultural identity and enhance the overall quality of English language teaching.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

The authors contributed to this study as follows: UR led the data collection and data analysis, drafted the results section, and revised the manuscript. K supervised the research process and provided critical review to the manuscript. WR developed the initial research design and prepared the early draft of the manuscript. All authors have read and approved the final version of this article.

REFERENCES

- Acton, Rebecca, and Paul Glasgow. (2015). "Teacher Wellbeing in Neoliberal Contexts: A Review of the Literature." *Australian Journal of Teacher Education* 40, no. 8. <https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2015v40n8.6>
- Agustina, N., & Kencana, N. (2023). "The cultural content and intercultural communicative competence in the global and local textbooks used in Indonesian EFL classes." *Journal on English as a Foreign Language*, 13(1), 242-264.
- Alexon, A., Safnil, S., & Syafryadin, S. (2024). Teachers' and students' perception on using local-contents in English textbooks in EFL context. *Cakrawala Pendidikan: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan*, 43(1), 102-115.
- Appadurai, Arjun. (2015). *The Future as Cultural Fact*. London: Verso Books.
- Banks, James A., and Cherry A. McGee Banks, eds. (2019). *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives*. 10th ed. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Barker, Will. *Culture and Identity through English as a Lingua Franca*. (2015). Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781501502149>.
- Borg, Simon. (2015). *Professional Development for Language Teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Busse, Vera. (2015). "Intercultural Language Teaching and Learning." *System* 49, no. 1. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2014.12.004>.
- Byram, Michael. (2008). *From Foreign Language Education to Education for Intercultural Citizenship*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Byram, Michael. (2021). *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. 2nd ed. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Collie, Rebecca J., Jennifer D. Shapka, and Nancy E. Perry. (2012). "School Climate and Social-Emotional Learning: Predicting Teacher Stress, Job Satisfaction, and Teaching Efficacy." *Journal of Educational Psychology* 104, no. 4. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0029356>.
- Day, Christopher, and Qing Gu. (2014). *Resilient Teachers, Resilient Schools: Building and Sustaining Quality in Testing Times*. London: Routledge.
- Esteban-Guitart, Moisès, and Luis C. Moll. (2014). "Funds of Identity: A New

- Concept Based on the Funds of Knowledge Approach.” *Culture & Psychology* 20, no. 1.
- Gay, Geneva. (2002). “Culturally Responsive Teaching.” *Journal of Teacher Education*.
- Gay, Geneva. (2018). *Culturally Responsive Teaching*. 3rd ed. New York: Teachers College Press, 2018.
- González, Norma, Luis C. Moll, and Cathy Amanti, eds. (2005). *Funds of Knowledge: Theorizing Practices in Households, Communities, and Classrooms*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE.
- Hidayati, A. F., Yuliati, Y., & Hutagalung, F. D. (2024, July). The implementation of culturally responsive teaching in ELT classrooms within the concept of emancipated curriculum. In *ELT Forum: Journal of English Language Teaching* (Vol. 13, No. 2, pp. 150-162). <https://doi.org/10.15294/elt.v13i2.7731>.
- Høigaard, Rune, Rune Giske, and Kari Sundsli. (2012). “Newly Qualified Teachers’ Work Engagement and Teacher Efficacy Influences on Job Satisfaction, Burnout, and the Intention to Quit.” *European Journal of Teacher Education* 35, no. 3. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2011.633993>.
- Hollie, Sharroky. (2017). *Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning: Classroom Practices for Student Success*. Huntington Beach: Shell Education.
- Inderawati, Rita, Amrullah Amrullah, Sofendi Sofendi, Soni Mirizon, Mulyadi Eko Purnomo, Ernalida Ernalida, Sri Indrawati, Sary Shilviany, and Zahra Alwi. (2022). “South Sumatra Local Culture-Based Teaching Materials Training for Vocational School Language Teachers”. *ENGLISH FRANCA : Academic Journal of English Language and Education* 6 (1 May):65-82. <https://doi.org/10.29240/ef.v6i1.3665>.
- Ladson-Billings, Gloria. (2021). *Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Asking a Different Question*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Laila, Alfi, et al. (2021). “Textbook Based on Local Wisdom to Improve Reading and Writing Skills of Elementary

- School Students." International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education 10, no. 3 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v10i3.21683>.
- Lie, Anita. (2017). "The Role of Local Culture in English Language Teaching." TEFLIN Journal 28, no. 2.
- Lo, Alfred W T. (2025). "A digital pedagogy for transculturing ELT through Global Englishes." ELT Journal. 79 (1), 428–440, <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccaf011>
- Loke, Siow Heng, Rohaida Mohd. Saat, and Chien Lee Shing. (2015). "The Knowledge of Teaching - Pedagogical Content Knowledge." The Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Science 3, no. 3. <http://www.moj-es.net>.
- Maulana, R. P., Yulianawati, I., Anggrarini, N., & Nasution, S. S. (2025). Pre-Service Teachers' Readiness to Implement Culturally Responsive Teaching. Jadila: Journal of Development and Innovation in Language and Literature Education, 5(2), 89-101.
- McKay, Sandra Lee. (2018). Teaching English as an International Language. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook (3rd ed.). SAGE.
- Ministry of Education and Culture. (2022) Merdeka Curriculum Framework. Jakarta: Kemendikbud.
- Moodie, Ian. (2017). "Donald Freeman: Educating Second Language Teachers." Applied Linguistics 38, no. 6. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amx023>.
- Moll, Luis C., Cathy Amanti, Deborah Neff, and Norma González. (2001). "Funds of Knowledge for Teaching: Using a Qualitative Approach to Connect Homes and Classrooms." Theory into Practice 31, no. 2.
- Najah, N. S., Nabilah, S. E., Waluya, E. A., Sukmawati, F. W., & Syaripudin, U. (2025). Exploring Culturally Responsive Teaching in Indonesian ELT: Pre-Service Teachers' perceptions and Experiences. Eltin Journal: Journal of English Language Teaching in Indonesia, 13(2), 453-466.
- Najib, M. R. A., Aditama, M., & Santoso, Y. I. (2025). Culturally Responsive English Teaching: Integrating Local Wisdom and Multiple Intelligences in

- EL Classrooms. Proceeding International Conference on Education, 717-726. Retrieved from <https://jurnalfaktarbiyah.iainkediri.ac.id/index.php/proceedings/article/view/6664>.
- Nederveen Pieterse, Jan. (2009). *Globalization and Culture: Global Mélange*. 2nd ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Norton, Bonny. (2013). *Identity and Language Learning: Extending the Conversation*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Nurteteng, N., Setiawan, A., & Lestari, T. D. (2025). "Adapting Contextualized ELT Materials in Sorong Regency: Teachers' Perspectives and Pedagogical Implications." *Lensa: Kajian Kebahasaan, Kesusastraan, dan Budaya*, 15(1), 106-131.
- Putra Darma, V., Maesaroh, S., & Ria Citra, A. (2025). "Integrating Local Culture Into the English Language Teaching and Learning Process." *Penelitian. Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Dan Riset Pendidikan*, 4(2), 11009-11014. <https://doi.org/10.31004/jerkin.v4i2.3536>
- Renandya, W. A. (2018). "Should We Teach Culture in the English Classroom?" *RELC Journal* 49, no. 1.
- Rima, R., Muhyidin, A., Leksono, S. M., & Jamaludin, U. (2024). Exploring culturally responsive teaching practices in English language teaching at high schools in Banten Province: Perceptions, strategies, challenges, and opportunities. *Edukatif. Edukatif: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan*, 6(3), 2145-2155. <https://doi.org/10.31004/edukatif.v6i3.6620>
- Ronfeldt, Matthew, Susanna Owens Farmer, Kiel McQueen, and Jason A. Grissom. (2015). "Teacher Collaboration in Instructional Teams and Student Achievement." *American Educational Research Journal* 52, no. 3. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831215585562>.
- Saraswati, Girindra, Hartoyo Hartoyo, and Amida Fadwati. (2018). "The Role of Local Culture in English Speaking Classes." *LLT Journal* 21, no. 2. <https://doi.org/10.24071/llt.v21i2.934>.
- Santosa, Agus Budi, Yudi Basuki, and Ari Metalin Ika Puspita. (2019). "The Effectiveness of Local Wisdom-Based Teaching Materials in Enhancing Creative Writing Skills of Elementary School Students." *Journal of English Language Teaching and Linguistics* 4, no. 3.

- <https://doi.org/10.21462/jeltl.v4i3.326>.
- Sari, Indah, and Hanifah Mutia ZN. Amrul. (2021). "Perception of English Learning Based on Local Wisdom for Junior High School Students in Desa Kolam Deli Serdang District North Sumatera Indonesia." *Britain International of Linguistics Arts and Education (BioLAE) Journal* 3, no. 1. <https://doi.org/10.33258/biolae.v3i1.409>.
- Shin, Jeeyoung, Zohreh R. Eslami, and Wendy Chen. (2018). "Presentation of Local and International Culture in Current International English-Language Teaching Textbooks." *Language, Culture and Curriculum* 31, no. 3.
- Shulman, Lee S. (1986). "Those Who Understand: Knowledge Growth in Teaching." *Educational Researcher* 15, no. 2.
- Tantri, N. N., & Santosa, M. H. (2024). "The Integration and Development of EFL Classroom Materials Based on Local Culture: A Systematic Literature Review." *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Undiksha*, 12(1), 61-70.
- UNESCO. (2017). *Local Culture Matters: Culture in Development*. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.
- Vogel, Sara, and Ofelia García. (2017). "Translanguaging." In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Vygotsky, Lev S. (1978). *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Waddington, J., & Esteban-Guitart, M. (2024). Funds of knowledge and identity in language learning and teaching. *Innovation in language learning and teaching*, 18(3), 201-207.
- Wulandari, Dwi, Wiwiek Sundari, and Cut Aja Puan Ellysafny. (2020). "Integrating Local Wisdom into ELT Materials for Secondary School Students in Semarang." *PAROLE: Journal of Linguistics and Education* 10, no. 1. <https://doi.org/10.14710/parole.v10i1.14-21>.
- Zipin, Lew. (2009). "Dark Funds of Knowledge, Deep Funds of Pedagogy: Exploring Boundaries Between Lifeworlds and Schools." *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 30, no. 3.

