

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results and analysis of research obtained from in depth interviews and observations. Data were collected through interviews with participant (Ms. A, UPB lecturer) and three class observations conducted in October 2025. This research aims to understand teacher's experiences in integrating local wisdom into English language learning as an effort to face the challenges of globalization and preserve students' cultural identities.

The research findings focus on teacher's view on the influence of local culture in English language learning, ways to integrate it into classroom activities, the challenges faced, and its impact on students. Data were analyzed using an interpretative qualitative approach, particularly through narrative investigation to understand how participant make sense of their teaching experiences. This approach aims to unveil insights, challenges, and strategies employed by teacher in implementing culturally responsive teaching practices as a form of pedagogical and cultural resilience. The findings and discussion are systematically organized to depict the themes that emerge from the participant's experiences and to answer the research questions.

A. Findings

Researcher conducted the transcription process of interview results, ensuring that the content and meaning of participant's answers remained accurate through the use of verbatim notes. Since the participant was not native English speaker, there was a possibility of grammatical errors in the initial responses. Therefore, the researcher edited the responses without changing the substance of their meaning to facilitate the identification of themes and categorization.

Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews and observations to explore qualitative information about teacher's experiences in integrating local wisdom into English language learning. This research focuses on how teacher design and implement learning activities that incorporate local culture values in the classroom.

Findings from interviews and observations indicate that teacher's experiences in integrating local wisdom include several important aspects, namely the strategies used, the motivations underlying them, and the various challenges faced. To support the analysis process, the researcher first examined the teacher's view on the urgency of local wisdom in learning, including its impact on classroom teaching approaches. Subsequently, the analysis also addresses the role of integration in relation on cognitive load, including how integration can facilitate students' understanding, the cognitive demands that may arise, and the strategies used by teacher to

reduces cognitive load. These aspects serve as the basis for answering the research questions.

1. Teacher's Experience in Integration Local Wisdom

Based on the research findings, the participant's (Ms. A, UPB lecturer) experience in integrating local wisdom shows that this practice has been consistently carried out in every class meeting since 2022. In the process, the teacher actively connects the cultural content found in textbooks with the local cultural reality, making learning material more relevant and closer to the students' daily lives.

a. Teacher Strategies in Integrating Local Wisdom-Based Material

In every learning session, participant consistently relate the material in the textbook (in aspects of reading, writing, speaking, and listening) to the Banjar cultural context. The main strategy applied is to build a "direct correlation" between the global culture present in the book and the local values familiar to the students.

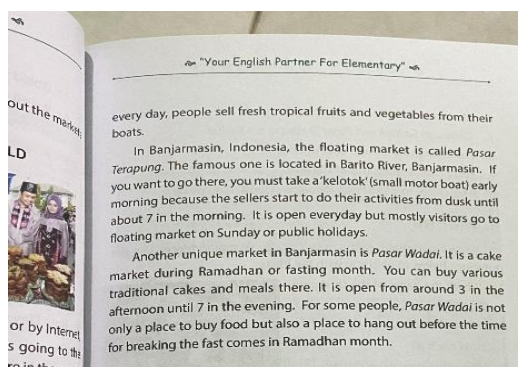
"For example, if I take from the 'Introduction Section' like yesterday, there are many ways to greet people like hugs, handshakes, and bows. So, there are different types, and we're also correlate to them. For instance, in Banjarmasin it might be a handshake or a hand-kiss to the elders."

This explanation shows that the teacher is trying to understand the concept of international social behaviour by directly comparing it with the manners in the Banjar community.

An effort to connect the material with students' real lives are also made by incorporating various local contexts into broader learning topics.

“For example, in the shopping material, if there are butchers and others outside, we have traditional markets like Pasar Terapung. Then, for the family topic, for instance in England they usually call aunt but in our culture we have “Acil” which can be connected to that.”

Through the use of local terms such as “Acil” and “Pasar Terapung”, the participant successfully transformed foreign



language material into more contextual form, making more accessible and easier for students to understand.

Figure 4. 1 Material Book About Pasar Terapung.

This was confirmed by the observation results on 9 October 2025, where the participant shared her personal experience of visiting the floating market (*Pasar Terapung*). Interestingly, in that session it turned out that most of students had never actually visited

that iconic place directly. Then, in the assignment document students are asked to compose an interactive dialogue themed “Ramadhan Cake Fair” (*Pasar Wadai*) and use specific terms such as “*Bingka Barandam*”.

In addition to sharing personal experiences, the integration of local wisdom is most prominently found in reading texts about Sultan

Suriansyah Mosque and in speaking activities that use cultural concept. On the other hand, participant also emphasized the importance of adaptation by applying different approaches in each class.

“Even each semester, each class gets different treatment. Even though I’ve taught (English material about local wisdom) several times, the methods are always different.”

This adaptability shows that the integration of local wisdom is not a static method, but rather a dynamic process that is continuously adjusted to the unique characteristics and needs of students in each class. additional documents for teacher reinforce this finding through lesson plans that consistently local cultural elements as authentic content to enrich students’ perspective beyond Western-based English language theories.

b. Motivation and Orientation of Teacher in Implementing Culture-Based Learning

Based on the result of interview and observation, the participant's motivation in integrating local wisdom into English language learning is not only focused on academic aspects. This effort also aims to enhance student engagement and raise awareness of their cultural identity. Participant believe that learning becomes more meaningful when the material is directly related to the students' experiences and cultural environment.

This finding is reinforced by enthusiastic statements from participant explaining that the integration of local cultural values aims to spark interest and build students' cultural awareness.

"To increase students' interest and make them aware of their own culture. Sometimes they are not aware that they have it (local culture), so someone needs to remind them again".

Additionally, one of the strongest motivations of the participant comes from personal experiences and cultural reflections. She recounted that her awareness emerged after pursuing education outside her region (Java), which gave her a new perspective on her original identity.

"I used to study in Java, the difference is really noticeable. Oh, it turns out that Banjarmasin also has (cultural wealth). I used

to think, what is there in Banjarmasin? It turns out that after being in different place, we only realize what we have”.

This personal awareness is what drives the participant to ensure that their students do not experience the same thing. She wants students to be aware of the culture wealth they possess from an early age, such as the existence of the floating market (Siring) and rivers. Furthermore, the participant argued that in the era of globalization “uniqueness” or differentiation is very important so that the students do not lose their identity while learning a foreign language.

”Because globalization is differentiation. Something becomes global due to differences. There must be uniqueness from an individual or in learning process”.

For participant, cultural differences of uniqueness (differentiation) are crucial bargaining chips. In order for students to participate on the global stage, they must first understand their own cultural identity and uniqueness as the foundation of their strength.

Data from classroom practices or observations also show that participant explicitly connect local wisdom with cultural preservation efforts and its impact on students’ futures in the global era. Although this connection was not prominent in the first observation, in the second and third observations, participant began

to provide concrete examples of the benefits of integrating local values, such the culture of mutual cooperation, into daily life.

Participant often use students' personal experiences to spark enthusiasm by throwing out stimulating questions, such as "when you're in the dormitory, do you usually help each other out?" this question proved effective in connecting the lesson material with the students' social reality, making them truly enthusiastic during the learning process. Furthermore, the participant directly linked it to linguistic aspects by asking about the term 'gotong royong' in English, which was then well-received by students who already knew it.

c. Dynamics of Challenges and Barriers Faced by Teacher in the Local Process

The application of local wisdom in English classes at UPB present its own challenges for teacher. There is an interesting contradiction, although teacher feel greatly assisted by technology such as Google and AI in finding local cultural materials, the real obstacles arise when these materials are actually taught in class. The main problem comes in the students' low English proficiency, which makes it difficult for teacher to explain local culture concepts in depth without using Indonesian. To ensure that the cultural messages

and meanings reach the students, the teacher ultimately uses more Indonesian in their instruction.

”Teaching materials are really easy now we have Google, we have AI. But the problem comes with the students (their language proficiency), sometimes explaining local things is difficult if we use English, we have to use more Indonesian first before they understand”.

This finding indicates the presence of obstacles in the language mediation process. Based on the observation result, the teacher definitely seemed to use almost full English at the beginning, but was forced to do instant translations into Indonesian to keep the communication going. During the observation, the researcher also noted that the teacher had to simplify the material to match the students’ proficiency levels to avoid confusion or loss of focus when local cultural content was presented. The teacher’s reliance on Indonesian language highlights the severity of the students’ language barriers, forcing the teacher to use it as a temporary bridge to ensure the cultural concept is delivered.

Beside the language barrier, time constraints act as a significant obstacle. Because the UPB program is an additional unit and not a main course, teacher must be careful in assigning workloads. Teacher is concerned that assigning large projects (such as Project-Based Learning) will burden students academically.

"Our curriculum doesn't have specifics because it's from the UPB book. As for time, it's also lacking. If we want to relate it to local contexts continuously (all the time) there's not enough time, but if it's just about adding it, that's fine".

This condition causes the integration of local wisdom to often become just an "appendix" in the middle of the main material or merely an addition at the end of the learning session.

Another obstacle also arises from the students' unpredictable physical condition. Based on interview result, students' enthusiasm in discussing local wisdom is also influenced by their physical readiness. For example, when there are students who are sick, group activities become less effective because they lose focus and cannot actively participate in understanding the material, even though it is only a small portion of the student population.

Moreover, during the observation the researcher noticed that the classroom conditions were not very bright, with a somewhat dark atmosphere, which led to a lack enthusiasm among the students.

2. Integration and Cognitive Load

a. Effectiveness of Material Integration in Facilitating Student Understanding

The integration of local wisdom has proven effective as a cognitive bridge that helps students understand English language

material. By linking students' background knowledge to new language structures, the learning process becomes more organic and meaningful.

The use of cultural contexts familiar to students, such as the *Baayun Mulud* tradition or *Aqiqah*, has been shown to improve language comprehension. Since students already have a visual understanding of these topics, they are no longer challenged by contextual issues (what is being discussed), allowing them to fully focus on linguistic aspects (how to express it).

“With the use of local wisdom materials, students find it easier to understand. It's easier because it relates to them, they already know the context, like Aqiqah. But they still have to find the English terms”.

This finding was validated through observation results, which showed that students mastered vocabulary and grammar more quickly when connected to their own cultural experiences. Teacher also confirmed that an understanding of basic cultural concepts greatly helps students apply grammar rules more naturally.

Integrating this material also facilitates students' use of English in real-life contexts. Based on assignment documents the researcher obtained from participant, students were able to stimulate conversations themed around local markets in Kalimantan (such as the Floating Market or Wadai Market). They accurately used

transactional expressions like “How Much is it?” along with price amounts in the local context.

Overall, the observation results show that the teacher’s simplification of the material, combined with local wisdom, helps students feel more confident when practicing speaking skills and translating cultural terms into English.

AMERY BIRDS

No: Kelmank 2 : _____ Date: _____

Alvin = Seller/Paman

Nida

Sarah

Hefa

"Night Market"

Paman: Come on come on! Try the cilok, it's cheap and delicious!

Sarah: Excuse me Paman, How much is this?

Paman: One portion is only five thousand rupiah (Rp 5.000)

Hefa: Wow, that's very cheap!

Nida: Can I try it first?

Paman: Of course, please try it.

Sarah: Hm... it tastes really good!

Hefa: I agree, the sauce is delicious.

Nida: I would like to order one portion.

Paman: Sure, how many portions do you want in total?

Sarah: I'll have one portion.

Hefa: I want one portion, but make it spicy, please.

Nida: I'll take one portion too.

Sarah: Do you have any drinks Paman?

Paman: We have iced tea and orange juice.

Hefa: I'll have an iced tea.

Nida: I'd like an orange juice.

Sarah: How much is everything?

Paman: The total is fifteen thousand rupiah.

Hefa: Here is the money.

Local wisdom encourages students to participate more actively because they feel have something valuable to share. This enthusiasm emerges when students talk about their regional identity. A participant shared one example:

Figure 4. 2 Students Assignment Documents

“There was a time. So, she was talking about her hometown in class. She was so proud of her hometown, she tell us there’s a beach there, the local foods are this and that. And she was telling the story in English, I’m so proud of it”.

The second and third observation data noted an increase in the frequency of students asking questions when cultural elements were incorporated. Interestingly, students were also able to engage in functional code-mixing, such as continuing to use the terms “Acil” or “Paman” (Banjar’s culture to call an old man seller) in English

conversations. This demonstrates the students' ability to use the target language without losing their sociocultural identity. For the students, learning about local culture feels more "real" and relevant compared to studying foreign cultural contexts that are far removed from their daily lives.

b. Cognitive Load Analysis in Integrated Learning Structure

Analysis of the learning structure shows that the integration of local wisdom causes unique cognitive dynamics, where teacher manages three types of cognitive load: intrinsic, extraneous, and germane load to optimize information retention in the influence of global culture.

Intrinsic load or the difficulty level of material tends to decrease when the concepts discussed are familiar to students, such as the tradition of *Aqiqah* or tradition markets. However, this load increases again when students enter the stage of searching for specific of the same vocabulary. Regarding this challenge, the participant expressed:

"It's about vocabulary. For example, what is the English for Jukung? do we need to translate it into English or keep it as is?... finding the same of vocabulary is easy, but the concept itself is hard"

This aligns with the observation results from October 2, 2025, which indicate that although students understand the language

structure more quickly through their own cultural context, they still need an extra time to process the translation of technical local terms.

On the other hand, extraneous load arises when the material is not relevant to the students' mental schema, especially in the era of globalization where some local icons feel "strange" to today's generation of students. The participant realizes that if students have not experienced that culture directly, the impact of their learning is weakened.

"Surprisingly, they don't know Siring or the Batu Market in Martapura. So, it turns out that local culture analogies are sometimes not very impactful because they have never experienced it".

These findings are supported by first observations showing that students tend to be less active because they are more familiar with global icons like London rather than local icons, so teachers need to make extra efforts to build their background knowledge.

To overcome these obstacles, the teacher maximizes germane load through stimulating students' curiosity to build stronger mental schemas. The teacher notes that enthusiasm for new details is key for students to process information more deeply.

"Their enthusiasm comes from curiosity and interest. Once they get into the topic, they become aware of the details"

Concrete evidence of this success is seen in the assignment documents, where students actively build new mental schemas by incorporating Banjar terms such as “*Acil*” and “*Bingka Barandam*” into English question-and-answer structure (How much is it?). The use of visual media in the second observation, further strengthens this process by helping students visualize concepts as a whole rather than just memorizing words. Overall, the integration of local wisdom effectively reduces intrinsic load through familiarity with the concept. However, its success heavily relies on the teacher’s role as a mediator capable of presenting local information details to keep it competitive and engaging compared to global information.

c. Strategies to Reduce Students’ Mental Load and Help Them Learn Better

In the implementation of learning, teachers apply various instructional strategies to ensure that the integration of local wisdom serves as a support, not a hindrance to students’ cognitive load. The main strategy used is the provision of scaffolding in the form of keywords and visual aids before students engage with complex texts. This step aims to build a first schema so that students do not feel overwhelmed when facing new material. Regarding this, a participant explains:

“Use keywords. For example, before discussing the material, we show the keywords at the beginning, so they are not too shocked, they will understand little by little. The concept is easier to understand if we use pictures, maybe it’s easier with visual aids”.

The effectiveness of this strategy was confirmed through observations, where the teacher used visual media through mobile phones to reinforce concept understanding. The teacher also introduced specific terms such as “prophet” or “ceremony” as a foundation for vocabulary before entering into the core material.

In addition, to minimize extraneous cognitive load, the teacher intentionally simplifies the material by limiting the scope of cultural topics to those that are most relevant to the students’ daily lives. The teacher chooses to remain focused on specific contexts so that information does not expand unnecessarily.

“Reducing the local wisdom. So, we have to provide topics that are appropriate, and the discussion is not too broad. For example, the market. So just the market that is discussed, which is in Kalimantan. We only talk about the nearby markets (the markets that are around)”.

This simplification step has proven effective in field observations, where students appear calmer and less confused because the material presented has been tailored to their basic ability levels. Interestingly, the teacher also applies a unique strategy by allowing the use of local terms as a temporary substitute. This is done to minimize vocabulary retrieval barriers, so students can better focus on the application of grammatical structures. The participant confirms this ease by stating:

“When discussing the topic of Aqiqah or pilgrimage, is it easier for them in grammar? Yes, it easier because the vocabulary is in the book, it’s easier to understand because they already know (the concept itself)”.

Finally, the teacher optimizes the internalization of language through the provision of immediate feedback and repetition techniques. This aims to directly improve students’ memory schemes before pronunciation or structural errors become permanent. The participant explained:

“Usually at the end as feedback like during speaking, I directly correct the mispronunciations. This is then followed by the practice of ‘repeat after me’ so that students can more quickly remember the correct pronunciation”.

This practice is consistently observed in the classroom, where the teacher directly corrects students' pronunciation errors in a persuasive manner to ensure language accuracy is maintained amid the use of local context.

B. Discussion

This section discusses the findings of the research about the participant's experience in integrating local wisdom into English language learning at UPB. By using a Narrative Inquiry approach, the researcher explored the participant's stories, personal reflections and teaching practices that shaped the participant's pedagogical identity. This discussion aims to connect those experiences with the theories explained in chapter 2, as well as compare them with previous studies in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding.

1. Teacher's Experience in Integration Local Wisdom

a. Teacher's Strategies in Integrating Local Wisdom-Based Material

The integration of local wisdom into English language teaching (ELT), as found in the findings shows a strong connection between the global curriculum and local cultural identity. The participant's strategy of creating a "direct correlation" between textbook materials and the Banjar context reflects local wisdom as a source of contextual knowledge (Wahyuni et al., 2015). From a Vygotsky sociocultural perspective, the

teacher acts as a “central mediating force” (Scott & Palincsar, 2013), where local culture is not only a background element but also an important factor that shapes how students think, behave, and learn.

1) Social Interaction as the Source of Knowledge

Vygotsky explained that every function in a child’s cultural development appears twice, first on the social level (interpsychological) and later on the individual level (intrapsychological). In this research, classroom interaction becomes the main source of learning. When the teacher involves students in discussion about the “Ramadhan Cake Fair” (*Pasar Wadai*), English is not learned from textbooks. Instead, knowledge develops through interaction between the teacher’s personal experiences at the floating market and the students’ active participation. This social interaction helps students experience the language in a familiar setting before understanding the language rules, supporting the balance between global education and local perspectives (Setiawan et al., 2017).

2) Mediation Through Cultural Tools

Mediation explains that people use “tools” to understand the world around them. In the finding shows that Banjar cultural artifacts, such as the Sultan Suriansyah Mosque, the term “*Aci*”

and the tradition of “*Salaman*”, function as important psychological tools.

a) Language as a Tool

The use of terms as “*Acil*” and “*Bingka Barandam*” represents the dimension of “physical materials and ideas” in local wisdom (Brennan, 2005). These terms help reduce students’ cognitive load by providing familiar references that guide them in learning a foreign language.

b) Cultural Symbol

The practice of hand-kissing elders helps students understand the concept of international greetings, such as hugs and bows. By connecting foreign concepts with familiar Banjar traditions, students can understand the material more easily. This finding confirms that local wisdom acts as an authentic mediating force that makes foreign concepts more concrete, rather than simply serving as additional material (Rahmatih et al., 2020).

3) Navigation Through the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

The ZPD refers to the gap between what students can do independently and what they can achieve with guidance. The findings show that the teacher uses local wisdom as a form of scaffolding to help students cross this gap. For example, although many students had never visited the floating market, the teacher’s

personal stories provided meaningful cultural support that helped students understand the topic better. Through this support, students were able to create interactive dialogues about a place they only knew from stories. This finding is similar to the use of local traditions as authentic contexts for developing language skills, such as the Whale Hunting tradition in Lamera (Giyatmi, 2020).

4) Internalization, Participation, and Character Building

The final stage of sociocultural process is internalization, where social experiences become part of students' personal understanding. Through active participation in culturally theme activities, students are not only memorizing English but also using it to express their identity. This is in line with (Rummar, 2022), who states that local knowledge is represented through diverse cultural expressions and texts integrated into everyday activities. In this research, the creation of interactive dialogues and the use of cultural concept in speaking activities serve as the "cultural expressions" that allow students to internalize both language and their heritage. This process also supports character education through three dimensions (Nurmala Sari, 2020)

- a) Moral knowing: By connecting international greetings with local traditions, the teacher develops students' moral awareness and perspective-taking skills, helping them

understand the ethical values of their community in a global context.

- b) Moral feeling: The use of local cultural icons encourages students to feel proud of their culture and appreciate local values, preventing them from being lost under foreign influences.
- c) Moral action: Creating interactive dialogues about the “Ramadhan Cake Fair” allows students to apply English in ways that match their social reality. Students practice their competence and build habits through meaningful communication activities.

The participant’s ability to adapt and apply different methods in each class demonstrates a strong level of professional confidence (Berger et al., 2018). Here, the classroom serves as a social space for reconstructing Banjar cultural values. The findings of this research conclude that the integration of local wisdom is achieved by directly linking textbook content to students’ cultural realities. The use of local terms and traditions has proven effective as a tool that helps students understand English concepts through the cultural perspective they are familiar with in their daily lives.

b. Motivation and Orientation of Teacher in Implementing Culture-Based Learning

The analysis of the interview and observation results shows that the integration of local wisdom in English language learning is not only a methodological choice, but rather a reflection of teacher's strong internal motivation structure.

Based on the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (as cited in M Van Lange Arie W Kruglanski et al., 2011) developed by Deci and Ryan, the motivation of teacher in this research can be categorized as Intrinsic Motivation. This is clearly reflected in the participant's personal experiences while pursuing higher education in Java. The participant's realization that "Banjarmasin has extraordinary cultural richness" indicates that the motivation to teach comes from personal satisfaction and natural interest, rather than external pressure such as school regulations or financial incentives (Sinclair, 2008).

Conversely, (Dörnyei Zoltán & Ushioda Ema, 2011) explain that Extrinsic Motivation comes from external factors or rewards rather than the enjoyment of the task itself. In teaching, these external influences often include working conditions, financial benefits (such as salary, pensions, and insurance), job security, career status, or promotion. In this research the teacher's commitment remains unshaken by these external factors. Despite facing limitations in classroom facilities and a

lack of direct incentives, the teacher is still highly driven by their internal values.

This intrinsic motivation can be seen through the three main components of SDT:

- 1) **Autonomy:** The teacher demonstrates full control in determining differentiated teaching strategies. The participant's perspective that globalization should highlight "uniqueness" reflects the freedom to design learning activities that differ from conventional teaching standards.
- 2) **Relatedness:** The teacher attempts to build meaningful connections between the lesson materials and the students' social realities, such as using examples related to floating markets. Through this approach, students feel that their cultural identity is acknowledged and respected within the classroom environment.
- 3) **Competence:** The teacher's success in increasing students' enthusiasm through contextual questions strengthens the teacher's sense of competence and effectiveness in managing the learning process. This positive classroom interaction reinforces the teacher's confidence in applying culturally based teaching practices.

Furthermore, when connected to the motivational phases proposed by (Williams, 2006), the participant's experience of

studying outside the region can be categorized as Initiative Motivation. This experience became a turning point that encouraged the participant to bring local elements into the classroom. However, the findings from the second and third observations indicate that this motivation gradually developed into Maintenance Motivation.

The participant's continuous effort to provide intellectual stimulations through values such as "gotong royong" reflects stable and sustained energy in maintaining the quality of students' engagement. This finding suggests that strong intrinsic motivation, as explained in SDT becomes the primary factor supporting the sustainability of culturally based teaching practices in schools.

In addition, the participant's internal motivation naturally transforms their role into that of a facilitator, which aligns with Jean Piaget's Constructivism principles (Prakash Chand, 2023). Since the teacher is driven by the desire to develop students' cultural awareness, the participant consciously create a learning environment that supports the following processes:

- 1) Assimilation: The participant guides students to connect new concepts, such as English vocabulary with their knowledge and experiences, including communal living experiences in the dormitory environment.

- 2) Accommodation: Through stimulating and reflective questions, the participant encourages students to adjust their perspective by understanding that becoming global does not mean losing local identity. Instead, students are guided to see their cultural “uniqueness” as a strength.

Overall, these findings support (Wild Cameron T et al., 1997) theory, which states that teachers with high intrinsic motivation tend to produce students who are more enthusiastic and confident in the learning process. The integration of local wisdom in this research reflects the teacher’s autonomy within SDT and is realized through active and meaningful classroom interactions, as emphasized in Piaget’s Constructivism. Ultimately, the participant successfully demonstrates that understanding and appreciating one’s cultural identity serves as an essential foundation for students to participate in the global world without losing their sense of identity.

c. Dynamics of Challenges and Barriers Faced by Teacher in the Local Process

Integrating local wisdom into English learning at UPB is not a simple task, but a complex process that involves many practical challenges in the classroom. One of the main challenges is the gap between the cultural material being taught and the students’ English ability. Based on the interview and observation results, the participant

found a contradiction where AI technology and Google helped her to find learning materials more easily, but students still struggled to understand the material when it was delivered fully in English. Participant explained that it was difficult to discuss deep local cultural concept using only English, so she often used Indonesia language as a temporary bridge to make sure students could still understand the cultural meaning being discussed.

The use of Indonesia language as a communication bridge at UPB shows that cultural exposure cannot be delivered only through English. Theoretically, this situation reflects the practice of Translanguaging, which according to (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020) refers to the use of all linguistic resources, including the first language, to help learners understand complex information. This idea is also supported by (Jawas, 2020), who explains that English classroom in Indonesia, especially those involving Banjar students in Kalimantan, consist of learners with diverse cultural practices. Because of this diversity, participant need to be aware of how students' cultural backgrounds influence their learning process. As a result, Translanguaging becomes a pedagogical strategy that helps participant negotiates meaning and improve students' understanding. This finding also supports the view of (Kramsch & Hua, 2016) that language and culture cannot be separated, because understanding cultural meaning often requires flexible language use rather than focusing only on grammar.

Besides linguistic challenges, structural limitations such as time and curriculum constraints also reduce the role of local wisdom in the learning process. The findings showed that since UPB is only a supporting unit and not a main subject, the participant felt overwhelmed when trying to integrate larger activities such as project-based learning. As a result, local wisdom is often treated only as additional material at the end of the lesson rather than becoming an important part of the main curriculum. This condition shows a gap between the ideal curriculum design and the reality of classroom implementation. The participant's concern about increasing students' academic burden also limited the potential of local wisdom to become a major tool for strengthening students' cultural identity. This finding reflects the challenge discussed by (Sulistiyo et al., 2021) who argue that English teaching materials in Indonesia still tend to prioritize target culture over students' local realities, making the integration of local wisdom an ongoing administrative challenge.

Furthermore, the success of integrating local wisdom was also influenced by the classroom environment and students' physical readiness. During the observations, the researcher found that dark classrooms and poor lighting reduced students' enthusiasm when discussing cultural materials. In addition, students' physical conditions, such as illness or lack of focus, made group discussions about local wisdom less effective. Analytically, facilities and classroom condition

are not simply technical matters, but important elements that shape the overall learning experience. Supportive environments and students' physical readiness are essential in contextual learning because they help students internalize regional values more effectively. This finding strengthens the idea of Harold Rugg (as cited in Susanti & Wicaksono, 2025) that curriculum development should consider students' characteristics, geographical conditions, and school facilities carefully. Without adequate environmental support, efforts to preserve local cultural values through education may not reach their full potential.

2. Integration and Cognitive Load

a. Effectiveness of Material Integration in Facilitating Student Understanding

Using local culture in English lessons at UPB really helps students understand the material better. When participants use familiar traditions like *Baayun Mulud* or *Aqiqah*, students can connect the lesson to what they already know. Classroom observations in October 2025 showed that this method helps students learn vocabulary and grammar much faster. Because they already know the cultural context, they do not get confused by the topic. They already understand “what” they are talking about, so they can just focus on “how” to say it in English. The teacher or participant also agreed that linking lessons to real life makes learning smoother and more meaningful.

Theoretically, this is exactly what Jean Piaget calls assimilation. Assimilation is a process where we absorb new language into our existing mental frameworks (Pankin, 2013). Because students can rely on their own cultural knowledge, their brains do not have to work twice as hard to understand the new language structures. This matches F.C. Bartlett's view that our past experiences create expectations that help us process new information much more easily.

However, even though local culture makes things easier to understand, students still face language barriers, especially when a word cannot be translated directly (*untranslatability*). Interestingly, this challenge actually makes students more creative. In class, students often struggle to find the exact English words for local terms that have deep cultural meanings. As a result, they mix languages (*code-mixing*). For example, they still use words like "*Acil*" or "*Paman*" while speaking English during simulated shopping at the floating market or *Pasar Wadai*.

This behaviour supports (Mizamkhan & Kalibekuly, 2020) theory about culturally loaded vocabulary, which proves that language and culture are inseparable. Mixing local words into English sentences is not a sign of failure. Instead, it is a practical solution because some local philosophies simply do not have a direct translation in English, as (Suma Mansyur, 2025) explains through the concept of

untranslatability. Because of this, the classroom becomes more than just a place to translate words, it becomes a space for the true cultural connection.

Furthermore, bringing local wisdom into the classroom builds students' confidence and shapes their identity as global communicators. The data shows that students become more active and prouder when they talk about their hometowns, beautiful beaches, or local foods in English. They feel personally connected to the lesson, making them much more enthusiastic than when they study foreign cultures that feel distant from their lives.

This confidence to hold onto their roots, even though intentional code-mixing shows that students are successfully developing Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) based on Michael Byram's model (as cited in Liu, 2019). They show the real-world traits of *savior etre* (attitudes) and *savior s'impliquer* (critical cultural awareness). They act as intercultural speakers who do not just try mimic native speakers, but are able to connect across cultures without losing who they are. This intercultural negotiation also strengthens their cognitive schemata when navigating diverse cultural contexts. By comparing the global contents of the textbook with both Banjar and Javanese cultural elements, such as mapping the English kinship term 'aunt' onto the distinct social roles of a Banjar '*Acil*' versus a Javanese

'*Bude*', students learn to contextualize foreign concepts through a familiar national matrix. Ultimately, local wisdom is a powerful tool to raise students who are not only good at grammar, but also culturally aware, confident, and ready to face the global world while staying proud of their identity.

b. Cognitive Load Analysis in Integrated Learning Structure

When we mix local culture into English lessons, it changes how students' brains process information. How well students learn depends on their working memory. As (Baddeley, 1986) points out, our working memory has a very limited capacity to handle new information. According to Cognitive Load Theory (CLT), successful learning is not just about the language itself, but also about how familiar students are with the culture, which directly affects how hard their brains have to work.

The findings showed that intrinsic load (the natural difficulty of the lesson) dropped when students learned using familiar traditions like "*Aqiqah*". They already know the concept, so it felt easier. However, the brain's workload spiked when students had to find specific English words for local terms, such as "*Jukung*". Classroom observations on October 2, 2025, confirmed that students needed more time to think and process when translating these unique local words.

The researcher also noticed an extraneous (mental distraction/unnecessary brain workload) caused by globalization. Surprisingly, some students today are less familiar with local icons like “*Siring*” and know more about places like “*London*.” When this happened, students became less active because the lesson did not connect with what they already knew. To fix this, the participant tapped into germane load (productive brain effort) by sparking their curiosity. With the help of pictures and visual media, students became excited and successfully placed local words like “*Acil*” and “*Bingka Barandam*” into English sentences.

According to (Swezzler, 1994), learning works best when the total mental effort does not overload the working memory. In this research, local culture does two things. First, it lowers the intrinsic load because students do not have to learn a concept from the scratch, they already know about local markets and traditions.

However, the fact that younger generation is sometimes disconnected from their own culture creates an unexpected load. Local information that was supposed to help them actually became a burden because it did not match their minds, which are heavily influenced by global trends. That is why shifting the focus to germane load by triggering curiosity is so important. As (Kirschner, 2002) explains, germane load encourages students to actively connect new English words

with what they already know. The connection helps build stronger long-term memory. In this case, visual media played a huge role in cutting down heavy reading demands and helping students learn more efficiently.

In short, this CLT analysis proves that adding local wisdom to English classes does not automatically make learning easier. Success depends on balance, the participant must use familiar culture to reduce the natural difficulty (intrinsic load), minimize the cultural gap caused by globalization (extraneous load), and use curiosity and visuals to help students build deep, lasting knowledge (germane load).

c. Strategies to Reduce Students' Mental Load and Help Them

Learn Better

To help students from getting mentally tired when learning English through local culture, the teacher used four simple strategies. These strategies helped protect students' short-term memory from overload:

1) Using Pictures and Clues (Visual Scaffolding)

First, the teacher gave early guidance using keywords and pictures before diving into the main lesson. For example, the teacher used a mobile phone to show pictures and shared keyword like "prophet" or "ceremony" to trigger what students already knew. This

stopped students from feeling overwhelmed when reading complex English texts.

Theoretically, this matches the concept of Scaffolding by (Van Der Stuyf, 2002), which is simply guidance that keeps students from feeling frustrated. By turning abstract ideas into clear pictures, students did not have to waste mental energy guessing the difficult words. Instead, they could understand the meaning faster. This made moving to harder topics much smoother.

2) Making Tasks Simpler and Relatable (Context-Based Task Simplification)

The teacher kept the lessons focused only on the cultural topics closest to students' daily lives. Based on classroom observations, the teacher narrowed down discussions to familiar local icons, like traditional markets in Kalimantan Selatan. This kept students from getting distracted by too much irrelevant information.

This strategy follows the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) principles by John Dewey (as cited in Sulistio Andi, 2021), which emphasizes connecting lessons to real life. It also supports (Nailul Huda et al., 2025), who states that this approach helps students connect with their social reality, helping them learn English while thinking critically about their own culture. By breaking the lesson on the whiteboard into smaller, manageable pieces, the teacher kept the classroom calm and focused. Students could spend

their energy on understanding English grammar rather than trying to understand an unfamiliar culture.

3) Allowing Mixed Languages as a Help (Pedagogical Translanguaging)

Third, the teacher allowed students to use local words temporarily when they forgot or did not know the English translation. For instance, the teacher let the word “*Aqiqah*” stay in grammar exercise. This helped students focus on building sentences without getting stuck on vocabulary.

According to the theory of Pedagogical Translanguaging by Ofelia Garcia and Durk (as cited in Cenoz & Gorter, 2020), using a first language is a smart tool to understand deep cultural concepts. This act serves as a mental bridge, helping students move between their local identity and English without feeling pressured. As a result, students could keep their thoughts flowing smoothly in English.

4) Giving Examples and Quick Corrections (Modeling and Immediate Feedback)

To make sure students remembered the English rules correctly, the teacher used modelling and quick feedback. During speaking practice, the teacher immediately corrected pronunciation errors using the “repeat after me” technique. This stopped mistakes from becoming bad habits in the students’ long-term memory.

Giving direct examples helps students see where they made mistakes and how to fix them, as explained by (Bransford, 2000). Over time, the teacher will step back (*fading*) as students become more independent, as discussed by (Chang et al., 2002). This supportive feedback ensured that even though the topic was local, the accuracy of the students' English remained the top priority.

In short, combining pictures, simpler tasks, mixed languages, and quick feedback created a great support system. Through these friendly steps, the teacher successfully turned a potentially heavy cultural lesson into an enjoyable tool that helped students learn English more effectively.