Developing Local Culture-Based Instructional Materials of English Reading for Social Welfare Learners

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Abstract

The development of instructional materials plays a crucial role in improving students' learning outcomes, particularly in the context of English reading comprehension at the tertiary education level. At the Social Welfare Department of Institut Teknologi Pagar Alam (ITPA), there is a distinct lack of instructional resources that are not only pedagogically sound but also culturally relevant and aligned with the students' academic and professional demands. The materials currently in use often do not reflect the students' sociocultural background, leading to low engagement and limited learning effectiveness. This study aims to address this gap by designing English reading comprehension materials infused with Besemah cultural elements. Employing the Design and Development Research (DDR) methodology, the research collected data through questionnaires and interviews with both students and faculty members. The developed materials were subjected to a comprehensive validation process involving content experts in reading and instructional design, an English language practitioner, and feedback from 15 Social Welfare students focusing on clarity, engagement, and practical use. Results revealed that integrating Besemah cultural content substantially improved students' motivation and understanding, making learning more meaningful and contextually appropriate. The study concludes that culturally responsive instructional materials not only enhance language acquisition but also foster a sense of cultural identity and appreciation, offering a valuable model for localized educational innovation across various disciplines.

Keywords: Local culture; Instructional material; English reading

INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly interconnected world, English proficiency has become a critical skill for university students, particularly those in the Social Welfare Department. As future professionals, these students need strong reading comprehension skills to access international research, policies, and case studies that inform their field. Joraboyev (2021) notes that incorporating realistic resources in classroom instruction can motivate students and help them feel confident when learning a foreign language. Instructional materials serve as practical examples of teaching strategies, aiding instructors and students in bringing these approaches to life (Edelson et al., 2021). Reading English is crucial for accessing various information and resources that support students' academic and professional goals. Yapp (2023) highlights that reading in a second language (L2) is essential for university students.

However, English reading instruction for Social Welfare students at Institut Teknologi Pagar Alam *(ITPA)* faces a fundamental challenge: the absence of a specialized instructional module tailored to their academic and professional needs. English lecturers must compile reading materials from various sources, many of which are linguistically complex and contextually irrelevant to students' fields of study. As a result, students often struggle with comprehension, encountering unfamiliar vocabulary and abstract concepts that hinder their learning. Additionally, the lack of engaging and relatable content reduces motivation, limiting opportunities for meaningful reading practice.

One promising approach to addressing these challenges is integrating local culture into English reading instruction. Although numerous textbooks are available, few include local cultural content (Oktarina et al., 2022). The government supports using materials that conserve Indonesian cultural values and religious elements as part of the national education framework. Teachers also play a crucial role in embedding cultural traits into their teaching. When students engage with English reading materials, including local culture, their learning experience becomes more prosperous and engaging. Research in language education has demonstrated that culturally relevant materials enhance students' engagement, comprehension, and retention of new language concepts. Since language and culture are closely linked, integrating cultural elements is as important as language learning itself (Alakrash et al., 2020; Byram & Flemming, 1998; Kim, 2020; Turan & Akcay, 2021, cited in Oktarina et al., 2022). By incorporating elements of Besemah culture—an integral part of the student's identity—English reading materials can become more relatable, fostering a deeper connection between language learning and real-life experiences. Such an approach improves reading proficiency and promotes cultural appreciation, aligning with the broader goal of preserving local heritage in an academic setting.

Despite the recognized benefits of culturally integrated learning, little research has been conducted on systematically developing and validating an English reading module tailored specifically for Social Welfare students. Most existing studies on localized English instruction focus on general language learning without addressing the unique academic and professional requirements of students in social sciences. This gap underscores the need for a structured approach to instructional material development that ensures linguistic accessibility and cultural relevance.

By producing a well-structured and validated instructional module, this research seeks to provide a sustainable solution to the challenges faced by Social Welfare students in learning English reading. Furthermore, it contributes to the broader discourse on localized English language instruction and offers practical insights for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers in designing culturally relevant educational materials. Instructional materials are crucial for fostering communication between teachers and students, as well as among students themselves (Abdala, 2024). This study does not merely aim to develop a textbook; it aspires to transform the way Social Welfare students engage with English reading—making it more accessible, meaningful, and reflective of their own cultural identity.

To address these challenges and fulfill the need for culturally integrated instructional materials, this study is guided by the following research questions: (1) What is the ideal design of a local culture-based instructional material of English reading based on the specific needs of Social Welfare Department students at ITPA? ; And (2) How can local culture-based instructional material of English reading meet the criteria of validity and practicality?

RESEARCH METHOD
Research Design
This study adopts a Research and Development (R&D) approach using the Design and Development Research (DDR) model to create culturally enriched English reading instructional materials tailored to Social Welfare students at Institut Teknologi Pagar Alam (ITPA). As outlined by Richey and Klein (2008), DDR offers a systematic framework that emphasizes the design, development, and evaluation of educational products through iterative validation and refinement. The research was implemented in three main phases: Needs Analysis, Design, and Development. Each phase was interlinked to ensure the instructional module was pedagogically sound, contextually relevant, and culturally responsive. The process involved rigorous needs identification, prototype design, expert and practitioner validation, and user testing to ensure the final product's effectiveness, relevance, and usability in real classroom contexts.

Research Participants
The study involved three main categories of participants: (1) one English lecturer from the Social Welfare Department with over five years of teaching experience and a background in instructional design, (2) 15 purposively selected students in their second semester who actively participated in English classes, and (3) three experts—two in reading pedagogy and one in visual design. The student participants comprised 13 females and 2 males, all of whom were first-time university-level English learners. This diverse set of participants enabled the research to capture practical, theoretical, and experiential insights into the instructional module's development.

Instruments and Data Collection Technique
To ensure the collection of relevant and reliable data, the study utilized both questionnaires and interview guides as its primary instruments. The student questionnaire, structured using Likert-scale items, measured aspects such as clarity, engagement, cultural integration, and visual appeal of the module. Sample items included statements like "Integrating local culture into the reading module will motivate me to learn English." Interviews were conducted with both the lecturer and selected students to gain in-depth insights into instructional challenges and the relevance of local cultural elements. All instruments underwent validation to ensure clarity, coherence, and alignment with the study's goals. Data collection occurred at various stages—during needs analysis, after expert validation, and following student trials—allowing for ongoing feedback integration.

Data Analysis
The study utilized a mixed-methods approach to data analysis, integrating both quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness and practicality of the developed instructional module. Quantitative data were primarily derived from student questionnaires, which used Likert-scale items to measure perceptions of the module's clarity, engagement, cultural relevance, and visual appeal. These responses were analyzed using descriptive statistical tools, including the calculation of mean scores and standard deviations, allowing the researchers to identify central tendencies and variations in student opinions. This numerical analysis offered objective insights into how the module was received by its intended users.

In parallel, qualitative data were collected through in-depth interviews with both the English lecturer and selected student participants. These interviews were transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis, in which recurring patterns and key issues were identified. Themes such as difficulties in understanding reading texts, motivational factors, and the value of integrating local Besemah culture into the content were explored in detail. This qualitative approach enriched the findings by capturing personal experiences, contextual factors, and nuanced perspectives that could not be fully captured through quantitative

data alone. Additionally, expert evaluations of the module were conducted using structured rubrics that assessed linguistic quality, pedagogical effectiveness, and visual design. The evaluations provided targeted feedback, which, along with practitioner and student input, guided iterative revisions to the module. This integrative data analysis process ensured that the final instructional product was both pedagogically robust and practically applicable, aligning with the academic needs and cultural context of the students.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Research Findings

This study began by distributing questionnaires to all *SW* students, followed by interviews with several students from the department and the English lecturer who taught their class. Two types of questionnaires were delivered to students. The first asked for input on present English learning, while the second asked for their expectations for the development of an English reading module. The questionnaires were distributed to 15 respondents and yielded the following findings.

Table 1. The Result of Need Analysis

No.	Aspect	Statements	Assessments
1	Relevance and Material Needs	Students need an appropriate reading module; It is essential to include local cultural elements in the new reading module.	Strongly Agree
2	Motivation and Engagement	Integrating local culture will make learning English more enjoyable and exciting; Integrating local culture in the module will motivate me to learn English.	Strongly Agree
3	Reading Skills and Critical Thinking	I expect the reading module to include comprehension questions after each text; Reading comprehension is essential to be mastered.	Agree
4	Interactivity and Practice	The module should include interactive activities to enhance understanding; The module should provide exercises to improve vocabulary; I find writing assignments related to reading materials beneficial; Group activities based on the reading materials would enhance my learning experience.	Strongly Agree
5	Integration of Local Culture	The reading module should provide clear explanations and examples related to local culture; Reading materials with local cultural elements will enhance my understanding of the texts; I would like to see assessments that measure my understanding of the local cultural content in the reading module; Integrating local culture into the reading module will help students connect better with the content.	Strongly Agree
6	Module Design	The reading module should provide clear instructions; The module should provide a vocabulary section; The module should have a clear and engaging layout; The module should provide clear and colorful picture illustrations; I expect the new reading module to include various content types (e.g., articles, stories, case studies); Materials should be presented in short, manageable segments (1-2 pages).	Strongly Agree

The questionnaire results reveal critical insights into students' expectations for developing a new English reading module, highlighting specific areas of interest and preference. Most respondents emphasized the importance of reading comprehension, indicating that it should be a primary focus in the new module. They also expressed a strong interest in integrating local cultural elements into the reading materials. The reading module is expected to enhance students' engagement by including familiar cultural aspects, making the learning experience more relatable and enjoyable. Respondents believe incorporating such content will help deepen their understanding of the texts and connect the material to their context.

Regarding the module design and features, students underscored the necessity of clear explanations and interactive activities. Many agree these elements are essential for improving comprehension and providing practical learning support. The module is expected to include tasks that focus heavily on vocabulary development, as mastering new vocabulary is a key component of language learning. The feedback also indicated a preference for user-friendly features such as clear instructions and structured exercises. Regarding layout and format, students preferred a visually appealing design with colourful illustrations to help clarify the content and enhance comprehension. They said an exciting and well-organized layout would make the module more engaging and accessible. Additionally, there was a strong demand for diverse content types, including articles, stories, and case studies, which would provide various reading experiences and maintain students' interest.

Students also highlighted the importance of including practical assessment tools in the module. They favoured comprehension questions at the end of each reading text and assessments that specifically measured their understanding of the integrated cultural content. Group activities and writing assignments related to the reading materials were considered valuable components, as they offer opportunities for collaboration and practical application of the knowledge gained. Finally, the preference for concise and manageable text segments was evident. Many respondents suggested that the reading passages be limited to 1-2 pages to prevent overwhelming students and ensure that the content remains focused and accessible. This preference for shorter reading segments indicates a need for a module designed to cater to students' varying levels of language proficiency and attention span.

In conclusion, the questionnaire results indicate clear expectations for the new English reading module. Students want a module that is engaging, culturally relevant, and designed with interactive features that support learning. They desire varied content that reflects local culture and provides opportunities for vocabulary enhancement. The module should be visually appealing, easy to navigate, and include assessments that evaluate comprehension effectively. These findings will guide the development of a reading module that aligns with students' preferences, ultimately aiming to improve their language skills and overall learning experience.

The results of the interviews with students and the English lecturer also provide a clear and consistent picture of the *SW* Department's needs and preferences for English reading comprehension materials. Both students and the lecturer expressed a strong need for reading materials closely tied to the student's field of study and current social issues. The existing materials often include too complex language that needs to be simplified, making them difficult for students to understand and reducing their effectiveness in enhancing reading skills. Students find it challenging to connect with the texts, as they sometimes need more engaging elements, visuals, or a clear link to practical, real-life situations. There is a shared preference for reading texts incorporating local culture, particularly the Besemah Tribe culture, making the materials more relevant, familiar, and engaging. This cultural integration enhances language learning and helps students better

appreciate their heritage. The lecturer agrees that incorporating local culture can improve students' comprehension and cultural sensitivity, particularly in a field like Social Welfare that values diverse perspectives.

After finding out the needs analysis, the study goes to find out the experts' judgement of the design made. Table 2 showed the expert vealidation.

Table 2. Expert Validation Results in Design Phase

Aspect Evaluated	Expert 1 Score	Expert 2 Score	Average Score	Category
Content	90%	85%	87.5%	Very Good
Language	88%	84%	86%	Very Good
Presentation	92%	86%	89%	Very Good
			87.5%	Very Good

Table 2 presents the expert validation results obtained during the design phase. Two experts evaluated three main aspects of the module: content, language, and presentation. The average scores across both experts were consistently high, with content receiving 87.5%, language 86%, and presentation 89%. These results fall into the "Very Good" category, indicating that the prototype developed during the design phase was considered well-prepared and suitable for further refinement.

Table 3. Combined Results of Expert & Practitioner Validation and Student Assessments in Development Phase

Aspect Evaluated	Experts Score (Average)	Practitioner Score	Students Score (Average)	Overall Average	Category
Content	90%	88%	85%	87.7%	Very Good
Language	88%	86%	83%	85.7%	Very Good
Presentation	91%	89%	86%	88.7%	Very Good
				87.4%	Very Good

Table 3 summarizes the combined evaluations from experts, practitioner, and students during the development phase. Here, the module was assessed after the revisions made during the design phase. The expert and practitioner scores remained in the high range (around 88–90%), while the student assessment scores were slightly lower but still strong (averaging 83–86%). The overall average score across all groups reached 87.4%, placing the final product in the "Very Good" category. This suggests that the module effectively met its intended goals and was well-received by both professional validators and its target student audience.

Discussion

The findings presented in the tables above provide clear and structured answers to this study's two research questions. The first research question — "What is the ideal design of a local culture-based instructional material of English reading based on the specific needs of Social Welfare Department students at ITPA?" — is addressed primarily through the needs analysis and initial design phases. The results showed that students required materials that improve their English reading comprehension and reflect their local cultural context, making the content more relatable and engaging. This input shaped the module's design, including culturally relevant texts, appropriate vocabulary levels, and tasks aligned with students' academic and social contexts. The design was refined through expert feedback during the validation phase, confirming that the structure, content, and presentation aligned with educational standards and student needs.

Incorporating modules grounded in local culture yields numerous benefits for students' learning experiences. Firstly, integrating local culture into reading materials significantly heightens student engagement, as culturally relevant content fosters a stronger connection to the lessons. This is underscored by Oktarina et al. (2022), who emphasized that introducing local cultural values can enhance motivation in language learning. Additionally, the utilization of familiar cultural contexts aids in improving reading comprehension. Azizah et al. (2021) observed that students find it easier to grasp reading texts when local culture is integrated, allowing them to relate the material to their real-life experiences. Incorporating cultural elements into the curriculum enhances student engagement, motivation, and comprehension, ultimately fostering a deeper connection with the subject (Capper, 2021).

Moreover, this approach bolsters students' pride in their cultural identity. Byram and Flemming (1998) underscored the importance of integrating cultural elements into language learning to cultivate a deeper connection with cultural heritage and an appreciation for cultural diversity. Moreover, by emphasizing the local social context, this module equips students with more practical and relevant English language skills for their field of study, particularly social work. This aligns with Joraboyev's (2021) findings regarding the benefits of utilizing authentic materials in the classroom to better prepare students for real-life situations. Integrating local cultural elements into English language instruction has emerged as a promising strategy to address this need, fostering a more meaningful and relatable learning experience for students (Salim & Hanif, 2021). This integration not only enhances language acquisition but also promotes cultural awareness and appreciation, which are essential qualities for social welfare professionals working with diverse populations (Darmayenti et al., 2021)

Finally, this module is meticulously designed to align with the curriculum of the SW Department at ITPA, ensuring cohesiveness and relevance in the learning process, as emphasized by Inderawati et al. (2022), who highlighted the importance of learning materials that adhere to the curriculum to enhance student's academic outcomes. These aspects exemplify how local culture-based instructional materials enhance students' English language skills and enrich their appreciation of cultural heritage. Integrating local cultural elements not only made the material more relevant but also fostered a sense of pride and cultural awareness among students. This supports the notion that language learning is enhanced when it is connected to students' cultural identity, as proposed by Alakrash et al. (2020). The lecturers also noted that using culturally integrated materials helped bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-life application, crucial for SW students.

The second research question — "How can local culture-based instructional material of English reading meet the criteria of validity and practicality?" — is answered through the results from the development phase, which combined expert, practitioner, and student evaluations. The experts and practitioners' assessments demonstrated that the final product met high standards of validity, particularly in terms of content accuracy, linguistic clarity, cultural relevance, and instructional design. Meanwhile, the student assessments confirmed the material's practicality, showing that the module was usable, understandable, and beneficial for classroom learning. Together, these evaluations provided strong evidence that the developed material meets both validity and practicality criteria, ensuring its suitability for implementation in the Social Welfare Department's English reading courses.

Need Analysis

A needs analysis was conducted to gather information about the requirements of students and instructors for developing this instructional material. According to Berutu

and Margana (2023), a needs analysis aims to obtain information about the learners' needs and learning processes. The needs analysis phase involves identifying the target audience, their learning needs, and the specific cultural elements to be integrated into the materials (Yusof et al., 2020). The participants in the needs analysis were the students and the English lecturer teaching in the second semester of the SW Department at ITPA. Since the SW Department had only one class, the researcher involved all fifteen students in the class in the data collection and analysis. The researcher used three methods to collect data during the needs analysis phase. The first method involved distributing a questionnaire to all students in the SW Department. This questionnaire included two main sections: the first focused on obtaining students' feedback on their current English language learning experience. In contrast, the second they sought their expectations for the planned development of a local culture-based module.

The second data source came from interviews conducted with a selection of students from the SW Department. Only five of the fifteen students agreed to participate in face-to-face interviews with the researcher, conducted individually. Each student was asked five questions during these interviews. The third data source was an interview with the English lecturer who taught in the SW Department. This interview was also conducted in person, with six questions directed at the lecturer. Findings from all three data collection methods indicated a clear need for instructional materials, specifically an English reading comprehension module that integrates local culture, specifically Besemah culture.

The questionnaire responses revealed varied student opinions about the relevance of the current English reading comprehension materials. Some students felt the materials were aligned with their academic field, noting a connection between the reading topics and their study requirements. However, others disagreed or strongly disagreed, pointing out that certain materials did not fully meet their academic needs or expectations. Regarding engagement, the responses were mixed. While some students strongly agreed that the materials were exciting, others disagreed or remained neutral. This pointed to potential issues with the attractiveness and motivational aspect of the current reading materials, indicating that they may not captivate all students equally. One significant finding was that many students preferred shorter, more digestible reading segments (1-2 pages). This preference suggested that lengthy or dense texts could be overwhelming for some students, negatively affecting their comprehension and interest. An important insight was the need for more straightforward vocabulary. Many students found the vocabulary in current texts challenging, indicating that complex language might be a barrier to thorough comprehension. This underscored the importance of using vocabulary that aligns with the student's proficiency levels to make the material more accessible. Many students emphasized the value of including local cultural elements in the reading materials when asked about future expectations. This feedback suggested that culturally relevant content would enhance student engagement and make learning more meaningful.

In summary, the student feedback highlighted crucial areas for improving reading comprehension materials. The new module should focus on enhancing the relevance of the content to students' academic areas, making topics more engaging, and simplifying the language for better understanding. Moreover, integrating local culture could strengthen students' connection to the material, providing a learning experience that is both culturally enriching and academically supportive. The interviews with five SW Department students provided additional insights. Most students found reading comprehension in English difficult due to complex vocabulary and the materials' lack of engagement or direct connection to their field of study. They expressed a need for reading materials that were more relevant, engaging, and reflective of current issues related to their studies. They also recommended including elements of local culture, such as Besemah culture, to make the reading content more relatable and exciting. Additionally, students suggested adding

visuals, interactive texts, and vocabulary lists to aid comprehension. They favored more straightforward language and interactive learning activities, such as group discussions, to make learning more enjoyable.

The interview with the English lecturer highlighted the need for reading materials directly related to students' field of study, including texts on social issues or case studies. The lecturer mentioned difficulties finding academically relevant materials appropriate for the students' language abilities. Typically, the lecturer sourced materials from the internet and academic journals but had not previously included local cultural content in teaching. The lecturer strongly supported the development of culture-based materials, believing it would enhance student engagement and promote cultural pride. They stressed that integrating local culture would make learning more relatable and impactful, especially in social welfare. The lecturer also suggested using narrative texts featuring Besemah culture and incorporating activities such as role-playing and group discussions to boost practical application and student involvement. Both students and the lecturer agreed that reading materials should be relevant, comprehensible, and culturally integrated to enrich students' learning experiences and foster cultural awareness.

Product Design

The design phase is the second stage of the research process. During this phase, the researcher developed a prototype product based on the findings from the earlier needs analysis. Specifically, the researcher created an English reading comprehension module tailored for students in the Social Welfare (SW) Department. This module comprises five units precisely aligned with the SW Department's English reading comprehension curriculum and includes five sessions dedicated to that content. It consists of five main units, each addressing different dimensions of social issues and cultural identity, and features reading materials that reflect both SW and Besemah's cultural heritage.

Each unit begins with specific learning objectives and includes reading texts followed by comprehension questions, vocabulary exercises, and group discussion prompts. The readings combine relevant social issues with Besemah traditions' cultural narratives, ensuring academic and cultural engagement. By utilizing texts that reflect familiar cultural contexts, students are more likely to connect with the content, activate prior knowledge, and develop a stronger sense of ownership over the learning process. This approach can also bridge the gap between the classroom and the students' experiences, making learning more relevant and meaningful. Integrating local culture into the curriculum addresses the need for culturally relevant materials, especially when standardized textbooks may not adequately reflect the students' cultural background (Ratri & Tyas, 2022). Moreover, local culture-based materials can promote critical thinking skills as students analyze and interpret texts through a cultural lens. (Atmojo & Putra, 2022).

The module features a clean and organized layout. Each page is designed for readability, with ample spacing between sections. The text is divided into short, manageable segments to accommodate students' preferences for easily digestible content. Activities within each unit include comprehension questions, vocabulary matching, and discussion prompts that foster active participation and learning. The cover design is simple yet impactful. It features the title "Learning English: Promoting Local Culture" and the subtitle "English for Social Welfare." This reflects the module's academic focus while emphasizing its cultural elements. The font is clear and legible, with an appropriate text size that ensures accessibility for all readers. Key vocabulary terms are highlighted for easy identification during the learning process. The module's language should be clear, simple, and engaging to communicate effectively with students (Andika et al., 2023). Its structure should also be easy to use and visually appealing to attract students. Additional features of the module include: (1) Vocabulary Lists: Each reading passage is followed by a

vocabulary list defining key terms in English and Indonesian, aiding comprehension and language acquisition; (2) Discussion Activities: Each unit encourages group discussions and role-playing to enhance students' understanding and collaboration; and (3) Cultural Integration: The module successfully incorporates local cultural aspects, such as Besemah traditions, making the content more relevant and engaging for students.

This reading module is well-structured and effectively merges language learning with cultural education. Its thoughtful design, relevant content, and interactive activities make it a valuable resource for students, especially SW Department students. Incorporating local culture supports language development and reinforces students' connection to their cultural heritage. After the design process was done, the prototype product was validated by experts. Then, it came to the development phase.

Product Development

In this development phase, the researcher has created a preliminary product based on the initial design, resulting in a preliminary English reading comprehension module for SW Department students. This module has undergone validation by experts, practitioners, and student assessments.

Expert 1 validated the module, evaluating it across six key categories: content, structure, language, instructional design, visual design, and local context. The module received high ratings and was categorized as "Excellent" or "Good" in all areas. The content aligned well with the learning objectives, integrated local culture effectively, and presented accurate information. The structure was logical, and the language was clear, demonstrating appropriate grammar and vocabulary. The instructional activities were engaging, practical, and diverse, while the visual design was appealing and easy to read. The expert praised incorporating Besemah culture and confirmed that the module met educational standards.

Expert 2 also provided a favorable evaluation, noting that the module aligns well with the learning objectives and features accurate, high-quality content. It was commended for its clear and logical organization, appropriate language for English learners, and effective visual design, characterized by readable text and consistent color usage. While the experts appreciated the integration of Besemah culture, they suggested that each unit could benefit from additional exercises to assess students' reading mastery better. The expert recommended continuing with the module as it suits English language instruction.

Expert 3 reviewed the Reading Comprehension Module and mainly offered positive feedback, stating that the module is relevant to learning objectives and contains accurate and comprehensive content. They praised the logical structure, which presents material with clear learning objectives and activities. The language supports English learning effectively, although the expert-recommended enhancing the integration of Besemah culture. Visual elements, such as images and color, were utilized effectively, maintaining a consistent design. Overall, the module is well-crafted, but some adjustments to better incorporate local culture were advised.

A practitioner also positively evaluated the reading comprehension module, finding it relevant to the learning objectives and containing accurate, high-quality content. The material's flow was logical, and the varied tasks kept students engaged. The language was clear and suitable for English learners. Like the expert feedback, the practitioner noted that the module supports real-life situations and respects local cultural values (Besemah). However, they indicated that improvements could be made to ensure the material is more applicable to the local context. Overall, the practitioner viewed the module as well-prepared and engaging.

Student assessments provided generally positive feedback on the Reading

Comprehension Module. Most students found the content highly relevant to the learning objectives, rating the quality of the material as good. The accuracy of the information was predominantly rated as "excellent," indicating students' trust in the content's reliability. Students appreciated the integration of local culture, especially the inclusion of Besemah culture, which most rated as "excellent" or "Good." Students liked using color for the module's visual design, believing it enhanced readability and understanding. Additionally, students felt the module respected local cultural values and was relevant to their social context. Overall, the module effectively engaged students, though there remains room for improvement in making the content more comprehensive and culturally enriched. Students establish a more profound connection by adapting the content to mirror Indigenous culture and familiar scenarios, enhancing their motivation and academic performance (Wati et al., 2021) (Dukes et al., 2021). Developing instructional materials rooted in local culture has gained prominence in English language education, as it acknowledges the significance of students' backgrounds and experiences in learning (Jarquín et al., 2021; Masayu et al., 2022).

Despite the strengths of this study — particularly its successful integration of local cultural content and the validation of instructional materials for practicality and effectiveness — several limitations should be acknowledged. First, there were challenges in accommodating varying language proficiency levels among the students. While the module was designed based on the general needs of Social Welfare Department students, the class included learners with differing English abilities, from those with relatively strong reading skills to those still struggling with basic comprehension. This variability posed challenges in ensuring that all students could equally benefit from the material without the need for additional scaffolding or adaptation. Future iterations of the material may need to include differentiated tasks or supplementary resources to better support students across the full range of proficiency levels.

Second, the generalizability of the findings is limited. This study focused on a specific cohort within the Social Welfare Department at ITPA, and the module was tailored to the local Besemah culture. While the results show clear benefits for this context, it remains uncertain whether the same material or approach would be equally effective in other departments, institutions, or regions with different cultural backgrounds. Broader application would require careful cultural and contextual adaptation, as well as further testing in diverse educational settings.

Third, the study faced practical constraints, including a limited timeframe for development and validation and a relatively small sample size for student assessments. While the data gathered were sufficient to meet the research objectives, a larger-scale implementation and evaluation could provide deeper insights into long-term impacts, student learning outcomes, and areas for continuous improvement.

The discussion has highlighted the meaningful contributions of this research in advancing the design and validation of culturally enriched English reading materials tailored to the needs of Social Welfare Department students at ITPA. By addressing both pedagogical and cultural dimensions, the study enhances student engagement and affirms the practicality and relevance of localized instructional approaches. At the same time, the acknowledged limitations provide important considerations for future research and development, underscoring the need for continuous refinement and broader testing to ensure the adaptability and inclusiveness of such materials across varied educational contexts.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis conducted, the ideal design of developing English reading materials based on local culture for SW Department students is a reading comprehension

module that emphasizes local culture. This module contains reading texts related to their field of study, namely Social Sciences, but also includes content or reading texts that integrate and promote their local culture, specifically the Besemah culture. It consists of five units, each containing two reading texts for English reading comprehension material.

The first reading text, related to their field of study, SW, discusses current issues translated from the best-selected articles by researchers that meet the student's needs. The second reading text features elements of the local culture of the Besemah tribe in Pagar Alam City. All materials are designed to be as engaging as possible so that students can connect with the reading texts they study. At the end of each reading text, comprehension questions are provided to train students to understand the text they have read previously. Other supporting activities include group discussions and vocabulary exercises. Additionally, a list of essential vocabulary words in each reading text can help students understand the meanings of words they find difficult in the text. Additionally, to assist lecturers and students in achieving their goals at the end of the learning process, learning objectives have also been added at the beginning of each unit so that the learning is expected to be directed and well-structured, ultimately leading to achieving those goals. The language used in this module is structured according to the student's needs analysis results and is created using simple and easily understandable language. In addition, the cover design, images, and illustrations in this module are also made attractive and visually appealing so that the learning process is not tedious but more enjoyable. In other words, the ideal form of this module development is designed to be as attractive as possible and easy to use.

Based on the validation results by experts and practitioners and student assessments, this module has met the principles of validity and practicality because its content is relevant to learning objectives, accurate, and applicable in real situations. The inclusion of local culture, such as Besemah, makes the material easier to understand, although some improvements can still be made. The language is clear, and the activities are engaging, with good use of visuals such as colors and images to enhance understanding. Feedback from experts, practitioners, and students helps ensure that this module is effective and practical for the teaching and learning process.

Several recommendations are proposed to strengthen the practical application. Teachers are encouraged to receive targeted training on implementing local culture-based materials effectively, including strategies to accommodate varying language proficiency levels. Policymakers and curriculum developers are recommended to integrate local cultural content formally into English language programs and provide institutional support for developing similar materials across other language skills.

Future research could build upon this study by examining the long-term effects of culturally enriched materials on students' language proficiency and intercultural competence. Additionally, exploring integrating digital tools or multimedia resources within culture-based modules may offer innovative approaches to enhance learner engagement and accessibility further. Expanding research to diverse educational settings and cultural backgrounds would also provide valuable insights into how local cultural content can be effectively adapted for various learner populations, supporting language learning and cultural sustainability.

RECOMMENDATION

This study focused solely on developing instructional materials for one English language skill—reading—integrating local cultural elements. Therefore, future researchers are encouraged to expand this work by developing similar culture-based instructional materials for other English language skills such as listening, speaking, and writing. This expansion would provide a more comprehensive English learning experience and further

support students' overall language development while still preserving and promoting local cultural values.

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