

## **TECHNOLOGY MEDIATED LITERACY EDUCATION TO LOCAL WISDOM IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING**

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### **Abstract**

Indonesia education system has prioritized national character building to be the core of human resource development along with developing national competitive competence to enter a global living. This strategy is important for Indonesia to face the golden age in 2045 indicated by having a golden generation of competitive and high quality human resources. For this purpose, literacy teaching-learning is considered as an essential component of education process. However, literacy education has often been assumed simply as reading and writing both spoken and written texts monotonously and learning activities fail to lead students' understanding on their living philosophy. Consequently, the students seem insensitive to their natural, social, and local environments by means of wisdom. Lack of learning experience, for instance, may cause this situation. Although they look good in using technology devices, they may seem empty in understanding their living, future orientation, and goals. This paper presents how cultural and local wisdom should be referred to as learning resources in building students' characters by means of developing their literacy skills of English competence. As technology development is concerned, this paper also discusses the management of teaching and learning by organizing such local wisdom oriented materials of English into relevant technology based media (ICT Media) of interesting audio and visual presentations.

**Keywords:** media based technology, literacy teaching and learning, English language teaching, local wisdom

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The problem of learning nowadays is not only concerned with developing students' knowledge and competence of technical skills, but also related to developing an understanding on meanings and concepts of what the students learn. Understanding the meaning and concept could lead them to better view beyond what they see. This is important in teaching any subjects that will enable them to understand the way how to view the world. The way students view the world will make them comprehend problems, and enable them to encounter the problems in their life wisely.

Literacy education could be regarded as a subject that may lead students to develop a better understanding to see the world. This includes English literacy. It should not simply refer to an ability to read and write as its general definition, it could rather develop students understanding more than what they just see. In spite of this, this subject should at least cover the main aspect of literacy, that is, to develop reading skills, which begin with an ability to understand spoken words, decode written words, and conclude some deep understanding of texts. Having these skills, an individual can attain optional language literacy, which includes reading and writing with accuracy and using the information/insights from the texts as the bases of well-informed decisions, creative thinking, and writing skill as well.

For this purpose, local wisdom related materials could be used to encourage students learning experience to develop their English literacy skills. Local wisdom is the source of conventional value naturally grown up and derived from the social and natural environments that then become philosophical-deep thoughts in controlling and developing better socio-cultural system of students where they live as members of a certain group of people. Such socio-cultural value is contained in

local wisdom. Then understanding the local wisdom could develop the literacy skills. Therefore, implementing local wisdom in English language teaching would lead students to develop their English proficiency along with their characters according to the local socio-cultural values (Septy, 2016).

Related to the development of literacy skills, the objective of national education has also underpinned the importance of developing students' understanding on better life. This could be implied in the goal of Indonesia education system (Decree number 20 of 2003). Accordingly, the objective is to develop students' potential to have faith observing the Oneness of God, practicing noble characters, being healthy, knowledgeable, skillful, creative, and being independent, which in turn they become democratic and responsible citizens for Indonesia development (GOI, 2003, Decree No 20 Article 3). The objective also aims to lead students to better view and act as a member of national and global community wisely. Then, it is the role of teachers to facilitate them to attain this objective.

The objective also applies to English language teaching in schools. The goal of English language teaching (ELT) should not only develop students' English literacy skills, but also build appropriate characters in connection with local/national norms and values in the framework of national culture and philosophy *Pancasila*. In other words, students' English literacy skills (i.e., integrating listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills (Arslan, 2008)) are supposed to strengthen developing appropriate characters according to the cultural values. This could be implemented in what and the way how they are taught in viewing the world. So, managing local wisdom materials relate to developing students' literacy skills. However, it remains beneficial to discuss how English literacy education should be applied in schools.

This paper explores and discusses how cultural and local wisdom should be referred to as learning resources in building students' characters by means of developing their literacy skills of English competence. In addition, this paper discusses the management of teaching and learning by organizing such local wisdom oriented materials into relevant ICT media of interesting audio and visual presentation.

## **2. MEANING-BASED LEARNING, CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT, AND LOCAL WISDOM**

Language learning may contain some basic principles of life that are socio-culturally transferred through some socio-cultural values and norms (Diaz-Rico, 2004; Septy & Yatim, 2016a). Such socio-cultural values and norms could be used as guidelines in daily life. According to Diaz-Rico (2004:266), culture involves belief and values, rhymes, rules, and roles. The culture has explicit and implicit patterns for living, the dynamic system of commonly agreed-on symbols and meaning, knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, behaviors, traditions, and/or habits shared and make up the total way of life in constructing a personal identity.

The socio-cultural value could be found in so-called local wisdom. In particular, local wisdom is the source of conventional value naturally grown up and derived from the social and natural environment that then become philosophical-deep thoughts in controlling and developing better socio-cultural system of a certain group of people. Therefore, having connected with the purpose of education, character building could contain with socio-culturally based values/norms, local wisdom.

To be more specific, local wisdom could be regarded as both universal and specific values possessed by groups of people. Originally, local wisdom varies among societies, and it is frequently used as the basis for a group member to have normative and ideal patterns to manage and to organize their socio-cultural system. As a multi-cultural nation, Indonesia has many local values

of its traditional-socio-cultural life that could be referred to as learning resources to especially undertake character-based education. So, in this relation, literacy learning should let students understand cultures, more importantly how they could live in their own cultural values reflecting their identity and integrity. It is the essence of character based teaching. Then, it is the role of teachers to manage lesson materials containing such cultural values-local wisdom in English language teaching.

Language is used for communication and, in particular, for social and personal interactions. In a communication practice, a speaker reflects his/her personality. So, in a language learning process, developing personality becomes important as well as developing communicative competence.

What makes human becomes human is the way how human beings communicate by means of language. In this circumstance, language expressions are naturally influenced by the way they have socio-cultural features (Nuraeni & Alfian, 2012:66-70). As English language learning is concerned, then English language teaching will include learning the way to communicate according to the contexts of socio-cultural values (Sun, 2014; Septy, 2015a).

Furthermore, character based teaching has also been signaled in the current system of national curriculum. Despite some weaknesses, the current national curriculum of 2013 has outlined to integrate competence and character into four main competencies; knowledge and skill (competence) and spiritual and social attitudes (characters) (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013). Related to this issue, language lessons should be managed to develop not only students' linguistic mastery (i.e. sentence structures, vocabulary, pronunciation, etc.), but also characters (attitude and values). The attitudes relate to students' personality religiously and socio-culturally. Although it is not clear what resources to refer to in developing students' spiritual and social attitudes, this paper suggests to consider relevant religious reference (i.e., Al Qur'an and Al Hadist) and local wisdom in developing communicative competence of character values.

As the objective of national education is referred to in English language teaching, students' English literacy learning is not only to develop English competence, but also to build character according to *Pancasila* (MOEC, 2013a:78-82, Decree No. 64 Concerning Content Standard). In this relation, *Pancasila* is a collective culture with which students should refer to in practicing their way of life including communicative competence. In other words, the students are expected to have English competence demonstrating their national and international knowledge characterizing culturally appropriate characters as Indonesian.

There are a number of aspects related to characters referred to in the English language competence. The aspects include linguistic and discourse mastery as well as social-cultural awareness and understanding, and communication strategy appropriateness (Canale & Swain, 1980; Septy, 2015b:7). Similarly, according to Lane (2001), communicative competence may include (1) ability to adapt (adaptability/flexibility), (2) ability to involve in conversation (conversational involvement), (3) ability to control conversation (conversational management), (4) ability to express empathy (empathy), (5) ability to act effectively (effectiveness), and (6) ability to act appropriately (appropriateness). This means that such communicative competence reflects character values that speakers may refer to as their cultures and these are important to be developed in students' spoken and/or written communication skills.

In short, cultural awareness/understanding may become an important issue in English communicative competence. The ability to communicate should not disregard character values that are generated from cultural values, and this could be a determining resource in improving students' English proficiency. Besides, this cultural resource could relate to the process of character building. Therefore, the culturally based resources have to be considered in selecting teaching-learning materials.

### **3. ICT MEDIA FOR LOCAL WISDOM MATERIALS IN ENGLISH LITERACY TEACHING**

Information-Communication-Technology (ICT) media might be generally referred to as audio tape, mobile phone, computer, television, radio, video tape and emails (Thapaliya, 2014: 251). In education, ICT media refers to computer based or computer assisted learning in which lesson materials are organized into digital presentations. As computer becomes the main tool in presenting lesson materials, organizing lesson materials into computer will make learning more attractive and advantageous (Ibrahim, 2010; Susikaran, 2013; Ebrahimi *et al.*, 2013; Sadeghi & Dousty, 2013; Septy, 2015a). This also suggests organizing English lesson materials of local wisdom content into ICT based media would benefit both students and teacher.

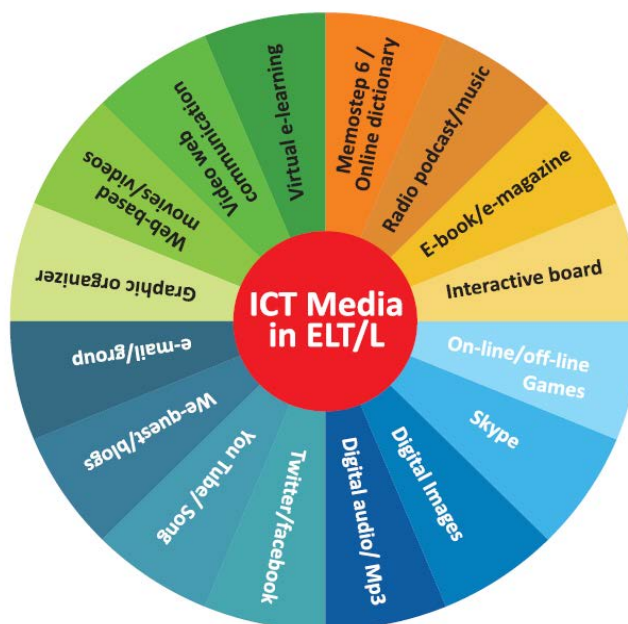
Using ICT media for teaching may at least have double benefits; (a) to facilitate teaching and learning and (b) to organize huge lesson materials. To facilitate the teaching and learning means that ICT media will ease students to understand lesson materials, as well as to ease teachers to manage classroom activities. On the other hand, the ICT media will also help teachers organize massive lesson materials into friendly-user formats.

Moreover, there are also other benefits in having the ICT media in the classroom. First, students may feel that they experience the learning in a real context. The ICT media can display still or animated materials that may be impossible to have in a traditional teaching mode and classroom. This is what is called authentic learning (Septy, 2015c). Kelly *et al.* (2002) and Kilickaya (2004) note that the authentic learning could at least:

- affect students' positive motivation,
- provide actual cultural information,
- provide a real exposure on the target language
- relate to students' needs,
- support creative approaches to learning

As active, creative, effective, and joyful learning (PAKEM) is concerned, teaching English with ICT media also relates to the PAKEM principles (Septy, 2007). In this circumstance, students and teacher may be involved in active activities. The material designed in the ICT-media could develop students' language skills, as well as promote active learning strategies and interests. Furthermore, the ICT media stimulates active endeavor for students to find their own way to problem solving, and teachers intensively assist them to achieve objectives (Ebrahimi *et al.*, 2013:3-19; Sadeghi & Dousti, 2013:1). Therefore, teachers' ability to artistically design learning materials with which students are interested in playing and actively participating is a challenge in the current and future English classes.

Figure 1. Numerous media teacher may use in teaching



There are a number of ICT media or computer-based media that could be used in classroom processes. They are, among others, radio podcast, electronic books, electronic email (groups), movies and online videos, web-quest, power-point presentation, digital images, and the like (Sep-ty, 2015c). Figure 1 shows numerous ICT media. To design and use these media, teachers may choose online and/or offline resources to determine types of application to use to manage local wisdom related teaching materials.

Then, in designing and presenting the lesson materials into such media, there are a number of criteria to consider. The criteria include readability (font size), colors (match colors and pictures, attract interests), clarity (zero noises), and adequacy (relevance to topic/content). As well, there are also several basic principles to note in designing the media. Among the principles are esthetic, skill, knowledge, and economy. It means that in designing the media, teacher needs to take into account some sense of arts, skills and knowledge to technical applications and knowledge about contents and materials of English language, and economical consideration as well.

#### 4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This paper has discussed how developing literacy skills of English competence should be related to cultural and local wisdom as learning materials. This paper also offers how to organize such local wisdom oriented materials into relevant ICT media of interesting audio and visual presentations that provide many advantages in the management of teaching and learning of English literacy skills.

Discussing this issue relate to the problem of learning nowadays that seem failed to develop students' understanding on meanings and concepts of what the students learn, disabled them to better view beyond what they see. This is important in teaching any subject that would enable them to understand the world. This could not only make them comprehend problems well, and also encounter the problems in their life wisely. This is the importance of literacy education leading the students to develop a better understanding to see the world. This is applied in English literacy education.

For this purpose, English literacy education would need to include local wisdom related resources in teaching/learning materials. Learning socio-cultural values of local wisdom could make learning the literacy skills possible; the students develop their English proficiency along with their character building according to the local socio-cultural values. Moreover, it does not only improve students' ability to read and write, but also develop students understanding more than what they just see. This implies that the students develop reading skills, which begin with an ability to understand spoken words, decode written words, and conclude some deep understanding of texts as well as their reading and writing with accuracy and using the information/insights from the texts as the bases of well-informed decisions, creative thinking, and writing skill as well.

Presenting local wisdom related materials by using ICT media would also offer some advantages such as (a) to facilitate teaching and learning and (b) to organize huge lesson materials. Also, the students may feel that they are experiencing the learning in a real context. As a result, this could affect the students' positive motivation, provide actual cultural information, provide a real exposure on the target language, relate to students' needs, and support creative approaches to learning. To facilitate the teaching and learning means that ICT media will ease students to understand lesson materials, as well as to ease teachers to manage classroom activities. On the other hand, the ICT media will also help teachers organize massive lesson materials into friendly-user formats. Last but not least, the national objectives of education could be effectively achieved to build their appropriate characters of local/national norms and values in the framework of national culture and philosophy *Pancasila* along with their English literacy skills (i.e., integrating listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills).

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