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A Survey Of English Reading Material Needs Based On Mbojo Local Culture At SMPN 1 Hu'u

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Abstrak

Penelitian deskriptif kualitatif ini mengkaji kebutuhan bahan bacaan bahasa Inggris yang mengintegrasikan budaya lokal Mbojo di SMPN 1 Hu'u. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara dengan dua guru bahasa Inggris dan empat siswa kelas VII yang jawabannya didokumentasikan dalam skripsi. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa kedua guru memandang bacaan bertema budaya Mbojo penting untuk menghubungkan pembelajaran dengan pengalaman siswa. Siswa menyukai tema tempat setempat, kesenian, kegiatan sehari-hari, teks bergambar, dan kegiatan membaca yang mudah dipahami. Diskusi berpasangan atau kelompok kecil serta pengembangan kosakata juga dianggap membantu proses belajar. Preferensi peserta tidak sepenuhnya seragam, sehingga bahan ajar perlu menawarkan pilihan topik dan aktivitas. Temuan ini merupakan persepsi dari sejumlah kecil informan dan tidak mengukur peningkatan kemampuan membaca secara eksperimental.
Kata kunci: bahan bacaan bahasa Inggris; budaya lokal Mbojo; analisis kebutuhan; sekolah menengah pertama; pembelajaran kontekstual

Abstract

This qualitative descriptive study explored teachers' and students' needs for English reading materials incorporating Mbojo local culture at SMPN 1 Hu'u, Indonesia. The thesis documented interviews with two English teachers and four seventh-grade students, organized around seven questions about cultural content, text topics, language skills, learning materials, classroom activities, and areas for improvement. Both teachers emphasized the usefulness of familiar Mbojo themes for connecting reading lessons with learners' experiences. Students

expressed interest in local places, cultural arts, daily activities, accessible vocabulary, and illustrated texts. Pair work and small-group discussion were also preferred, although individual interests and language priorities varied. The findings provide a context-specific basis for designing culturally responsive reading resources; they do not demonstrate measured improvements in reading achievement or establish the effectiveness of a completed teaching-material product.
Keywords: English reading materials; Mbojo local culture; needs analysis; junior high school; culturally responsive teaching

INTRODUCTION

English reading instruction requires more than presenting unfamiliar texts. Learners interpret language by connecting vocabulary, textual information, prior knowledge, and the purposes for which they read (Grabe, 2009; Nation, 2009). Materials that do not connect with students' experiences may offer fewer opportunities for meaningful comprehension and participation (Snow, 2002; Tomlinson, 2013).

The cultural relevance of instructional materials is especially important in multilingual and culturally diverse classrooms. Culturally responsive pedagogy recognizes learners' community knowledge as a resource for academic learning (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Sociocultural accounts likewise emphasize that learning is mediated by language, social interaction, and familiar cultural tools (Vygotsky, 1978).

For students in the Mbojo-speaking community, local cultural knowledge includes arts, songs, places, daily practices, and traditions. Using such themes in English reading passages may provide recognizable contexts for discussing vocabulary and meaning. However, material selection should be guided by evidence of what learners and teachers actually need rather than by assumptions about a single homogeneous cultural preference (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Nation & Macalister, 2010).

Needs analysis is an essential stage in language-material development because it examines learners' present abilities, target needs, interests, and classroom conditions (Richards, 2001; Brown, 2016). In reading lessons, attention to text difficulty, vocabulary load, and opportunities for collaborative interpretation can inform the selection and sequencing of materials (Grabe, 2009; Nation, 2009).

Research involving scholars associated with Universitas Pendidikan Mandalika provides related perspectives on reading pedagogy. Haerazi and Irawan (2020) examined ECOLA and reading comprehension; Hanan et al. (2020) investigated guided reading and critical thinking; and Hidayatullah (2016) studied questioning in expository-text comprehension. Although these studies did not specifically investigate Mbojo materials, they highlight the importance of supporting students' active engagement with texts.

Other locally relevant work has examined peer-supported comprehension and reading difficulties. Terasne et al. (2020) investigated teamwork learning, while Firman et al. (2021) discussed secondary students' difficulties in understanding English texts. These studies suggest useful pedagogical considerations but cannot substitute for an investigation of the needs of teachers and students at SMPN 1 Hu'u. Sandiarsa S. and Suhaili (2019) also compared Buzz Group and Critical Debate as speaking-oriented classroom formats; although their study did not investigate culturally grounded reading materials, it offers a relevant example of structured peer interaction in local English teaching. Two studies co-authored by K. Dedy Sandiarsa S. provide a closer comparison for reading pedagogy: Imran and Sandiarsa S. (2018) examined the Teammates Consult strategy in reading narrative texts and motivation, while Sandiarsa, Tantra, and Ratminingsih (2014) compared PQRST and SQ3R reading strategies across text types. Although neither study addressed Mbojo cultural content or a needs survey, both indicate that instructional design and text characteristics are relevant considerations when selecting reading materials.

The present research therefore addressed two questions: how do English teachers perceive the need for reading materials featuring Mbojo local culture, and how do seventh-grade students perceive that need? It aimed to describe preferences

that could guide the future design of locally grounded English reading materials, rather than to test an intervention or claim an experimentally verified learning gain.

METHOD

Research design. The source thesis employed a qualitative descriptive design focused on perceptions of culturally relevant English reading materials. This article synthesizes the documented interview findings without introducing new respondents, quotations, or measurements. Qualitative description is appropriate for presenting participants' reported preferences and classroom concerns in their original context (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Setting and participants. The research was conducted at SMPN 1 Hu'u in the Mbojo cultural setting. The findings identify two English teachers, St. Harfah and Rifaid, and four seventh-grade student respondents, Noval, Haijatuh, Kairan, and Tri. The methodology described purposive selection of students from different achievement categories. Because the thesis does not provide a complete schoolwide participant count for the reported interview data, the analysis is limited to these documented informants.

Data collection. The interviews covered seven domains: the need for culturally relevant reading materials, preferred text topics, language skills, materials for speaking practice, learning activities, desired aspects of English instruction, and skills needing improvement. The original thesis reports interview responses in teacher and student tables; it does not provide sufficient evidence to establish that the interview guide underwent independent psychometric validation.

Data analysis. Responses were organized into thematic categories following the seven interview domains, then compared across teacher and student perspectives. This interpretive presentation follows principles of qualitative data display and conclusion verification (Miles et al., 2014). No frequencies are generalized to the school population, and no causal or achievement-effect estimates are made. The thesis mentions consent and confidentiality as methodological

intentions, but the available record does not clearly document the completed consent process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teachers' perspectives on Mbojo-based reading materials

Both teachers described the inclusion of Mbojo culture as important for making English texts familiar and understandable. St. Harfah emphasized books highlighting Mbojo culture to increase students' interest and understanding. Rifaid similarly preferred local topics that could help learners connect new English content with experiences already known to them. Their accounts indicate a perceived need for contextualized materials, not measured evidence that such materials improve test scores.

The teachers also emphasized vocabulary development, reading strategies, and classroom interaction. St. Harfah valued illustrated texts and vocabulary linked to local objects, whereas Rifaid stressed text comprehension as a foundation for simple dialogue. Both recommended peer interaction, with suggestions ranging from conversation practice to small-group discussion. These responses suggest that reading materials should include activities before, during, and after reading.

Students' perspectives and variation in preferences

The four students generally welcomed familiar content but did not describe identical preferences. Noval mentioned local dance and Bima songs and preferred illustrated hobby-related texts. Haijatuh favored references to familiar people or places and examples drawn from daily activities. Kairan preferred local topics and simple sentences. Tri emphasized enjoyable, understandable materials while noting that some assigned reading topics did not match personal interests.

Students also described different ways of participating. Noval preferred pair discussion and dialogue practice; Haijatuh appreciated small-group discussion while memorizing vocabulary individually; Kairan valued learning with friends; and Tri enjoyed group discussion and image-supported texts. Their varied responses show

that cultural relevance should be combined with accessible language, choice, and flexible interaction formats.

Table 1. Summary of documented teacher and student needs

Dimension	Teachers' perspectives	Students' perspectives
Cultural content	Mbojo themes and familiar contexts	Local places, arts, songs, daily life
Text presentation	Illustrated texts and vocabulary support	Pictures, simple sentences, understandable topics
Learning activities	Peer dialogue and small groups	Pairs, groups, and individual vocabulary study
Language priorities	Vocabulary, reading, listening, dialogue	Reading and speaking preferences vary

Interpretation for reading-material development

The overlap between teacher and student perspectives supports the inclusion of short, illustrated passages about familiar Mbojo cultural practices, places, and everyday activities. Familiarity may help teachers introduce background knowledge and provide a basis for vocabulary discussion. Such a proposal is consistent with culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010) and materials-development principles that prioritize learner relevance (Tomlinson, 2013).

However, culturally responsive materials should not simply replace one fixed textbook topic with another fixed local topic. The student interviews show different preferences for art, daily activities, hobbies, and text presentation. A useful reading unit could therefore offer alternative texts of comparable difficulty, a small glossary, guided comprehension questions, and opportunities to relate local themes to wider English-language contexts (Nation & Macalister, 2010; Richards, 2001).

The emphasis on pair and group interaction is compatible with collaborative approaches to reading. Terasne et al. (2020) investigated teamwork learning in reading comprehension, and Hanan et al. (2020) considered guided reading activities and critical thinking. Haerazi and Irawan (2020) examined a different reading technique in relation to motivation and self-efficacy. These studies provide complementary instructional rationales; none establishes the impact of the particular materials proposed here. In a related instructional context, Sandiarsa S. and Suhaili (2019) examined Buzz Group and Critical Debate in students' speaking achievement. Their work provides a point of comparison for the interactive activities preferred by participants, but it does not directly validate Mbojo-based reading materials or demonstrate their effectiveness. The findings can also inform how the materials are used, rather than merely which topics they include. Imran and Sandiarsa S. (2018) investigated a peer-consultation approach to narrative reading, suggesting a relevant instructional comparison for the students' preference for collaborative tasks. Sandiarsa et al. (2014) examined different reading strategies in relation to text types; this supports considering genre and task structure during future material development, without claiming that either strategy was tested in the present survey.

The respondents' interest in accessible vocabulary also aligns with evidence that vocabulary knowledge and text demands influence reading comprehension (Nation, 2009; Grabe, 2009). Hidayatullah (2016) examined questioning techniques for comprehension, and Firman et al. (2021) reported difficulties experienced by secondary learners when understanding English texts. Together, these studies support incorporating questions, language support, and comprehension checks into the proposed resources.

Importantly, the research was a needs survey rather than a development-and-validation study. No completed textbook, reading-test gains, or comparative intervention results were reported. Its findings should therefore be read as design considerations based on a small number of interviews. The source does not provide evidence of inter-coder agreement, systematic member checking, or a detailed audit

trail, which limits the strength and transferability of the interpretations (Miles et al., 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

An appropriate next stage would be to draft Mbojo-themed reading units, review their cultural representation with local teachers and community members, pilot their readability and comprehension tasks with learners, and revise them using documented feedback. This would connect the expressed needs to a transparent materials-development process (Brown, 2016; Tomlinson, 2013).

CONCLUSION

The interviews documented in the thesis indicate that two English teachers and four seventh-grade students at SMPN 1 Hu'u perceived a need for English reading materials connected with Mbojo local culture. Familiar places, arts, songs, daily experiences, illustrations, accessible vocabulary, and opportunities for pair or group discussion emerged as useful design considerations. Preferences varied across students, indicating the importance of offering flexible text topics and activities. Because the evidence is qualitative and context-specific, it does not establish that culturally based materials caused improved reading achievement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Teachers and material developers should use these findings as preliminary input for locally grounded reading passages and activities, while checking cultural accuracy, language level, and student choice. Further research should develop and pilot the materials, document participant consent and confidentiality procedures, and assess reading outcomes using suitable validated instruments and a stronger comparative design.

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