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ARTICLE

Designing Locally Relevant Instructional Material for Indonesian EFL Classroom

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ABSTRACT

Meaningful teaching and learning can be achieved when the materials are closely related to the learners' real life. This research focuses on language and culture for the materials suitable for the first semester students of EFL class at the University of Palangka Raya. The design-based research was applied to provide sources consisting of environmental linguistic expressions within the eco-linguistic perspective and using a text-based or genre-based approach by selecting suitable texts for the level. The Product of Instructional Material shows at least two benefits: (1) as the source of the main module of Intensive Course in writing skill for the first-year students of English Education in Central Kalimantan, and (2) the solution for encouraging the teachers to modify the provided material which can cover the national standard (KKNI) as well as promoting the local values to strengthen local cultures to have meaningful teaching and learning process.

1. Introduction

The Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia delivered a public lecture, focusing on Education Reformation within six points: (1) learning freedom for trying and creating, (2) Pancasila learners with criteria of critical thinking, independent, creative, co-operation, unity in diversity, and virtuous, (3) teachers can be replaced by technology but a qualified teacher should master the technology, (4) curriculum is like a supermarket that teachers can choose their own material needs, (5) learning freedom means providing options of new activities as a true answer will never be found in a real-world, (6) in the pandemic situation of COVID-19, there are two options: doing nothing at all or trying something new, which the implication that pandemic situation as the time to strengthening adaptive and innovative muscles for self-high immunity[1]. Point number five can be related to *UU Sisdiknas* 'Constitution of National Education System' No. 20 the year 2003, article 36, the principle in organizing curriculum should consider at least three components: a) national standardized education, b) diversification of the levels, the students, and the potential local areas, and c) should be in the frame of *Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia* 'Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia' by considering character building, increasing students' understanding regarding national unity, national values, potential local areas and local development for facing global progress.

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For reaching all those educational purposes, the previous Minister of the Ministry of National Education and Culture had prepared a guideline of the national curriculum as well as the handouts for all provinces over Indonesia and was implemented in 2015. This centralization system causes disadvantages for the regions which have different environments, as Indonesia has diverse ethnic groups with different socio-cultural values. It has also affected the teachers' creativity in teaching; it is found in the informal observation of 30 teachers from all regencies in Central Kalimantan who pursued Professional Teacher Program, known as the Certified Teacher Program, conducted at the University of Palangka Raya in 2019, that only two teachers modified the material of the provided handouts which means that most teachers relied on handouts provided by the central government only. This condition does not support freedom learning and the national regulation to promote local development and to encourage teachers to modify materials by introducing and promoting local potential cultures and values [2]. Some previous researches show that introducing cultures are important. There is an opinion [3] describing how important a teacher recognizes students' cultural background to seek understanding between teacher and students to reach effective learning goals. Moreover, cultural backgrounds will affect intracultural competence which is the ability to communicate and work effectively with people from different cultures [4]. For this purpose, this research also aims to broaden the teachers' horizons on how to develop materials that can promote potential local areas, especially in Central Kalimantan within a research question of *how eco-linguistics and genre-based approach can be applied for strengthening local culture through English learning by developing instructional materials.*

The use of eco-linguistics and genre-based approach are selected from various texts suitable for language teaching. The point of eco-linguistics is for digging the oral and written translated cultural kinds of the literature of folktales and other traditional practices originated from the Dayak Ngaju community, while genre-based or text-based approach, which is used for English Curriculum of all educational levels, is to classify the texts into their functions to make the students easier to comprehend the texts.

Ecological Linguistics or *ecolinguistics* is a part of linguistics that relates a language and its environment. It was started an opinion that a language environment, either real environments or contextual. Then, Haugen in the 1970s started to propose an argument by using a metaphor study by adapting the interrelationship of a living being as organisms and their environment. The organism is meta-phorically considered as a language and the environment of language is the social practices within social life (culture, education, politics, or beliefs). This metaphor analogy has got some critical arguments and develops opinions of ecolinguistics by regarding the environment of language as the real biological environment of the language and applied in some fields, such as pragmatics, anthropological linguistics, or language teaching [5][6]. As the coverage of Ecolinguistics has been broadened, some theories are formulated, such as dialectical linguistic model which focuses on dialog or communication that consist of four constituents (speaker/ writer, interlocutor/ reader, subject, and object) occurred in certain time, place, and space within three social dimensions social, ideology, and biology [7]. All ecolinguistic theories identify that language and environment have tied at least in four cases: language can be found in a symbolic, in a natural, in sociocultural, and in cognitive ecologies [8]. This article regards ecolinguistics as the language used by the sociocultural of Danyak Ngaju community. The original language is translated into English for educational purposes that is English language teaching.

The eco-linguistics for language teaching in this research also applies the Genre-Based Approach (GBA), which is closely related to the explanation in Systemic Functional Linguistics. GBA has been implemented in the Indonesian curriculum since 2006 for primary and secondary educational levels. This approach has the assumption that language is used to reach a meaning [9]; therefore, the language is wrapped within a text to reach its goal (genre or type of text). All materials in the English curriculum are packed within texts, either spoken or written, such as the material of greetings, introducing self and people, or describing objects. The materials are designed starting from short functional texts for primary school level, and gradually to the long ones [10]. All texts are those of functional transactional texts or texts for exchange specific information, and interpersonal texts or texts to maintain a social relationship, for daily interactions.

However, for delivering the materials, all educational theories (model, methods, techniques, and approaches) which support *eco-linguistics* and *genre-based approach* for meaningful language teaching were welcomed for the implementation of the materials. So, in teaching a narrative text, for example, the teacher can apply role-play or small discussion groups.

2. Method and Procedures

This qualitative research had been initially conducted by three types of research in the linguistic field and language teaching: *Eco-linguistics of Ethno-Medicinal Plants*

of the Dayak Ngaju Community [5], and *Eco-linguistics for Teaching English* [11], and *Introducing Eco-linguistics in EFL Classroom* [12].

Meanwhile, the procedures of the present research were the continuation of previous research in 2016. It applied a Design-Based Research – DBR, which aims to develop a product; this research product is based on the Eco-linguistics and Genre-Based Approach of educational theory. The procedures in DBR include four steps [13]:(1) analysis of practical problems by researchers and practitioners in collaboration which were conducted by digging problems in schools and analyzing the problems, (2) develop solution informed existing design principles and technological innovation by doing reference study, and writing instructional materials, (3) iterative cycles of testing and refinement of a solution in practice by trying out the materials and doing experts' validity, (4) reflection to produce 'design principles' of the instructional material based on Ecolinguistics and GBA to enhance solution implementation.

The first step of 'analysis of practical problems' had already been conducted in 2016, with a topic of *Eco-linguistics for Teaching English,* as the previous research. Therefore, the step of reference study was conducted by a field study and finding documents either from the internet or regional library. While, the third and fourth steps which were trying out and designing instructional material by applying eco-linguistics and genre-based approach to the tryout of materials were conducted by the teamwork of the English Education Study Program of the University of Palangka Raya, together with validators and observers.

3. Findings

The findings are described based on the steps of DBR that have been started from 2016 for the initial research. The research was based on the concept of applying eco-linguistics for teaching and learning English.

3.1. Analysis of Practical Problems

Based on the steps/ procedures of DBR, the first step, analyzing the problems by researchers and practitioners in collaboration was conducted by digging the problems in the real situations at schools. The data of these problems were taken from students' questionnaire for 33 students and teachers' interview for 5 English teachers (questionnaire and interview were delivered in Bahasa Indonesia to avoid misunderstanding and were given after learning English by applying eco-linguistics) conducted in the previous research of Eco-linguistics for Teaching English in 2016.

3.2. Development Solution Informed Existing Design Principles and Technological Innovation

The instructional material was designed based on the subject of the Intensive Course stated on the syllabi of the English Education Study Program, the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Palangka Raya. The objective of this course is

This course aims to provide basic (elementary) English skills: Listening Reading Speaking, and Writing within some discourses: Person, Places, Time, Accessing Information, Vacation, Money & Banking, Environment,

Table 1 Results of Questionnaire for Students

No	Questions	Yes	No
1.	Are you interested in learning English?	81.81%	18.19%
2.	Do you speak English in everyday life?	0%	100%
3.	Have you ever learned English in a local story?	6.06%	93.94%
4.	Do you enjoy learning 'How to Make Young Rattan Soup'?	100%	0%
5.	Do you enjoy learning the story of 'Fish with No Scale'?	100%	0%
6.	Mention the reason you enjoy learning the texts: *funny, enjoyable, knowing familiar vocab in English, knowing the name of animals*.		

Table 2 Results Interview for the English Teachers

No	Questions	Yes	No
1.	Do you always use provided books (handouts and students' worksheets (LKS) for teaching?	20%	80%
2.	Have you ever modified the material for teaching?	40%	60%
3.	Have you ever made your materials?	20%	80%
4.	Have you ever used local stories for teaching English?	20%	80%
5.	Have you ever used local cultures for teaching English?	0%	100%
6	When you have a text on a local story, are you willing to introduce it to your students?	100%	0%

Recreational Activities, Direction, Health, Courses, Campus Facilities, Students and Lectures, and Student Union. (Syllabus and Course Outlines of English Education of UPR in Academic Year of 2018)

Regarding the syllabus, the material was designed by introducing local cultures divided into 14 themes, with the calculation of 16 meetings in which two meetings are for mid-test and final test. All texts were taken from the oral story of field study and students' Theses and Dissertation of Postgraduate Program of English Education of UPR. The fourteen themes, which were originally written in the local language and translated into English, are described as the following.

(1) Person: *Tampara Tatum* 'the Ancient of the Dayak' and *Karing Ewen Epat Hampahari* 'Karing Four Brothers and Sisters'

(2) Place: *Sandung* 'house of bones', and *Tambi Uwan Bawin Pampahilep* 'Grandma Grey Hair and Lady *Pampahilep'*

(3) Time: Cultivation

(4) Accessing Information: Rack-sack Book, Central Borneo Guide

(5) Vacation: *Balanga* Museum, *Danau Bahagia* 'lake *Bahagia'*

(6) Money and Banking: Young Rattan Soup and *Handep* 'traditional cooperation'

(7) Environment: Forest Fire

(8) Recreational Activities: Fishing, Traditional Dances

(9) Direction: *Lauk Je Dia Batisik* 'fish without scales', *Nyai Talong Ngambun* 'Lady Talong Ngambun'

(10) Health: Ethno-medicinal Plants

(11) Courses: Creative Writing, Community Development

(12) Campus Facilities: Peat Laboratory, Campus Forest

(13) Students & Lecturers: Ethnicity

(14) Student Union: English Student Association

3.3. Iterative Cycles of Testing and Refinement of Solution in Practice

The third step consisted of 3 steps: validation experts, revision, and tryout of the product. Invalidation, two validators were those of the English lecturers with a qualification of a professor and an associate professor majoring in English Education. The first expert validated the contents and texts' appropriateness and the second validated the performance and setting of the materials.

The first validator considered four points by the scales of totally agree to disagree in: (1) language use, (2) material contents, (3) material coverage, (4) Usage. While the second gave validation only on two points: (1) text display and (2) image display. Both validators answered an average of "strongly agree" for all questions.

The revision from two validators was: (1) from the first validator suggested to add explanations of basic English language system before the translated texts of local cultures, such as kinship or naming system of person, place, or events and activities, because learning language cannot be separated from learning culture, and (2) the second validator considered to delete unnecessary images as they would destroy the readers' concentration.

The try-out of the product was conducted in 2019, as the subject of Intensive Course (IC) is only held for the first semester each year. IC has been held since 2004, but starting at Curriculum 2018, the credit weight becomes lower than before that was from 18 credits to 10, and all the lecturers wrote an IC handout to serve this subject [14]. Then, this research followed the pattern from the previous handout. In other words, the tryout did not have any obstacles in the tryout. This tryout was also been observed by a colleague, as every skill has two lecturers. So, in this step, there were no major changes.

3.4. Reflection to Produce 'Design Principle' and Solution Implementation

After revising in 2019, in the year of 2020, the book of instructional material for students and teachers based on eco-linguistics and genre-based approach has been published with ISBN 978-623-6506-76-9, along with videos. It is also registered in the Directorate General of Intellectual Wealth of the Ministry of Laws and Human Rights with the certificate number 00209168. The instructional material is designed with a combination for each topic: starting with texts and vocabularies of environmental/ ecology language, such as *handep* 'local cooperation', *rotan* 'rattan' in general basic English pattern/ systems followed by translated local cultural texts from the Dayak language to English in the narrative, descriptive, procedure, and argumentative texts.

4. Discussion

As the instructional material is a combination system for each topic, the discussion will only describe the parts of texts that consist of local culture from translated texts and the language of environment (eco-linguistics). The first meeting with the topic of "Person" consists of general kinships and naming systems, while for eco-linguistics texts there are *Tampara Tatum* (TT) 'the ancient' and *Karing Ewen Epat Hampahari* (KEEH) 'Karing Brother and Sister'. TT is a narrative talking about how the ancient Dayak within their original names occupied along the Kahayan River. It was about 13 families who moved from an unsafe area from an enemy, and they spread, each family

occupied a safe area. While, KEEH is a narrative that is part of TT text, in which they lived at *Tumbang Pajangay* 'Pajangay estuary'. The two narrative texts are to introduce the kinship and naming systems of the Dayaks who originally lived along the riversides. The naming system gradually changed when the missionaries for Christianity came to Central Kalimantan: from a single naming of one word into two or even three, such as *Joni Bungai* or *Cornelis Yus Ngabut*. This naming system is different from other ethnic [15].

It is also for "Place" in which the Dayak people have a traditional house not only for a human being but also for their ancient dead body/ bones, which is called *sandung*. The indigenous people also know sacred or cursed places as shown in a narrative text of *Tambi Uwan Bawin Pampahilep* 'Grandma Gray Hair and Lady Pampahilep'. In this text, Grandma moved from a cursed place to a blessed place where the Lady Pampahilep protected grandma's family. While, for the topic of "Time", the students are introduced to the traditional knowledge of the time to do cultivation. The people know when and where to do farming from preparation to harvesting.

Discussing "Accessing Information", the students are guided to know the information about Central Kalimantan in argumentative and report texts taken from alumni of English Education Palangka Raya university who take care of the environment and local people by introducing the text of Central Borneo Guide (CBG) (https://central-borneoguide.com/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=-search&utm_campaign=borneo-tour) and Rack-sack Book – RSB (https://ranselbuku.org/) Program. CBG is a profit organization that preserves the environment from the use of plastics, and RSB is a non-profit organization that helps young villagers by providing books/a mobile library.

Dealing with "Vacation" for the local content of eco-linguistics, the texts are descriptive of *Balanga* Museum and Lake *Bahagia*. The two tourism destinations in Palangka Raya have two different visitors; the museum is usually for students of the primary and secondary level to know the historical pieces of evidence of the Dayak people, while Lake Bahagia is for the weekend destination for pleasure.

The topic of 'Money and Banking' consists of a procedure text of young rattan soup along with the prices of each ingredient and descriptive text of *Handep* 'cooperation' or *Handepharuei* (https://handepharuei.com/). *Handep* belongs to one of the alumni of English Education who promotes a local culture internationally, mostly in rattan bags, so the prices are shown in rupiah and dollar.

Environment topic discusses an argumentative text of forest fire. The forest fire becomes a disaster almost every year for the local area as the area is mostly covered by peatlands that make the disaster worse if the weather supports the fire's existence. The topic of environment is also closely related to the topic "Recreational Activities" of fishing which is held at a river in the forest. Indeed, traditional dance text also supports this topic, in which the students are introduced to a heroic story of *Kapakat Dayak* 'Dayak Deal' how to keep peace from *ngayau* 'headhunting and declares the peacefulness in Tumbang Anoi Decree in 1894 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TUBlQtLsGC4).

The topic of "Direction" consists of two local narrative texts entitled *Lauk Je Dia Batisik* 'Fish without Scales' and *Nyai Talong Ngambun* 'Lady Talong Ngambun'. The two texts talk about how the local people say the directions which are based on natural resources of the river and the sun; the elders say *ngaju* 'upstream' for the south and *ngawa* 'downstream' for the north, while the east is shown by the *matan andau belum* 'sunrise' and *matan andau belep* 'sunset' is for the west.

Health topic in the tenth meeting introduces the students to the argumentative text of Ethnomedicinal Plants for the eco-linguistics. How the people name the plants for traditional medicinal is based on their environments, such as color, size, sex, and shape. This shows that language and its environment are very closely related to the Dayak language system.

"Campus facilities" topics that support the material development are descriptive texts of Peatland Laboratory and Campus Forest. Peatland Laboratory with the main division of the Centre for International Cooperation on Sustainable Management of Tropical Peatlands (CIMTROP), is a technical unit at the University of Palangka Raya concerning with research and management of the peatland ecosystem (https://cimptrop.upr.ac.id). While campus forest is a part of the peatland laboratory.

For the topic of "Students and Lecturers", ethnicity is the, closest language environment as students' and teachers' ethnic, local languages and cultures are varied in their own situation. It also happens in the last topic of "Student Union". However, the student union focuses on the descriptive text of students' activities and their division based on religions; there are Christian English Student Association (CESA) and Moslem English Student Organization (MESO).

All materials on meeting I to VII and IX to XV are related to the students' and teachers' environments: social (people), cultures (place, time, activities), economic (money and banking), and education. Although the materials are a combination between the general English language system and translated texts of local cultures, it is proved

that the students can comprehend the texts easily and it can be used to strengthen their own cultures as well as to introduce them to newcomer students [4].These materials are applied to the students who belong to their environment. Therefore, the results in the implementation were also satisfied in which from 120 students, only one student (1.2%) did not pass the subject of Intensive Course, but the failure was because of non-academic reason as the students did not attend the final examination.

5. Conclusion

Learning a language will be meaningful when the learners know the references of what is being said. Eco-linguistics can be useful for this case as it deals with the environmental language. By combining with the genre-based approach or text-based which is used for every curriculum at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels, the teaching-learning process is more meaningful which also can be used to introduce and strengthen own local cultures. The government should promote local culture from the education field by introducing local translated texts, so this local language and culture can be recognized internationally.

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