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# Integrating Local Wisdom into Indonesian Language Learning to Strengthen Cultural Literacy among Elementary School Students: A Case Study at SDN Kedunggalar 1, Ngawi, Indonesia

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**Abstract**

This study examines the integration of local wisdom into Indonesian language learning and its contribution to strengthening cultural literacy among elementary school students at SDN Kedunggalar 1, Ngawi, Indonesia. Employing a qualitative case study approach, the research explores the integration process and its implications for students' cultural knowledge, understanding, appreciation, and awareness of local cultural identity. Data were collected through classroom observations, in-depth interviews with the school principal, teachers, and students, as well as documentation of learning materials and student assignments. Data analysis followed the interactive model of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing, with source and technique triangulation used to establish data credibility. The findings indicate that local wisdom is integrated through reading, writing, listening, and speaking activities using local stories, community traditions, social practices, and students' everyday experiences. This integration provides opportunities for students to recognize cultural knowledge, interpret social values, appreciate differences, and communicate their cultural experiences. The study highlights the potential of culturally contextualized language learning to connect language competence with cultural awareness and local identity formation

**Keywords** Local Wisdom; Cultural Literacy; Indonesian Language Learning; Elementary School; Cultural Identity; Contextual Learning

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## INTRODUCTION

Globalization and digitalization have brought significant changes to the social and cultural lives of society, including within the realm of education. Easy access to information allows learners to become acquainted with diverse cultures from various regions and countries. This increasingly open flow of information also presents challenges for the sustainability of local cultures particularly when the younger generation becomes more familiar with popular culture, disseminated through digital media, than with the traditions of their own immediate environment. Such a situation underscores the importance of cultural literacy as a skill for recognizing, understanding, appreciating, and engaging with culture. Hirsch (1987) explains that cultural knowledge is a vital component of an

individual's ability to comprehend information and communicate within social life (Naur et al., 2024). Aeni (2023) and Widiastuti et al. (2023) likewise identify cultural literacy as a life skill that should be cultivated from an early age, encompassing an understanding and appreciation of both local and global cultures (Aeni, 2023).

Primary education holds a strategic position in building cultural literacy, as it serves as a crucial stage for the formation of a learner's knowledge, attitudes, and character (Dahliana & Tirtoni, 2025; Nurrohmah et al., 2025). Introducing culture cannot be achieved merely by providing information about local traditions or historical artifacts; rather, it must be connected to the children's actual experiences within their families and communities. Local wisdom can serve as a learning resource that helps students understand the values, norms, customs, and knowledge that have developed within their own environments (Hendratno et al., 2026; Sari et al., 2025). Rummar (2022) explains that local wisdom describes how a society behaves and acts in response to changes in its physical and cultural surroundings (Saenab et al., 2026). This perspective demonstrates that local wisdom is not merely a legacy of the past, but rather a form of social knowledge that remains relevant to the lives of the current generation. Integrating local wisdom into primary education is one way to align the learning process with the realities of students' lives, while simultaneously fostering a sense of concern for their regional cultural identity.

Indonesian language instruction offers a significant opportunity to serve as a space for introducing local identity and culture (Sariasih, 2025). The four language skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing enable learners to engage with various forms of cultural knowledge. Folklore, community traditions, family customs, local expressions, and social experiences can be developed into reading materials, topics for discussion, or themes for writing. Through these activities, learners not only study the structure and usage of the language but also gain an understanding of the meanings embedded within the life of the community. Vygotsky's (1978) perspective suggests that the development of knowledge occurs through social interaction, with language and culture serving as essential tools in the learning process. Similarly, Dewey (1938) emphasizes the importance of experience as the foundation for meaningful education. Together, these perspectives provide a basis for developing Indonesian language instruction through cultural experiences that are closely connected to the lives of the learners (Dar, 2021; Dewey, 2023).

Ngawi Regency possesses a social and cultural environment with the potential to serve as a learning resource for the Indonesian language. Community life, local traditions, stories passed down within families, social customs, and the value of togetherness are all part of a cultural experience that can be introduced to students. This potential enables teachers to develop learning materials that are more contextual and aligned with the students' own environment. The "Contextual Teaching and Learning" approach connects academic content with the personal, social, and cultural contexts of daily life (Ni'mah, 2023). Utilizing Ngawi's cultural environment as a learning resource also aligns with the principles of multicultural education, which encourage respect for the diverse experiences and backgrounds of students

(Banks, 2021). Thus, local culture can function both as a source of knowledge and as a space for fostering an attitude of mutual respect.

However, this potential is not always matched by planned integration of local culture into Indonesian language instruction. Challenges include an over-reliance on textbooks as the primary learning resource, a scarcity of reading materials that highlight regional culture, and varying levels of teacher proficiency in developing contextual materials. Furthermore, cultural education risks being limited to merely introducing the names of traditions, failing to provide students with the opportunity to grasp the underlying values and meanings. These issues highlight the need for an integration strategy that goes beyond using local culture as a mere introduction to lessons; it must be directly linked to activities involving reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Teachers play a crucial role in selecting cultural content appropriate for the age and experience of their students, while also guiding them to understand the social values embedded within that culture.

Several previous studies have explored the integration of local wisdom into Indonesian language instruction and school literacy activities. Hatima et al. (2025) demonstrated that integrating Sundanese local wisdom through the study of literature can foster student interest in learning, instill moral values, shape character, and raise awareness regarding the preservation of cultural identity among elementary school students (Hatima et al., 2025). Hatima (2025) reveals that integrating the cultural heritage of the Baduy people using a contextual and multicultural approach can strengthen language competence, cultural awareness, and appreciation for diversity (Hatima, 2025). Research by Made (2024) further demonstrates that incorporating local cultural values into school literacy programs supports students' reading and writing skills, as well as their cultural awareness (Made, 2024). These studies underscore the relevance of local wisdom in primary education. An area that warrants further exploration is the specific process of integrating local wisdom into the four language skills, and how this process contributes to strengthening students' cultural literacy within the context of primary schools in Ngawi Regency.

This study offers a novel contribution by examining the pedagogical process of Indonesian language instruction in relation to the strengthening of cultural literacy based on local wisdom at SDN Kedunggalar 1, Ngawi. The novelty lies not merely in the use of local culture as instructional material, but in the exploration of the connections between language-related activities, students' sociocultural experiences, the understanding of values, appreciation, and the awareness of cultural identity. This research aims to analyze the process of integrating local wisdom into Indonesian language instruction and to identify its contribution to strengthening students' cultural literacy. Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich the field of research on culture-based language instruction. Practically, the findings may serve as a reference for teachers and schools in developing contextual instruction that links language proficiency with the introduction, understanding, and appreciation of the local community's culture.

## METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach, specifically a case study design. A qualitative approach was chosen because the research seeks an in-depth understanding of the process of integrating local wisdom into Indonesian language instruction, as well as its contribution to strengthening students' cultural literacy (Flick, 2023). The case study method is used to examine this phenomenon within its specific context, taking into account learning activities, interactions between teachers and students, and the sociocultural conditions that form the backdrop for the instruction. The study is not intended to statistically measure the impact of integrating local wisdom; rather, it aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the processes, experiences, and meanings that emerge throughout the learning activities.

The research was conducted at SDN Kedunggalar 1 Ngawi, located in Ngawi Regency, East Java, Indonesia. This site was selected due to the relevance of its context to the use of local wisdom as a learning resource within Indonesian language instruction. The sociocultural environment of the community surrounding the school provides a context that enables students to encounter and recognize their culture through daily experiences. The study focuses on two primary aspects: the process of integrating local wisdom into Indonesian language instruction and its contribution to strengthening students' cultural literacy encompassing their knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of, as well as their awareness of, local cultural identity.

Research informants were selected using purposive sampling, based on their level of involvement with and knowledge of the study's focus. Key informants include the school principal, the classroom teachers responsible for Indonesian language instruction, and the students participating in the learning activities. The school principal was included to provide information regarding institutional policies and support for the integration of local culture. Classroom teachers served as sources of information concerning the planning, implementation, and evaluation of instruction. Students were involved to gain insight into their learning experiences, understanding, and appreciation of local culture. The number of informants was determined by the data requirements and the sufficiency of information gathered throughout the study.

Data collection was carried out through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observation was employed to directly examine the Indonesian language learning process, the utilization of local cultural materials, the interaction between teachers and students, and student engagement in reading, writing, listening, and speaking activities. In-depth interviews were conducted with the school principal, teachers, and students to gather information regarding the integration of local wisdom and its contribution to cultural literacy. Documentation was used to supplement the data from observations and interviews by examining instructional materials, reading resources, student worksheets, completed student assignments, and other documents relevant to the research focus.

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which encompasses data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data condensation involved selecting, focusing, and categorizing information based on the research questions. The condensed data were then presented through narrative descriptions and the grouping of findings according to research themes. Conclusions were drawn by interpreting the relationships between findings, identifying the meaning of the data, and verifying their alignment with the empirical evidence obtained. The validity of the data was assessed through source triangulation and technique triangulation. Source triangulation involved comparing information from the school principal, teachers, and students to obtain a consistent overview of the phenomenon under study. Technique triangulation involved comparing the results derived from observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation. This verification process helps ensure that the research findings are supported by sufficient data and are scientifically sound.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### The Process of Integrating Local Wisdom into Indonesian Language Instruction

The findings at SDN Kedunggalar 1 Ngawi indicate that local wisdom is integrated into Indonesian language learning by utilizing the community's social and cultural environment as a contextual learning resource. The process involves planning lessons around cultural elements familiar to students, such as local folklore, traditions, regional arts, local expressions, and community customs in Ngawi. In practice, teachers incorporate these cultural elements into reading, writing, listening, and speaking activities through group discussions, storytelling, text comprehension, descriptive writing, and simple presentations. Interviews and classroom observations reveal that learning materials closely related to students' daily experiences increase their interest, facilitate understanding, and build confidence in expressing their ideas. Beyond developing language skills, these activities also promote togetherness, mutual respect, and social responsibility. Learning documentation, including lesson plans, reading materials, student worksheets, and written assignments, further demonstrates the implementation of local culture-based learning. Nevertheless, several challenges remain, including limited locally relevant reading materials, differences in students' language proficiency, and the need to align cultural content with learning outcomes. To address these challenges, teachers develop supplementary materials independently and utilize students' personal experiences as additional learning resources.

Research findings at SDN Kedunggalar 1 Ngawi indicate that the integration of local wisdom into Indonesian language instruction is achieved by utilizing the social and cultural environment of the community as a learning resource. Rather than limiting instruction to textbook material, teachers strive to connect language competencies with experiences familiar to students from their family and community lives. Folklore, local traditions, regional arts, indigenous expressions, and social customs are incorporated into the learning context to develop skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. This process

encompasses identifying relevant content, selecting cultural themes, preparing reading materials, and designing learning activities tailored to the characteristics of primary school students. Observations show that teachers provide space for students to share personal experiences, identify information within texts, discuss moral lessons, and produce written work rooted in their own cultural environment. Documentation including lesson plans, worksheets, reading materials, and student writing confirms that local wisdom serves as a core context for learning activities, rather than merely acting as a supplementary element or an introductory device. However, the findings also reveal challenges in this integration, such as a scarcity of reading materials specifically focused on Ngawi's culture, disparities in students' language proficiency, and the need to align cultural content with established learning objectives.

The significance of these findings lies in the shifting role of local wisdom within the educational process. Community culture is no longer viewed merely as an object for introducing traditions; instead, it is positioned as a source of knowledge capable of enlivening the students' learning experience. Indonesian language instruction gains a context that is more closely aligned with the realities of the students' lives. Students do not merely encounter texts as sequences of sentences to be read and understood; they also discover the connections between language, their own experiences, and their social environment. Stories about community life, for instance, allow students to explore characters, settings, plot, and moral lessons, while simultaneously gaining an understanding of the values that shape their shared social existence. The activity of writing about cultural experiences brings together the ability to organize ideas and the effort to represent one's own cultural environment through language. Such integration demonstrates that language learning possesses social and cultural dimensions, which are inseparable from the process of knowledge construction.

These findings are strongly linked to Lev Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social constructivism specifically his views on social interaction and cultural mediation in cognitive development. Vygotsky posited that individual knowledge develops through engagement in social activities that utilize cultural tools, including language and symbols. This perspective explains why incorporating local wisdom into instruction can foster meaningful learning experiences. When teachers draw upon the stories, customs, and experiences of a community as learning material, students engage with cultural tools that are already connected to their own lives. New knowledge is not constructed from an entirely alien context; rather, it is developed by linking prior experiences with information acquired during the learning process. Activities such as discussions, retelling stories, reading cultural texts, and composing written pieces illustrate how language functions simultaneously as a tool for communication and an instrument for shaping understanding.

Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) helps clarify the teacher's role in this integration process (Irshad et al., 2021; Xi & Lantolf, 2021). Teacher guidance offered as students refine sentence structures, select vocabulary, comprehend reading content, and interpret cultural messages serves as a form of pedagogical support that

enables students to develop their abilities incrementally. Students who are not yet able to independently explain the meaning of a tradition can gain understanding through the use of guiding questions, explanations, examples, and collaborative discussion. This process demonstrates that introducing culture cannot be achieved merely by conveying information; rather, it requires interaction that helps students construct meaning. Local wisdom acts as a medium that bridges individual experience with the social knowledge that evolves within a community.

The connection between these research findings and the ideas of John Dewey (1938) is also evident in the use of experience as a foundation for learning. In *Experience and Education*, Dewey identifies experience as a crucial element in the educational process. Experiences that resonate with the learners' own lives allow knowledge to be understood in a more meaningful way (Dar, 2021; Dewey, 2023). Instructional practices at SDN Kedunggalar 1 Ngawi exemplify this principle by incorporating students' experiences such as those related to their residential environments, community activities, family traditions, and social relationships into language-learning tasks. Consequently, the learning material becomes more easily linked to the realities with which the students are already familiar. Dewey's perspective underscores that meaningful learning is not merely about the transmission of information; it must also provide space for students to connect knowledge with real-life experiences. In this context, the integration of local wisdom represents a form of contextual learning that bridges academic knowledge with the students' sociocultural lives.

This perspective on contextual learning also aligns with Ni'mah's (2023) explanation of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL). This approach emphasizes the connection between academic content and the personal, social, and cultural contexts of daily life. Findings at SDN Kedunggalar 1 Ngawi demonstrate the application of this principle by using cultural themes as a basis for developing language proficiency. Reading, writing, listening, and speaking activities are not treated as isolated skills; rather, they are cultivated through objects and experiences closely connected to the students' own lives. This reinforces the perspective that Indonesian language instruction can serve as a space for developing academic competence while simultaneously strengthening the students' connection to their cultural environment.

From the perspective of cultural literacy, these research findings can be interpreted through Hirsch's (1987) concept regarding the importance of shared cultural knowledge for understanding social life. Knowledge of a society's traditions, language, stories, and customs provides individuals with a foundation for grasping the symbols and meanings that emerge within their environment. This view aligns with the efforts of teachers to introduce elements of local culture through texts and language-based activities. Aeni (2023) defines cultural literacy as an individual's capacity to explore information concerning a specific culture (Aeni, 2023). Similarly, Widiastuti et al. (2023) identify cultural literacy as a vital skill that should be nurtured from an early age through the understanding and appreciation of as well

as engagement with diverse cultures. In the context of this study, the introduction of local wisdom through Indonesian language instruction allows students to acquire cultural knowledge while simultaneously developing their literacy skills (Nawir et al., 2025). This understanding becomes more meaningful when students go beyond merely knowing the names or forms of traditions; they become capable of articulating that information and grasping the underlying values embedded within those traditions.

James A. Banks' ideas on multicultural education offer an additional lens for understanding this integration process. Banks (2019) explains that incorporating cultural content into instruction is a key dimension of multicultural education, a concept he terms "content integration" (Banks, 2021; Purwasari et al., 2023; Vavrus, 2023). The use of stories, traditions, and community experiences as instructional material reflects an effort to bring culture into the academic sphere. The dimension of the knowledge construction process is also relevant, as students are guided to understand that stories and social practices embody specific cultural values and perspectives. Activities such as sharing experiences and engaging in group discussions provide opportunities for students to listen to diverse viewpoints. Such practices have the potential to foster an attitude of respect for diversity, without rendering local culture closed off to further development of the community. This idea aligns with Sipuan et al. (2022), who emphasize the importance of multicultural education in fostering an inclusive attitude, respect for differences, and the character development of learners (Sipuan et al., 2022).

The alignment of these research findings with previous studies is evident in the work of Hatima et al. (2025) regarding the integration of Sundanese local wisdom into Indonesian language and literature instruction (Hatima, 2025). Their research demonstrates that utilizing literary materials rooted in local culture can enhance learning interest, strengthen character, instill moral values, and foster an awareness of cultural identity. The commonality lies in the use of local culture as a context for Indonesian language learning. Hatima's (2025) study on integrating the cultural heritage of the Baduy people into language and literature instruction in primary schools further suggests that contextual and multicultural approaches can support language proficiency, cultural awareness, appreciation for diversity, and character development (Hatima et al., 2025). These results reinforce the argument that language instruction has the potential to serve as a means for introducing and interpreting culture.

Another point of alignment is found in the study by Made (2024) on the integration of local cultural values into a literacy program at SD Negeri 1 Mayong (Made, 2024). That study highlights contributions to reading and writing skills, cultural awareness, and the formation of positive character. It also identifies the importance of enhancing teacher competence and ensuring the availability of learning resources to sustain such programs. Findings from SDN Kedunggalar 1 Ngawi reveal similar challenges, particularly a scarcity of reading materials that specifically highlight local culture. These parallels indicate that the successful integration of culture depends not only on teacher creativity but also on the availability of teaching materials, cultural documentation, and sustainable school policies. This research

contributes by detailing the pedagogical processes that connect elements of local wisdom with the four language skills within the context of Indonesian language instruction. This focus illustrates how culture is translated into learning activities that resonate with the students' own lives.

The implications of this research extend to pedagogical aspects, curriculum development, and the management of learning resources. From a pedagogical perspective, teachers need to develop Indonesian language instruction that provides greater scope for students' sociocultural experiences. The selection of stories, informational texts, objects for description, and discussion themes can be oriented toward the cultural richness of the surrounding community, while ensuring that the materials remain aligned with learning objectives. Regarding the curriculum, schools have the opportunity to develop contextual teaching materials that incorporate the folklore, traditions, languages, arts, and social values of the Ngawi community. The development of such materials should involve teachers, parents, community leaders, and individuals with expertise in local culture to ensure the accuracy and contextual relevance of the information used. At the institutional level, schools should support the documentation of local culture and enhance the capacity of teachers to design instruction rooted in local wisdom. These research findings also carry theoretical implications, suggesting that the integration of culture into Indonesian language instruction can be understood as a process of sociocultural mediation one that bridges language competence with the students' own construction of knowledge. Instruction is thus directed not only toward the ability to use language accurately but also toward the capacity to understand the social and cultural environment that shapes the students' lives. Consequently, local wisdom serves as a valuable learning resource with pedagogical significance, while simultaneously contributing to the preservation of cultural identity through primary education.

**The Contribution of Integrating Local Wisdom to Strengthening Students' Cultural Literacy**

Research conducted at SDN Kedunggalar 1 Ngawi indicates that the integration of local wisdom into Indonesian language instruction contributes positively to strengthening students' cultural literacy encompassing their knowledge, understanding, appreciation, and awareness of the local community's cultural identity. Interviews reveal that the use of folklore, traditions, local customs, and social values helps students connect learning materials to their daily life experiences. Observations show that student engagement in activities such as reading, group discussions, retelling stories, and writing about cultural experiences fosters both their ability to comprehend information and their recognition of values like *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), care, responsibility, and mutual respect. Furthermore, an analysis of worksheets, writing assignments, reading materials, and presentations demonstrates that students have developed their capacity to identify narrative elements, grasp moral lessons, describe their social environment, and articulate cultural knowledge both orally and in writing. Beyond enhancing language skills, instruction rooted

in local wisdom provides a space for students to share experiences, value differences, and cultivate tolerance. Consequently, the integration of local wisdom renders Indonesian language learning more contextual, while simultaneously playing a role in character development and deepening students' awareness of the cultural diversity within their own environment.

The research results indicate that the integration of local wisdom into Indonesian language instruction at SDN Kedunggalar 1 Ngawi contributes to strengthening students' cultural literacy. This contribution is evident in the development of cultural knowledge, an understanding of social values, an appreciation for local culture, and an awareness of cultural identity rooted in the students' daily lives. Findings from interviews, observations, and documentation reveal that students are given opportunities to engage with culture through activities such as reading, discussing, retelling, writing, and expressing opinions. The stories, traditions, social customs, and values incorporated into the lessons serve as a foundation for students to grasp the connections between language, personal experience, and the cultural life of their surrounding community.

The significance of these findings lies in the shift in the role of culture within the learning process. Culture is no longer treated merely as supplementary knowledge introduced by the teacher; rather, it becomes an integral part of a learning experience closely connected to the students' own lives. When students read stories related to their local community, they do not simply encounter sentence structures and textual content; they also gain the opportunity to recognize the customs, values, and worldviews embedded within them. Such experiences help students understand that culture is not merely a relic of the past. It is present in family life, relationships among neighbors, community activities, and the social habits they encounter every day. Consequently, Indonesian language instruction gains a broader scope: it serves to develop language proficiency while simultaneously building students' understanding of their own cultural environment.

These findings can be interpreted through the perspective of E.D. Hirsch Jr. (1987) regarding "cultural literacy." Hirsch posits that cultural knowledge is a vital component of an individual's ability to comprehend information and communicate effectively within their social environment (Hodgson & Harris, 2022). Cultural literacy should not be defined narrowly as the mere ability to identify the names of traditions or recognize specific regional art forms; rather, it encompasses a deeper understanding of the cultural knowledge and meanings that form the backdrop of a community's way of life. This perspective aligns with the findings of a study conducted at SDN Kedunggalar 1, Ngawi. Students are not only introduced to the stories and customs of the community but are also guided to grasp the moral messages and social values embedded within them. The students' ability to connect the content of what they read with their own family experiences and the environment in which they live demonstrates that cultural knowledge is beginning to serve as a foundation for understanding information. Hirsch’s ideas gain relevance in this context, as the

introduction of local culture can provide a basis for students to understand broader cultural contexts.

This understanding aligns with the perspective of Aeni (2023), who defines cultural literacy as the competence to explore information regarding a specific culture (Aeni, 2023). Widiastuti et al. (2023) frame cultural literacy as a life skill that encompasses the understanding and appreciation of as well as the ability to interact with diverse cultures (Nawir et al., 2025). Together, these perspectives indicate that cultural literacy comprises both knowledge-based and attitudinal dimensions. The findings of this study suggest that both dimensions can be cultivated through Indonesian language instruction. Activities such as reading and retelling facilitate the acquisition of cultural information, while discussions and the exchange of experiences provide students with opportunities to listen to and value the cultural knowledge of their peers. Consequently, learning extends beyond the mere mastery of information; it begins to guide students toward an open-minded attitude regarding diverse cultural experiences.

Lev S. Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivist perspective provides an explanation for how such understanding is formed. Vygotsky posited that the development of knowledge occurs through social interaction and the use of cultural tools, including language. In the learning process at SDN Kedunggalar 1 Ngawi, language serves as a medium for students to express their experiences, interpret stories, exchange opinions, and construct a shared understanding. When a student shares customs practiced within their family, other students gain insight into cultural experiences that may differ from their own. Such interactions broaden the students' horizons while introducing them to diverse perspectives. The teacher plays a role by providing guidance, prompting questions, and offering explanations whenever students encounter difficulties in grasping the content or cultural significance. This role aligns with the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) a process through which abilities are developed with the assistance of a more competent individual. Teacher support enables students to progress from merely recognizing information to developing the capacity to explain and interpret cultural values in a more focused manner (Irshad et al., 2021; Xi & Lantolf, 2021).

The ideas of John Dewey (1938), as presented in Experience and Education, further reinforce the findings of this study. Dewey emphasized that experience is a vital element in education, as knowledge becomes more meaningful when it is connected to the learners' own lives (Dar, 2021; Dewey, 2023). Incorporating experiences from family life, the local environment, and community activities into the curriculum demonstrates that the learning process does not rely solely on knowledge conveyed through textbooks. Students are given the opportunity to bring real-life experiences into the classroom and process them through language-based activities. This perspective is consistent with the "Contextual Teaching and Learning" approach described by Ni'mah (2023), which links academic material to the personal, social, and cultural contexts of the learners (Ni'mah, 2023). This connection explains why themes rooted in local culture can make activities such as reading, writing,

listening, and speaking feel more relevant to the students' daily lives. Experiences that were once purely personal acquire educational significance when they are articulated, discussed, and documented using structured language.

The contribution of integrating local wisdom can also be interpreted through the perspective of multicultural education. Banks (2019) proposes five dimensions of multicultural education: content integration, the knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and empowering school culture and social structure (Banks, 2021; Purwasari et al., 2023; Vavrus, 2023). In the context of this study, the dimension of content integration is evident in the use of local cultural materials within Indonesian language instruction. The knowledge construction process is demonstrated when students are encouraged to connect information from reading materials with their own existing experiences and knowledge. Activities such as storytelling and discussion also create space for reducing prejudice, as students learn to accept differences in customs and cultural experiences. Providing students with the opportunity to share their individual experiences reflects the importance of an educational approach that values diverse backgrounds. Banks' perspective aligns with that of Sipuan et al. (2022), who emphasize the significance of multicultural education in fostering an inclusive attitude, empathy, and an appreciation for diversity (Sipuan et al., 2022). Purwasari et al. (2023) further assert that multicultural education should be incorporated into both the curriculum and school culture (Purwasari et al., 2023). The findings of this study suggest that the introduction of local culture can serve as a gateway to fostering an attitude that respects differences, rather than limiting students' understanding to a single cultural identity.

The alignment of these research findings with previous studies is reflected in the work of Hatima et al. (2025), which demonstrates that integrating Sundanese local wisdom into Indonesian literature instruction can enhance learning interest, instill moral values, strengthen character, and foster an awareness of preserving cultural identity among elementary school students (Hatima et al., 2025). Hatima (2025) also found that integrating the cultural heritage of the Baduy people through contextual and multicultural approaches can strengthen language competence, cultural awareness, appreciation for diversity, and character development (Hatima, 2025). Similarly, research by Made (2024) indicates that the integration of local cultural values into school literacy programs supports the development of reading and writing skills, cultural awareness, and positive character traits (Made, 2024). These three studies share similarities with the findings at SDN Kedunggalar 1 Ngawi, particularly in positioning local culture as a learning resource and a means for fostering cultural awareness.

This research focuses on how cultural literacy is fostered through Indonesian language learning activities that leverage students' own social and cultural experiences. The strengthening of cultural literacy is framed not merely as an outcome of exposure to traditions, but as a process woven through the interplay of cultural knowledge, the interpretation of values, language proficiency, and peer interaction. Reading activities enable

students to acquire cultural information; discussions provide a space for the exchange of experiences; and writing and presentation tasks offer opportunities for students to organize and articulate this knowledge. Together, these activities demonstrate that the development of linguistic literacy and cultural literacy can occur in an integrated manner.

The implications of this research extend to pedagogy, the development of teaching materials, and the enhancement of school culture. Teachers should be empowered to develop learning materials rooted in the students' own socio-cultural environments. Elements such as folklore, community traditions, family customs, local expressions, and social practices can be transformed into reading materials, discussion themes, or writing assignments that align with learning objectives. Furthermore, schools should ensure the availability of learning resources that reflect the richness of local culture, so that the introduction of local wisdom does not rely solely on the individual initiative of each teacher. Students' cultural experiences can serve as complementary sources of knowledge, while still accommodating differences in their individual abilities and backgrounds.

On a broader level, this research underscores the significance of Indonesian language instruction as a space for forging a connection between literacy skills and cultural awareness. By engaging with the culture of their own environment, students have the opportunity to develop an understanding of their social identity while learning to value the cultural experiences of others. Thus, the integration of local wisdom as observed at SDN Kedunggalar 1 Ngawi goes beyond the mere introduction of local traditions; it contributes to the development of learners who are capable of understanding, communicating, and appreciating culture through the use of language. Primary education serves as a vital setting for fostering a student's affinity for local culture, without precluding an openness to broader cultural diversity.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, the integration of local wisdom into Indonesian language instruction at SDN Kedunggalar 1 Ngawi is implemented by utilizing the community's social and cultural environment as a learning resource. This integration process involves planning curriculum content relevant to the students' lives, selecting local stories and traditions, and developing activities focused on reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Experiences from the students' families and their residential environments serve as a learning context, enabling them to connect language-related content with the realities of their daily lives. Teachers play a key role in guiding the learning process, providing support, and linking language-based activities with sociocultural values.

The integration of local wisdom contributes to strengthening students' cultural literacy encompassing knowledge, understanding, appreciation, and an awareness of cultural identity. Students are given the opportunity to recognize community customs, grasp moral lessons and the value of *gotong royong* (communal cooperation), appreciate diverse cultural experiences, and communicate cultural knowledge through both spoken and written

language. These findings underscore that Indonesian language instruction is not merely oriented toward mastering language skills; it can also serve as a space for fostering cultural awareness. Sustaining this integration requires teacher creativity, the availability of teaching materials rooted in local culture, and institutional support from the school, ensuring that local wisdom remains a meaningful component of the students' learning experience.

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