

## The Students' Need of Workbooks Based on Local Wisdom in The Merdeka Curriculum

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### Abstract

This study aims to explore the need for students' workbooks based on local wisdom in the Merdeka Curriculum for junior high school students, particularly at SMPN 3 Air Besar. The study is motivated by the importance of local wisdom in shaping students' character and identity, as well as the need for appropriate teaching materials that can support the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. This study employed a survey research design to elicit information. To identify the students' needs, data was collected through questionnaires, interviews, and direct observations. The interviews were conducted with students, English teachers, and villagers to gather in-depth information about the students' needs in the materials design. The study proposes various positions for EFL teachers to perform, including visionaries, cultural mediators on a local level, intercultural educators, and role model practitioners. It offers strategies for EFL teachers to include local cultural elements into their classroom instruction, such as establishing a local culturally responsive pedagogy, cultural sensitivity and awareness, and leveraging technology and information to support teaching. Incorporating local culture into EFL teaching can benefit students by raising cultural awareness, developing cultural literacy, building intercultural competence, enhancing language learning experiences, and acquiring skills in eliciting meaning. By using a workbook that takes into account the specific requirements of the students, teachers can better address their learning needs and create a more effective and engaging learning environment. It is recommended that English language teachers utilize the workbook that is based on local wisdom, as it aligns with the Indonesian National Educational System and the current Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes the relation between teaching English and the learners' closest environment for meaningful language use. Overall, the study focuses on exploring the need for a supplementary workbook that integrates local wisdom and culture into English language teaching, aiming to enhance students' language proficiency and cross-cultural communication skills.

**Keywords:** Local Wisdom, Workbook, Merdeka Curriculum, Remote area.

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## *The Students' Need of Workbooks Based on Local Wisdom in The Merdeka Curriculum*

### **1. Introduction**

The need for local wisdom books in the Merdeka curriculum is crucial because it enhances students' understanding and appreciation of their cultural heritage, fostering a deeper connection to their local context. This integration with English language learning ensures that students develop both linguistic skills and cultural awareness, making the learning experience more meaningful and relevant.

SMPN 3 Air Besar is one of the public schools in Landak that brings English as one of the subjects from the seventh grade to the ninth grade. This school is located in a remote area in the middle of a palm forest and protected forest. The school is the farthest from the capital of Landak Regency, making it challenging to reach, especially during the rainy season. This school faces limitations in electricity and internet network access. The available books often fail to cover the students' needs due to their unfamiliarity with the local language and context. English is a local subject at this school and is taught by the English teacher.

The implementation of local wisdom books in the Merdeka curriculum is essential for rural schools like SMPN 3 Air Besar. This approach ensures that students learn English in a way that is relevant to their daily lives and cultural practices. By incorporating local wisdom, the learning experience becomes more engaging and effective.

This study focuses on developing workbooks based on local wisdom specifically for junior high school students in rural areas. Unlike previous studies, this research aims to create materials that are tailored to the needs of students in remote areas, such as SMPN 3 Air Besar. The integration of local wisdom into English language teaching is a unique aspect of this study, which could be further explored to enhance the effectiveness of the Merdeka Curriculum.

The practical implementation of this approach in SMPN 3 Air Besar involves creating a workbook that includes local cultural elements. This workbook is designed to be relevant to the students' daily lives and to enhance their linguistic skills while fostering cultural awareness. The study also highlights the importance of contextual learning, where teachers prepare materials that are close to the local wisdom of students, making the learning process more meaningful and effective.

Overall, the study aims to address the lack of appropriate materials for rural schools by developing a workbook that integrates local wisdom and culture into English language teaching. This approach has the potential to improve the quality of education in remote areas by making

it more relevant to students' lives and cultural practices.

### **Need Analysis**

A needs analysis is an important step in creating a curriculum or course. It determines the needs and learning expectations of the learners.

Before conducting a project or generating a product, including developing language learning material, needs analysis is a vital method to acquire thorough information about needs (Ikhsanudin, 2020). To identify which language points pupils must learn, a need analysis is undertaken.

Need analysis helps instructors identify students' future goals and responsibilities, as well as alter the curriculum to match the learners' specific requirements, what the students understand, and what they need to learn to meet these needs (Lapele, 2019).

In her study on the need analysis for developing ESP Speaking materials (Lapele, 2019), referenced Borg, suggesting that teachers conduct a needs analysis to identify and address students' needs that align with the learning objectives during material development. This approach aligns with Tomlinson's (2011) concept of conducting a comprehensive analysis of students' needs. For material development, Lapele, (2019) mentioned that teachers employed four types of needs analysis: Target Situation Analysis, Wants, Means, Subjective Needs Analysis, Present Situation Analysis, and Lack Analysis. As a result, students' needs are vital in supporting the developing material.

### **Local wisdom Inserted into ELT in Merdeka Curriculum**

Local wisdom is part of a culture that grows and develops to establish noble traditional values in certain communities and regions that serve as guidance for environmental conduct. These local cultural values differ by region and have distinct advantages that are regarded as socio-cultural legacy. As a result, in the present independent learning curriculum, local wisdom is an important component of learning for everyone. Using local context helps students better understand the topic.

The Merdeka curriculum was specifically developed as a flexible framework to address the learning recovery needs of students. It aims to strike a balance between essential academic content and the holistic development of students' character and competence. The curriculum incorporates several key features to support this objective. First, project-based learning is emphasized to foster the development of soft skills and character traits, aligning with the Pancasila student profile. By engaging in projects, students have the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills in real-world contexts, promoting critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving abilities. Second, the curriculum focuses on essential materials, allowing for

in-depth learning of fundamental competencies such as literacy and numeracy. This ensures that students have a solid foundation in core subjects and essential skills necessary for their academic and personal growth. Last, the Merdeka curriculum provides flexibility for teachers to implement differentiated learning approaches based on students' abilities and adapt to local circumstances. This allows educators to tailor their teaching methods and strategies to meet the diverse learning needs of students effectively. The Merdeka curriculum is designed to provide a supportive framework that enables schools and teachers to facilitate learning recovery while promoting character development, essential competencies, and flexibility in the educational process.

The analysis of the English Learning Outcome or *Capaian Pembelajaran* (CP) in the Merdeka Curriculum revealed the expected proficiency level of students in English by the end of seventh grade (Phase D). At this stage, students are expected to demonstrate competence in spoken and written English, as well as the ability to interpret and create visual materials, with consideration for the situation, purpose, and intended audience or reader. In terms of language skills, students are exposed to various types of texts, including narration, description, procedure, recount, report, and authentic texts. These texts serve as the primary references for English language study. Students are encouraged to use English to express their wishes, feelings, and thoughts, and engage in discussions on topics relevant to their daily lives or current situations. Additionally, students develop their reading skills by engaging with written texts to acquire knowledge and information. They are expected to employ implicit inference skills to comprehend and interpret the information presented in the texts. Furthermore, students are encouraged to create texts that incorporate a wider range of writing styles and visuals. They develop an understanding of the goals and target audience when producing written materials, demonstrating their ability to effectively communicate their ideas and messages. Overall, the analysis of the CP in the Merdeka Curriculum outlines the desired English language proficiency and communication skills that students are expected to achieve by the end of tenth grade. It highlights the importance of using various text types, developing reading comprehension skills, and enhancing writing and visual communication abilities in English language learning.

Integrating local knowledge into the civics curriculum in the period of the autonomous curriculum, this can be accomplished by adding local knowledge values into the Civics curriculum and course offerings. with a "Theme" or "Topic" that is tailored to the current local knowledge values. Meanwhile, the hidden curriculum of local wisdom can be included into regulations, norms, and learning rules. For example, during the learning process, students must behave in accordance with current local wisdom principles. As a result, including local wisdom

values into civics education makes learning more meaningful because the information studied is relevant to the context of people's lives, and students discover local values that are important to life through contact with their surroundings.

In EFL classes, a new paradigm for comprehending English language position has been established. The study of local culture and the English language work in harmony. To increase students' proficiency in cross-cultural communication, language instruction should be integrated with local culture study (Brdarić, 2016). Anderson (2016) said the importance of including traditions and practices based on indigenous ways of knowing has led to an intergenerational curriculum model where the lessons and themes pertaining to the language and culture are vetted by community elders. He said again (P.105) parental family, social, and cultural capital can have a huge impact on children' early literacy development and school readiness. Thus, English teachers should be aware of the need to promote both local cultures and English-speaking nations. Additionally, culture serves as background knowledge for all of the socio-cultural situations that students must use to acquire the target language (Sitoresmi, 2019). Teaching English without local cultural content may threaten a nation's identity. As evidenced by (Jia, 2015) teaching English without national content emerges "Chinese culture aphasia". By incorporating local culture into EFL learning, students are likely to become more engaged and motivated in their language studies. It not only helps them develop linguistic competence but also nurtures their cultural identity and promotes intercultural competence, enabling them to effectively communicate and interact with people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Local content can be inserted through various methods. Some of these methods are using EFL textbook with local content, which is commonly standardized by education legislation system.

Adding local wisdom is in line with the Indonesian National Educational System. National education functions to develop the ability and to build nation character as well as dignified nation civilization. It means that the nation character building becomes one of the concerns in the Indonesian national educational system. It is also in line with the current Merdeka Curriculum which mentions that there must be the relation between teaching English and the learners' closest environment so that the learners can use English in a meaningful way.

#### **Work Book in ELT integrated with local wisdom**

Teachers can employ a range of media and pedagogical techniques when teaching. A textbook is the primary resource that can be used in the classroom by both teachers and students. According to research by (Jusuf, 2018), a textbook is a crucial source of educational content in the classroom and improves students' awareness of cultural details and international events.

Additionally (Ayu & Indrawati, 2019), textbooks not only serve as a reference for teachers while presenting the content, but they also provide the necessary input through a variety of explanations and activities. Therefore, a textbook can be used in the classroom as a learning tool or to promote different cultural norms and values, not just in language courses (Ayu & Indrawati, 2019). It is strengthened by Tomlinson, (2023) Text-Driven Approaches are guided by a written or spoken text that has the potential to be affectively and cognitively stimulating rather than by a teaching point, topic, or theme. The exercises and any language-learning points come from the text. As a result, there is a greater chance that learners will require and be motivated to study, enhance their exposure to actual language use, and reuse the text in the activities. In accordance with the significance of textbooks in the learning process, teachers should take into account cultural difficulties when it comes to teaching a target language, such as learning English, so that they can choose the right book that reflects the cultural values woven throughout the language.

As a crucial source of educational content in the classroom, textbooks come in various types. One type of textbooks is workbook or called LKS (*Lembar Kerja Siswa*). In schools today, student workbooks are used for practically every topic, including English classes. It is anticipated that the adoption of student workbooks will enhance both the learning process and academic performance of students. The usage of student workbooks (LKS) provides various benefits for teaching and learning in the classroom, such as making learning easier than in textbooks and having a large number of practice questions that are relevant to the information being taught. Student workbooks can also increase learning achievement and make students more engaged and successful learners. As stated by Susantini et al., (2016), student workbooks may stimulate the development of creative thinking abilities.

According to previous studies, using a student workbook can aid students in understanding the concepts being taught (Anwar, 2017). Additionally, this media should be viewed as a way to transmit and channel messages from sources (teachers, books, etc.) to recipients (students) rather than only as a tool for teachers to teach. The student workbook functions as a messenger that can be utilized by both the students and the teacher to aid in the learning process. This fact and the case of course are contradictory with the previous statements and assumption stated above though it is also supported by several previous studies that have proved the use of student workbook give positive impacts on students' learning.

## 2. Method

The survey research design was used in this study to investigate the students' needs for workbooks based on local wisdom in Merdeka Kurikulum. The data was taken at SMPN 3 Air Besar (West Kalimantan, Indonesia). This study included 34 students (19 female and 15 male, ages 11 to 15). They were chosen using convenience and selective sampling. The data gathering instrument was a questionnaire. For their convenience, the participants completed the questionnaire anonymously. The participants were assisted and guided by the researcher. The questionnaire data was then descriptively examined by the researcher

## 3. Results and Discussion

The questionnaire's reliability has been tested and measured by using Cronbach Alpha. The score obtained was 0.70 means it is a reliable instrument. The questionnaires consist of 50 statement items.

$$\alpha = \left( \frac{k}{k-1} \right) \left( \frac{s_r^2 - \sum s_i^2}{s_x^2} \right)$$

**Table 1.** Student Questionnaire Reliability

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items
.70	50

Based on the questionnaire table above, it is shown that the 50 number statement items of questionnaire the score was 0.70, based on the reliability score of 0.70, the questionnaire shows acceptable internal consistency and can be considered reliable for measuring or collecting the data.

**Table 2.** Blueprint Of Students Questionnaire

No	Aspect		Number of Questions	Questions
1	Means	Local materials used in work book	6	1-6
		The most useful local materials	6	7-12
		The most useful aspect	8	13-20
2	Target-Situation	The main purpose of using local	11	21-31
	Analysis	wisdom materials in workbook		
3	Present Situation	Prior learning experience in using	2	32-33
	Analysis	workbook		
4	Wants	Learner's learning expectation when	6	34-39
		using workbook		
5	Lack Analysis	Learner's difficulty	6	40-45
		Learner's preference	5	46-50

The second table above shows the blueprint of a 50-item student questionnaire. The blueprint is divided into three parts. Firstly, it includes five components of need analysis: means, target scenario, existing situation, expectations, and deficiency analysis. Second, it defines the quantity of questionnaires assigned to each aspect. Finally, it lists the question numbers. This design serves as a core structure for the questionnaire, specifying the areas of focus and the distribution of questions throughout the many parts of the need analysis. It provides a structured strategy to ensure extensive covering of the key topics within the questionnaire, allowing for a detailed analysis of the students' opinions and needs.

**Table 3.** Categories of Students Needs of Workbook with Local Wisdom Materials

No	Score of Needs Aspects	Interpretation
1	0-10	Not Needed
2	11-20	Rather Needed
3	21-30	Moderately Needed
4	31-40	Needed
5	41-50	Strongly Needed

Based on the table, the students' needs for the workbook can be categorized into five levels, each corresponding to a specific score range. The categories and their respective score ranges are as follows: Not needed (0-10): Students who score between 0 and 10 are considered not to need the workbook. Rather needed (11-20): Students who score between 11 and 20 are considered to need the workbook to some extent. Moderately needed (21-30): Students who score between 21 and 30 are considered to need the workbook moderately. Workbook needed (31-40): Students who score between 31 and 40 are considered to need the workbook and may benefit significantly from it. Strongly needed (above 40): Students who score above 40 are considered to need the workbook strongly.

These categories provide a reasonable framework for understanding the varying levels of need among students, allowing for a more nuanced analysis of their requirements and preferences.

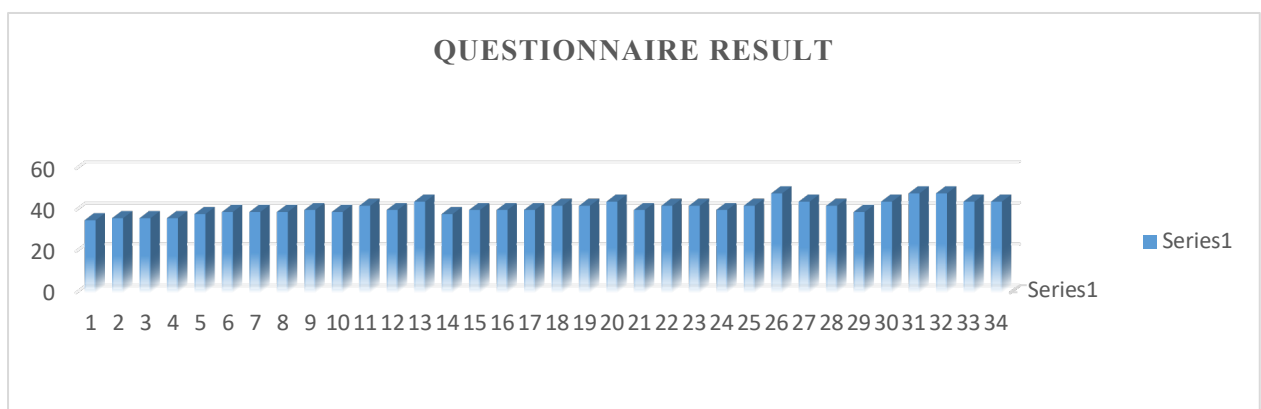
**Table 4.** Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics of Respondents		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	19	55,88
	Male	15	44,12
	Sum	34	100
Age	11 years	2	5,88
	12 years	12	35,29
	13 years	8	23,53



14 years	9	26,47
15 years	13	38,24
Sum	34	100

The instruments used in the study were distributed to 34 first-grade junior high school students, comprising 19 females (55.88%) and 15 males (44.12%). The students' ages ranged from 11 to 15 years, with 2 students at age 11, 12 students at age 12, 8 students at age 13, 9 students at age 14, and 13 students at age 15. The distribution of the questionnaire and the demographic information of the students provide a comprehensive understanding of the study's participant characteristics, allowing for a more nuanced analysis of the research findings.



**Figure 1.** Questionnaire Result

Based on the participants' responses, it is evident that the scores are distributed across various levels. One person (2.9%) obtained the lowest score of 35, while three students (8.8%) scored 36. Additionally, two students (5.8%) achieved a score of 38, and five students (14.7%) received a score of 39. Furthermore, seven students (20.5%) scored 40, and an equal number obtained a score of 42. Moreover, six students (17.6%) achieved a score of 44, and only three students (8.8%) attained the highest score of 48. Based on this result the item that students most frequently need is item 45, about the students' need for compatible task of EFL learning materials. Item number 39 is where the students can use workbooks. It scores high in frequency in the Lack aspect. Item 45 (lack aspect) scores 16 is about the unavailable of workbook. Item 48 (lack aspect) score 16 is the student's need for compelling materials. By following this structured approach, the English workbook based on local wisdom can provide a valuable resource for students at SMPN 3 Air Besar, promoting both English language proficiency and a deeper appreciation for their cultural heritage.

Teaching students in remote area is challenging and uneasy. The objective of the teachers is a major factor in how the education turns out. Whether or not they desire to grow the pupils and the institution. The absence of instructional materials and the poor quality of the

already available material have been noted as the study's main issues. As a result, we can infer from the context that a teacher has to have quality and useful teaching materials if he or she wants to improve pupils' English proficiency. The English workbook is one solution for the difficulties the teacher faces when educating the students.

Based on the study's findings, it can be said that using student workbooks (LKS) based on local wisdom has a positive impact on students' learning. The idea that a student workbook might turn the emphasis from active to passive learning is not entirely accurate. Since using the workbook will encourage independent learning, teachers can still use it to help students engage in active learning. Additionally, they can use the workbook (LKS) based on local wisdom as an additional resource whose information can be addressed in class. Students feel that using the workbook makes it simpler to learn the subject matter. Additionally, the workbook's overview and exercises help the students learn the content efficiently and clearly. Their success in particular subjects or content consequently improves.

In addition, the usage of student workbooks (LKS) based on local wisdom in the educational process benefits teachers. This aids the teacher in improving the pupils' understanding of the previously taught content. After that, students can read the summary and complete the tasks in the student workbook (LKS). Given that the teacher doesn't have to explain things over and over again and waste time, this is incredibly useful and efficient for the learning process.

This study shows that the use of student workbooks continues to have an impact on the effectiveness of students' learning. Even though student workbooks (LKS) are no longer used at every school level, with only a few schools still using them, it is hoped that there will be a better student workbook (LKS) replacement in a modern way, such as in the form of a digital platform or application, because internet-based material is now thought to be a more effective teaching resource than coursebooks (Sari, 2019). Finally, the government, schools, and communities that continue to support and generate innovations in the field of education are expected to contribute to the improvement of education quality in Indonesia

#### **4. Conclusion**

This study looks at how several EFL teachers try to incorporate local cultural learning into their teaching approaches. The study demonstrates how the shifting role of the English language from foreign to international language affects the roles of EFL teachers. EFL teachers are increasingly accountable not only for imparting language information, but also for bringing and incorporating local cultural elements into their EFL instruction. The study proposes many

positions for EFL teachers to perform in order to meet their new duties. These include visionaries, cultural mediators on a local level, intercultural educators, and role models-practitioners. The study offers various strategies that EFL teachers might take to include local cultural elements into their classroom instruction: establishing a local culturally responsive pedagogy, vision, cultural sensitivity and awareness, and establishing an English-non-English collaborative discipline understanding learners' social-cultural world and leveraging roles of technology and information to support teaching

In order to do better research in the future, the writer would like to make the following ideas. To educators. Workbook Material's design can be customized dependent on the level of students. As the one who is most familiar with his students' circumstances, the teacher is expected to be sensitive in selecting content that is relevant to their needs. Because the scope of this study was limited to one school and was conducted by a single researcher. As a result, this content is only suitable for students at SMP Negeri 3 Air Besar. This is due to the fact that the design is truly based on the students' identification of needs at SMP Negeri 3 Air Besar. To increase English skills, teachers must simplify the material and provide additional practices that are appropriate to the learners' condition and level, so that students see the value of the product. To the researchers. Future study can be conducted in schools with various features. Furthermore, the product can be used in a large class.

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