

## Culture-Based English Teaching Improves Understanding of Language Context

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**Abstract-** English language skills have now become one of the most important basic competencies in the current era of globalization. English not only functions as a means of international communication, but also as a medium to access information and knowledge globally. In addition, through the main discussion carried out in this study, it aims to explore how culture-based English teaching can improve understanding of language context among students. Through this study, there is also another goal, namely to identify effective strategies that can be applied by teachers in integrating cultural elements in language learning. And in addition, the Implementation Method section used in this study is to use a mixed approach, namely qualitative and quantitative. So based on this, this study shows the results that cultural integration in English teaching improves students' understanding of language variations in formal and informal situations. Students become more sensitive to cultural differences, are able to adjust their communication styles, and avoid misunderstandings in cross-cultural communication. In addition, this approach also helps improve students' speaking, listening, and writing skills, making them more confident and competent in using English in everyday life and professional environments. In addition, culture-based teaching encourages active participation of students in teaching and learning activities. They are more involved in discussions, simulations, and other interactive activities that enrich their learning experience. The application of technology, such as videos, multimedia materials, and interactions with native speakers, also play an important role in supporting this approach, providing students with direct exposure to authentic cultural contexts.

**Keywords:** Cultural Integration in English Language Teaching, The Concept of Multicultural Education, Contextual Approach in Learning.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

English language skills have now become one of the most important basic competencies in the current era of globalization. English not only functions as a means of international communication, but also as a medium to access information and knowledge globally. However, in the process of learning English, there is a major challenge that is often faced by students, namely how to understand the context of the language. Language is not just a collection of words and grammar, it reflects the culture, values and worldview of the speakers of the language. Therefore, in order to master English thoroughly, understanding the cultural context inherent in the language is very important. In many educational institutions, the approach to teaching English still tends to focus on grammatical aspects and technical skills such as reading, writing, listening and speaking. Through this approach, although very important, it is often not enough to build a deep understanding of the context of different language uses. For example, the use of certain expressions in English often has a meaning that depends on the cultural background of the speaker. Lack of understanding of this cultural aspect can lead to misunderstandings or even communication failures [1].

Culture-based language teaching offers a solution to overcome these challenges. Through this approach, language learning will be combined with an introduction to the culture of English speakers. Thus, students not only learn the structure of the language, but also understand the values, traditions and customs that influence how language is used. For example, understanding the difference between formal and informal language in English often requires an introduction to social norms and certain situations in the culture of English-speaking countries. In addition, through this culture-based approach, it is also in line with contextual learning theory which emphasizes the importance of linking learning materials to real experiences. Culture-based learning helps students to understand that language is a reflection of culture and also that effective language acquisition requires a deep understanding of the cultural context in which the language is used. In addition,

through this approach, learning motivation can be increased because students feel more relevant to the material being taught [2].

Through previous research conducted by Jeperson Hutahaean, with the title of the previous research, namely "Development of Local Wisdom-Based English Learning Modules for MTsN 1 Sanana Students". Where the study aims to integrate local wisdom in the English learning process to improve students' understanding of the material and build a sense of love for regional culture. In addition, this study uses the Research and Development (R&D) method with the ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation) development model. Where the initial stage of this study began by analyzing the needs of students and teachers through interviews and observations. The results of the analysis showed that students had difficulty understanding the material due to the lack of relevance between the material taught and the conditions in their daily lives. Therefore, the learning materials developed include materials such as folklore, traditional songs and local proverbs that are relevant to local culture. The resulting module will then be tested on grade VII students at a junior high school in South Sulawesi. The results of the evaluation showed that students were more enthusiastic about learning English because the material used was more contextual and interesting. In addition, there was a significant increase in students' understanding of vocabulary and grammar. Through this study, it was also concluded that local wisdom-based learning media can be an innovative alternative to improve the quality of English learning. This study is a very important reference in the development of similar modules, especially for secondary education levels with a strong cultural background [3].

Previous studies have shown that cultural integration in English language learning can provide various benefits. One of them is improving students' understanding of contextual meaning in communication. For example, studies conducted by several linguists have shown that students who study culture together with language tend to be better able to understand idioms, humor and cultural expressions in English. This suggests that cultural understanding provides a framework that can help students understand more complex messages in cross-cultural communication. In Indonesia, culture-based English teaching has not been widely implemented. Most of the curriculum is still oriented towards achieving standardized test targets, such as reading and grammar skills. However, with the increasing need for cross-cultural communication in the modern era like today, it is important for educational institutions in Indonesia to be able to start integrating this approach in English language learning. With Indonesia's rich cultural background, students also have the opportunity to introduce their local culture to the world through English, which can ultimately encourage more inclusive cross-cultural dialogue. [4].

Although culture-based teaching offers many benefits, its implementation stage is not free from the main problems. One of the main problems is the limited resources, such as relevant learning materials and the availability of training for teachers. In addition, students' perceptions of the importance of cultural elements in language learning are often still low, so that it requires a creative and innovative approach from teachers to be able to increase students' interest. The purpose of this study is to explore how culture-based English teaching can improve students' understanding of language context. Through this study, there is also another goal, namely to be able to identify effective strategies that can be applied by teachers in integrating cultural elements in language learning. With this approach, it is hoped that students will not only be able to use English technically, but also contextually, so that they become more confident and sensitive communicators to cultural differences. In addition, theoretically, the culture-based language teaching approach can be explained through the theory of constructivism, where learning is considered a process of building knowledge based on experience. In this context, culture plays a role as one of the main factors that influences how individuals understand and use language. Therefore, by integrating cultural elements, the learning process can become more relevant and meaningful for students [3].

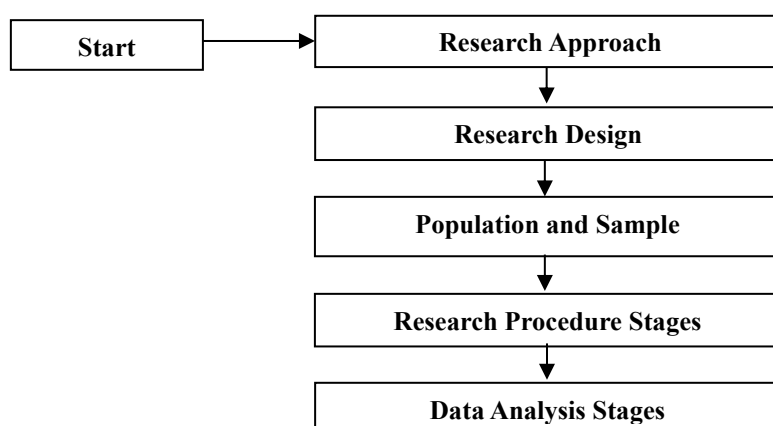
In practice, culture-based teaching can involve various strategies, such as the use of authentic teaching materials, discussions about cultural traditions and values, and interactive activities involving simulations or role-playing. Through the use of these strategies, not only does learning become more interesting, but it also helps students to understand how language is used in real situations. In addition, technology can also be utilized to support culture-based teaching, such as by using videos, films or online learning platforms that offer cultural content. The impact of this

approach can be felt in various aspects, including increasing learning motivation, vocabulary mastery and students' ability to communicate effectively in various situations. Through this research, it will also evaluate how a culture-based approach can support the development of critical and creative thinking skills of students, which are very important skills in an era like today [5].

Ultimately, culture-based English teaching is expected to be a foundation for improving students' cross-cultural competence. In today's increasingly connected world, the ability to understand and appreciate other cultural perspectives is a very valuable skill [6].

## 2. METHODS

The research method in this study will focus on the application of English language teaching that not only emphasizes linguistic aspects, but also cultural aspects to be able to improve students' understanding of the context of language use. Through this method, language learning activities will be integrated with cultural elements that are relevant to English, so that students can more easily understand how language is used in various social and cultural contexts. In addition, the research method used is a quantitative method with an experimental approach, because it wants to directly test the relationship between culture-based teaching and a better understanding of language context [11]. And here are the details of the implementation method used in this study :



**Figure 1.** Research Implementation Framework Image

### 2.1 Research Approach

The approach used in this study is a quantitative approach, which aims to obtain data in the form of numbers to be analyzed objectively. This approach is considered appropriate because the study focuses on measuring how much influence culture-based teaching has on students' understanding of language context. Quantitative data provides measurable results and can be tested for validity through statistical analysis [11].

### 2.2 Research Design

The research design used an experiment with a control group and an experimental group. The experimental group received culture-based teaching, while the control group was taught using conventional methods. This design was chosen to directly compare the effect of teaching methods on understanding language context. The results of these two groups will be the basis for identifying the effectiveness of culture-based teaching [12].

### 2.3 Population and Sample

The study population consisted of high school students studying English in several schools. The sample was selected randomly to avoid bias and ensure representative results. Two classes with

equal numbers of students were used as control and experimental groups. This sampling ensures that both groups have the same basic characteristics so that the comparison of results is valid [13].

## 2.4 Research Procedure Stages

The research was conducted through four main stages. First, the preparation stage involved the preparation of culture-based teaching materials and data collection tools such as tests and interviews. Second, the intervention stage where the experimental group received culture-based teaching for four weeks, while the control group was taught using conventional methods. Third, the data collection stage, where both groups were given tests to measure their understanding of the language context. Finally, the data analysis stage was conducted to process the results of the tests and interviews in order to obtain objective conclusions [11].

## 2.5 Data Analysis Stages

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive and inferential statistical approaches. Quantitative data from the test were analyzed using mean scores and t-tests to determine significant differences between the control and experimental groups. Qualitative data from interviews were analyzed thematically to identify students' views on culture-based teaching. This combination of analytical techniques provides a comprehensive understanding of the impact of culture-based teaching on understanding language context [12].

## 3. RESULTS

In this section, we will discuss the results obtained from the implementation of culture-based English language teaching and also the results of an in-depth analysis of its influence on students' understanding of the language context. Through this culture-based English language teaching, it not only focuses on aspects of grammar and vocabulary, but also emphasizes the understanding of the social, cultural context and nuances of communication in the use of English. The results of this study indicate that by integrating cultural elements in learning, students can develop a deeper understanding of how language is used in various social and cultural situations. Through this discussion, we will also explore further how this approach affects students' communication skills, changes in learning behavior, and also the challenges and opportunities that arise during the learning process. In addition, this section will also discuss the important role of teachers in facilitating culture-based teaching and how technology can be utilized to enrich the understanding of the cultural context in using language [14]. And here is a detailed description and explanation through the table below :

**Table 1.** Table of Culture-Based English Language Teaching Programs Improving Understanding of Language Context

Stages	Activities	Learning objectives	Teaching Materials Used	Evaluation Method
Program Preparation	Develop a learning plan that integrates cultural elements into each teaching material.	Ensuring that teaching materials contain cultural elements that are relevant to the English context.	English textbooks, articles on international and local cultures.	Curriculum analysis and collection of feedback from teachers and students.
Introduction to Global Culture	Group discussion about different world cultures and how they influence language.	Enhance students' understanding of the relationship between language and culture in a global context.	Videos about cultural differences in communication, global culture articles.	Assessment of participation in discussions and understanding through quizzes.

Introduction to Local Culture	Presenting the traditions, customs, and regional languages that exist in Indonesia, and how these influence the use of English.	Introducing students to the diversity of Indonesian culture and its relevance to English.	Indonesian folk tales, traditional songs and cultural videos.	Assessment of understanding through group discussions and presentations.
Language Practices in Cultural Context	Conversation simulations use idioms and expressions common in native English-speaking countries.	Helping students understand idioms, expressions, and culturally related meanings in English.	Movies, everyday dialogues, literary books from native English speakers.	Practical exams or speaking assignments use the idioms and expressions learned.
Use of Technology	Using online apps or platforms to access cultural materials, such as podcasts, videos, and articles.	Introducing technology as a tool in understanding language and culture.	Language learning app, cultural video platform, podcast.	Evaluation of student interactions with digital materials and group discussions.
Reflection and Discussion	Class discussion about cultural experiences that have been learned and how they affect language understanding.	Improve students' ability to reflect on the language and culture they have learned.	Cultural sources that have been studied, students' personal notes.	Assessment through reflective essays and class discussions.
Final Assessment	A final exam that combines language and cultural understanding in an English context.	Measuring students' ability to apply English in an appropriate cultural context.	Culture-based exam questions, case studies of cultural interactions.	Comprehensive assessment through written and oral examinations.

Sumber : [15]

Through the explanation of the structured program table above, it is hoped that students can improve their understanding of the English context and become more effective communicators and be able to appreciate cultural diversity throughout the world [15].

### 3.1 Results Obtained From Culture-Based English Teaching Programs Increase Understanding of Language Context

This section will present the main findings of the research that has been conducted regarding culture-based English language teaching programs that improve understanding of language context [15]. And the following is a more detailed explanation of the results found in this research :

#### 1. The Effectiveness of Culture-Based Learning in Improving Communication Skills

Integrating cultural elements into English language learning has been shown to improve students' communication skills. By understanding the cultural context underlying language use, students are better able to express their ideas and feelings in a more appropriate and sensitive manner to their audience. Culture-based learning provides students with the opportunity to hone their speaking and listening skills by emphasizing more contextual and

realistic communication. Students feel more confident in speaking, because they not only understand the rules of grammar, but also know how to convey their message in various social situations.

## **2. Changes in Student Behavior and Response to Language Teaching**

The implementation of culture-based teaching brought positive changes in students' behavior. They showed higher levels of participation in class activities, such as discussions, presentations, and cross-cultural communication simulations. Students' responses to this approach were also more positive because they felt more connected to the material being taught. Learning English based on cultural elements makes students more interested and motivated, because they feel they are gaining richer and more relevant knowledge for their daily lives. This approach creates a more dynamic and interactive learning environment.

## **3. Improving Students' Ability to Use Language in Appropriate Contexts**

One of the main benefits of culture-based teaching is the ability of students to choose the right words and language styles in the appropriate context. By understanding the role of culture in language, students become more sensitive to different social situations and can avoid misunderstandings that often arise in cross-cultural communication. They are better able to judge when to use formal or informal language, and when to use appropriate terms for a particular audience. This shows a significant improvement in students' communicative skills that combine language and cultural context.

## **4. Challenges Faced in Implementing Culture-Based English Language Teaching**

Despite the many benefits found, the implementation of culture-based teaching also faces several challenges. One of the main challenges is the difficulty of students in understanding certain cultures that are very different from their own. This sometimes causes confusion or misunderstanding in using language in the right context. In addition, not all students have the same learning speed or style, so this approach may take longer to be accepted and understood by all students equally. Therefore, a flexible and adaptive approach is needed so that culture-based teaching can be well received by all students.

## **5. The Role of Teachers in Enhancing Understanding of Cultural Context in Language**

Teachers play a very important role in facilitating students' understanding of the cultural context of language. Teachers are not only responsible for teaching grammar, but must also be able to explain how language is used in various social and cultural contexts. Teachers must be able to provide real examples of how English is used in everyday life, both in formal and informal contexts. In addition, teachers also need to introduce relevant materials and relate language learning to concrete cultural experiences, which will make the material easier for students to understand.

## **6. The Influence of Culture-Based Learning on Writing and Speaking Skills**

Culture-based learning not only enriches speaking skills, but also improves students' writing skills. By better understanding the cultural context, students can write essays, reports, or articles with their audience and communication goals in mind. They are also better able to speak in a way that is sensitive to the audience's culture and understand when and how to use appropriate language in a given situation. This shows that culture-based teaching has a positive impact on both language skills, making students more skilled in communicating in English in various contexts.

## **7. Using Technology to Enhance Understanding of Cultural Context**

The use of technology in culture-based teaching offers many benefits, especially in accessing a wider variety of materials and introducing students to a wider range of cultural situations. The use of videos, audio recordings, or other multimedia materials can help students understand cultural contexts in a more vivid and real way. Technology also allows students to interact with native English speakers, giving them the opportunity to hear and communicate



directly with people from different cultural backgrounds. This enriches their learning experience and helps them build a deeper understanding of the relationship between language and culture.

## 8. The Relationship Between Cultural Understanding and Adaptability in International Communication

Students who have undergone culture-based instruction are not only more proficient in English, but also more adaptable in international communication. They understand that communicating with people from different cultures requires more than just language skills; it requires a deep understanding of the social and cultural contexts that underlie the communication. Culture-based learning prepares students for the challenges of global communication and provides them with the skills necessary to establish effective relationships in an international world.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Culture-based English language teaching has been proven to be an effective approach in improving students' understanding of the language context. This approach not only focuses on linguistic aspects such as grammar and vocabulary, but also integrates social and cultural elements that influence how language is used in various situations. By linking language learning to the cultural context, students not only learn to communicate technically, but also understand the meaning, values and norms that underlie the use of the language. The results of this study indicate that cultural integration in English language teaching improves students' understanding of language variations in formal and informal situations. Students become more sensitive to cultural differences, are able to adjust their communication styles, and avoid misunderstandings in cross-cultural communication. In addition, this approach also helps improve students' speaking, listening, and writing skills, making them more confident and competent in using English in everyday life and professional environments. In addition, culture-based teaching encourages students' active participation in teaching and learning activities. They are more involved in discussions, simulations, and other interactive activities that enrich their learning experience. The application of technology, such as videos, multimedia materials, and interactions with native speakers, also play an important role in supporting this approach, giving students direct exposure to authentic cultural contexts. However, the implementation of culture-based teaching is not without challenges. Some students may have difficulty understanding a culture that is very different from their own. Therefore, flexibility in teaching methods and teacher training are needed to ensure that this approach can be implemented effectively. Teachers also play an important role in creating relevant learning materials and providing adequate guidance to students. Overall, culture-based English teaching makes a significant contribution to shaping a more holistic and contextual understanding of the language. This approach not only improves students' language skills but also prepares them to become more adaptive, culturally sensitive and competent individuals in global communication.

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