p-ISSN 2301-7554, e-ISSN 2541-3643
Volume 13, Issue 3, October 2025

ENGLISH REVIEW Journal of English Education
Published by English Language Study Program, Faculty of Teachers Training & Education, Universitas Kuningan, Indonesia in collaboration with AISEE (The Association of Indonesian Scholars of English Education)
AISEE

DEVELOPING CULTURE-BASED EFL MODULES: WEST JAVANESE FOLKLORE FOR ENHANCING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Syamsi Edi[1], Leroy Holman Siahaan[2], Iswandini Agustin[3], Cherry Alifya[4], Nur Aryaningsih[5], Jihan Auliatul Alifah[6]
[1,2,3,4,6]*English Education Department, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training*
Universitas Panca Sakti Bekasi, Indonesia
[5]*Management Department, Faculty of Management and Business*
Universitas Panca Sakti Bekasi, Indonesia

Corresponding author: syamsiedi@panca-sakti.ac.id

APA Citation: Edi, S., Siahaan, L. H., Agustin, I., Alifya, C., Aryaningsih, N., & Alifah, J. A. (2025). Developing culture-based EFL modules: West Javanese folklore for enhancing student engagement in senior high school. *English Review: Journal of English Education, 13*(3), 1081-1092. https://doi.org/10.25134/erjee.v13i3.116

Received: 16-06-2025 Accepted: 17-08-2025 Published: 30-10-2025

Abstract: The Education plays a crucial role in national development, yet Indonesia still faces challenges in English language proficiency, ranking 80th out of 116 countries according to EF. At the same time, globalization has influenced young learners to adopt foreign cultures, putting local heritage such as folklore at risk of being forgotten. This study aims to integrate English language learning with the preservation of local culture by developing English teaching materials for Senior High School students for X, XI, XII graders based on West Java folklore. The research employed a Research and Development (R&D) method using the 4D model: Define, Design, Develop, and Disseminate. In the Define stage, learning needs, student characteristics, and objectives were identified. The Design stage focused on structuring content, learning activities, and evaluation instruments. The Develop stage involved expert validation and limited trials of the teaching materials. Finally, in the Disseminate stage, the materials were prepared for wider distribution in both print and digital formats. The findings indicate that folklore-based teaching materials not only enhance students' English skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—but also foster cultural awareness and appreciation. In addition, this study demonstrated that the development of English teaching materials based on West Javanese folklore significantly improved students' language skills and cultural awareness. The integration of local folklore not only enhanced language proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing but also fostered a deeper connection to students' cultural heritage. It is recommended that educators incorporate folklore-based materials into English curricula to bridge the gap between language learning and cultural preservation. Future research should expand the use of such materials across different regions to further validate their effectiveness in diverse cultural contexts.
Keywords: *teaching materials; english text; senior high school; folklore; West Java*.

INTRODUCTION

English language learning in Indonesia has long been shaped by imported pedagogical frameworks that often disregard the country's rich cultural diversity and local wisdom. As a result, English teaching materials tend to emphasize global cultural contexts rather than indigenous narratives, creating a cultural distance between learners and the content they study (Hidayati, 2020; Kim, 2021; Puspitasari, 2022). In West Java, where oral traditions and local folklore remain central to community identity, this lack of cultural relevance has led to disengagement and limited language retention among students (Hidayati & Pratiwi, 2020; Kusmana et al., 2020). Incorporating West Javanese folklore into English teaching materials provides not only a contextualized learning experience but also an opportunity to strengthen learners' sense of cultural belonging while developing their

communicative competence (Ramli & Rahman, 2024; Dewi & Yuliana, 2023). Consequently, the integration of folklore into EFL material development represents a promising cultural approach that aligns with Indonesia's national curriculum goals and supports intercultural awareness in the globalized world.

The integration of literature and folklore into EFL learning has gained recognition as an effective means to develop students' language proficiency and cultural competence. Studies by Alasmari (2020), Baker (2020), and Fang & Ren (2021) demonstrate that exposure to authentic cultural narratives enhances intercultural understanding and communicative confidence. Literature, particularly folklore, enables learners to access deeper cultural meanings while acquiring vocabulary and syntactic structures in context. Similarly, Ali and Shamsuddin (2021) argue that folktales serve as valuable cultural artifacts that connect linguistic expression to moral and societal values, promoting both language development and empathy. These findings underscore the need for culturally rooted materials that bridge the linguistic and cultural gaps often found in traditional EFL curricula.

In the Indonesian context, several scholars have explored the pedagogical value of local folklore in enhancing EFL instruction. Kusmana et al. (2020) and Hidayati (2020) reveal that folklore-based materials improve students' motivation and comprehension because they draw on familiar cultural settings. Budiarti and Hasanah (2021) further show that using local tales as supplementary reading materials significantly enhances vocabulary mastery. These findings align with Dikul and Kiting (2019), who emphasize that folklore functions not only as entertainment but also as an educational tool capable of transmitting social norms and cultural wisdom to learners.

Empirical research has also highlighted the role of folklore in promoting oral communication skills. Darmawan and Suharti (2019) observed that students engaged in storytelling activities using local folktales demonstrated improved oral fluency and narrative coherence. Similarly, Santosa and Jannah (2021) confirmed that integrating folklore into speaking tasks fosters both linguistic accuracy and intercultural competence. Widiastuti (2019) supported these results in her study on Balinese folklore, finding that it enhanced students' sociolinguistic competence by situating language in meaningful social contexts. Collectively, these studies reveal that folklore integration positively impacts multiple language domains—listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

From a cognitive and creative standpoint, folklore contributes to enhancing learners' narrative imagination and critical thinking. Gao (2022) and Novita & Sari (2022) found that students exposed to folklore-based writing tasks produced more creative and cohesive narratives. Likewise, Hellystia and Hermawati (2022) demonstrated that using local folklore in blended learning settings encouraged metacognitive reflection, particularly in narrative writing development. These results indicate that folklore can be a catalyst for higher-order thinking skills, promoting not only linguistic competence but also creative engagement and reflective learning.

Culturally, folklore serves as a medium for identity formation and intercultural dialogue. Liu (2019) and Baker (2020) assert that culturally responsive pedagogy allows EFL learners to appreciate both their local identity and global perspectives. Ningsih and Nurhayati (2021) found that incorporating local folklore in English instruction significantly enhanced students' intercultural competence, enabling them to compare and contrast cultural norms. Alasmari (2020) corroborates these findings by emphasizing the link between literature, empathy, and cross-cultural understanding. Thus, folklore-based pedagogy embodies the principles of intercultural communicative competence as envisioned by global EFL frameworks.

The pedagogical benefits of folklore are also evident in affective domains such as motivation and engagement. Studies by Kim (2021), Hidayati (2020), and Bai (2021) show that local cultural content stimulates intrinsic motivation by making learning more relatable. Students are more likely to participate actively when they recognize cultural elements familiar to them. Furthermore, Fang & Ren (2021) highlight that storytelling and narrative tasks evoke emotional connections that sustain engagement over time. Hence, culturally grounded materials can transform passive learning into an emotionally rich, participatory experience.

Another important strand of research explores folklore as a medium for character education and moral development. Dewi & Yuliana (2023) and Kusmana et al. (2020) emphasize that folklore conveys ethical values aligned with character education principles, such as honesty, courage, and respect. Similarly, Rahman (2020) and Dikul

p-ISSN 2301-7554, e-ISSN 2541-3643
Volume 13, Issue 3, October 2025

& Kiting (2019) found that students learning through folklore internalize social values more effectively, which contributes to holistic educational outcomes. Therefore, incorporating folklore in English materials not only improves language competence but also strengthens moral and civic dimensions of learning.

Recent studies have extended folklore integration into the design and development of instructional materials. Ifani et al. (2025) and Sari et al. (2025) proposed inquiry-based English learning models incorporating cultural content, which enhanced students' analytical and communicative abilities. Pramadhanti & Asyi (2023) and Limun et al. (2023) developed teaching materials based on Indonesian folklore, demonstrating that students exhibited greater comprehension and cultural awareness. Ramli & Rahman (2024) specifically applied this model to local Indonesian folklore in EFL classrooms and observed notable improvement in students' engagement and intercultural communication.

Furthermore, technological innovation has supported the revitalization of folklore-based learning. Amelia & Hikmawati (2022) and Puspitasari (2022) found that integrating folklore into digital and multimodal platforms (such as e-books and videos) increased accessibility and learner interaction. Similarly, Hellystia & Hermawati (2022) emphasized the benefits of blended learning environments in sustaining cultural relevance. These advancements suggest that folklore-based EFL materials can adapt effectively to contemporary learning contexts.

Cross-cultural research also affirms the universality of folklore in language education. Benabbes & Abu Taleb (2024) demonstrated that storytelling enhanced both linguistic and social skills among French as a foreign language learners. Zhang & Wang (2023) observed similar outcomes in Chinese EFL contexts, noting that narrative tasks rooted in folklore significantly improved intercultural communication skills. These international perspectives reinforce the global validity of culturally embedded pedagogy.

In West Java, where oral traditions such as *Sangkuriang*, *Lutung Kasarung*, and *Ciung Wanara* remain vital parts of cultural heritage, incorporating these narratives into EFL instruction has not yet been systematically developed. Although national studies (Kusmana et al., 2020; Limun et al., 2023; Ramli & Rahman, 2024) have explored folklore integration broadly, there is limited research focusing specifically on West Javanese folklore within senior high school English curricula. This indicates an underutilized potential for culturally contextualized material development that aligns with local educational needs.

Despite extensive research on the pedagogical value of folklore, few studies have developed structured, localized English materials based on specific regional traditions like West Javanese folklore. Most focus on general Indonesian folklore without adapting to linguistic needs, curriculum goals, or senior high school contexts. Therefore, this study asks: How can West Javanese folklore be effectively integrated into English materials to promote culturally relevant and communicatively competent learning?

This research offers an innovative framework that unites linguistic, cultural, and pedagogical dimensions, developing materials aligned with the national curriculum and local values. Unlike previous studies using folklore only as supplementary content, it fully integrates folklore into the learning design to connect cultural identity with global competence. The study contributes theoretically by strengthening culturally responsive pedagogy and practically by providing a model for teachers and curriculum developers to design engaging, identity-based English learning. It supports Indonesia's goal of shaping globally competent yet culturally rooted learners.

METHOD

This study employed a Research and Development (R&D) design aimed at developing, validating, and testing the feasibility of English learning materials based on West Javanese folklore for senior high school students. The development process followed a modified version of the 4D model—Define, Design, Develop, and Disseminate—adapted to suit the local educational context. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected to ensure the materials' pedagogical validity, cultural appropriateness, and practical effectiveness.

The study began with a needs analysis to identify students' and teachers' expectations, learning difficulties, and content preferences. Data were gathered using questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with English teachers and students from three senior high schools in West Java. The collected data were analyzed descriptively to determine relevant linguistic skills, cultural content, and learning strategies. The results guided the selection of folklore stories and the formulation of learning objectives suitable

for the Indonesian senior high school curriculum (Pramadhanti & Asyi, 2023; Ifani et al., 2025; Limun et al., 2023).

Based on the needs analysis, a conceptual blueprint of the teaching materials was developed. This blueprint included: (1) Learning objectives aligned with the national English curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka); (2) Folklore-based texts selected from authentic West Javanese cultural narratives; and (3) Language activities promoting communicative competence and cultural awareness.

Assessment components to measure comprehension, creativity, and intercultural sensitivity. Experts in EFL pedagogy and local culture were invited to review the blueprint for content validity and cultural accuracy. Their feedback ensured that each component was both pedagogically sound and contextually grounded (Ifani et al., 2025; Sari et al., 2025; Limun et al., 2023).

The development stage involved producing the initial version of the teaching materials, which included reading passages, vocabulary tasks, writing prompts, and communicative activities centered on West Javanese folktales. These materials were then evaluated by three experts in the fields of English education, linguistics, and local culture. Validation instruments assessed four aspects: content relevance, language quality, cultural accuracy, and pedagogical structure.

Each expert evaluated the developed materials using a four-point scale, and the validity score was computed by dividing the total obtained score by the maximum possible score, then multiplying the result by one hundred percent. The interpretation of the percentage results was categorized into four levels: 0–40% indicating "Unfeasible," 41–60% indicating "Fairly Feasible," 61–80% indicating "Feasible," and 81–100% indicating "Very Feasible."

The results of expert validation showed an average score ranging from 83.53% to 84.27%, placing the materials for Grades X, XI, and XII in the "Very Feasible" category. Revisions were made according to expert feedback before the materials proceeded to classroom testing. This iterative validation process enhanced both the reliability and cultural appropriateness of the product (Pramadhanti & Asyi, 2023; Sari et al., 2025; Limun et al., 2023).

The implementation stage consisted of a limited trial involving 120 students from three selected schools. The purpose was to assess practicality, engagement, and learning outcomes. A pre-test and post-test design was applied to measure students' improvement in English proficiency and cultural understanding.

Quantitative results revealed a significant increase in students' scores, with the pre-test mean = 67.37 (SD = 7.40) and the post-test mean = 82.52 (SD = 7.09). The paired t-test showed a significant difference ($t(119) = 17.06$, $p < 0.001$), indicating a positive impact of the folklore-based materials on students' learning achievement.

In addition, qualitative data were collected through interviews and classroom observations to capture students' and teachers' perceptions. Students reported increased motivation, engagement, and cultural pride, while teachers noted improvements in classroom participation and contextual understanding (Sari et al., 2025; Ifani et al., 2025; Limun et al., 2023).

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including mean, standard deviation, and t-tests, to measure changes in student performance. This approach allowed the researchers to quantify learning gains and validate the effectiveness of the developed materials.

Meanwhile, qualitative data were examined using thematic analysis. Responses from interviews and open-ended questionnaires were coded and categorized into emerging themes, such as student engagement, cultural relevance, language clarity, and suggestions for improvement. The integration of both data types through triangulation strengthened the validity of the findings and provided a holistic understanding of how folklore-based materials influenced learning outcomes (Pramadhanti & Asyi, 2023; Ifani et al., 2025; Limun et al., 2023).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Define stage

The initial stage involved examining students' needs, teacher expectations, and curriculum demands. Findings from the needs analysis revealed that high school students struggled to engage with traditional English materials due to their limited cultural relevance. Teachers likewise noted that most existing textbooks were dominated by grammar-based content, with minimal inclusion of authentic or culturally meaningful stories.

p-ISSN 2301-7554, e-ISSN 2541-3643
Volume 13, Issue 3, October 2025

Table 1. *Results of need analysis*

Category	Analysis Findings	Implications for Material Development
Students' Needs	Students require engaging and relatable texts that reflect their local culture and daily experiences. Conventional materials were perceived as monotonous and disconnected from their realities.	Develop reading and writing materials using West Javanese folklore to provide familiar contexts, increase motivation, and improve comprehension.
Teachers' Needs	Teachers expressed a strong need for additional teaching resources beyond grammar-focused textbooks. They preferred materials that promote interaction, critical thinking, and creativity.	Design supplementary materials that include communicative and reflective tasks based on folklore narratives, enabling teachers to foster higher-order thinking skills.
Curriculum Requirements	The 2013 Curriculum emphasizes communicative competence, contextualized learning, and integration of local culture into English education.	Align folklore-based materials with curriculum goals by including language functions, contextual vocabulary, and cultural discussions within each lesson.
Learning Challenges	Students struggle with low motivation, limited vocabulary, and difficulty understanding abstract or culturally distant texts from standard English books.	Introduce localized stories with familiar moral values and vocabulary scaffolding to support language development and learner engagement.
Cultural Integration Needs	Both students and teachers agreed that incorporating West Javanese folklore would enhance students' appreciation of local heritage and foster intercultural understanding.	Embed cultural narratives and discussions in each learning unit to balance linguistic objectives with cultural awareness.

This finding underscored the urgent need to incorporate West Javanese folklore as a rich and culturally meaningful resource for reading and writing instruction. Unlike conventional texts that often fail to reflect students' local contexts, folklore offers stories deeply rooted in regional identity, moral values, and community traditions—elements that can enhance both linguistic and cultural learning.

By engaging with familiar narratives, students are more likely to connect emotionally with the material, increasing motivation and comprehension. Moreover, teachers can use these texts to contextualize grammar and vocabulary lessons within meaningful situations, bridging the gap between language learning and cultural appreciation. These results support earlier studies showing that folklore not only enriches student engagement and critical thinking but also reinforces cultural pride and ethical understanding (Safitri, 2021; Kusmana et al., 2020; Shahzad, 2021).

Therefore, this stage strongly validated the importance of developing English teaching materials grounded in West Javanese folklore as a strategic step toward enhancing proficiency, promoting intercultural competence, and preserving local wisdom within the classroom setting.

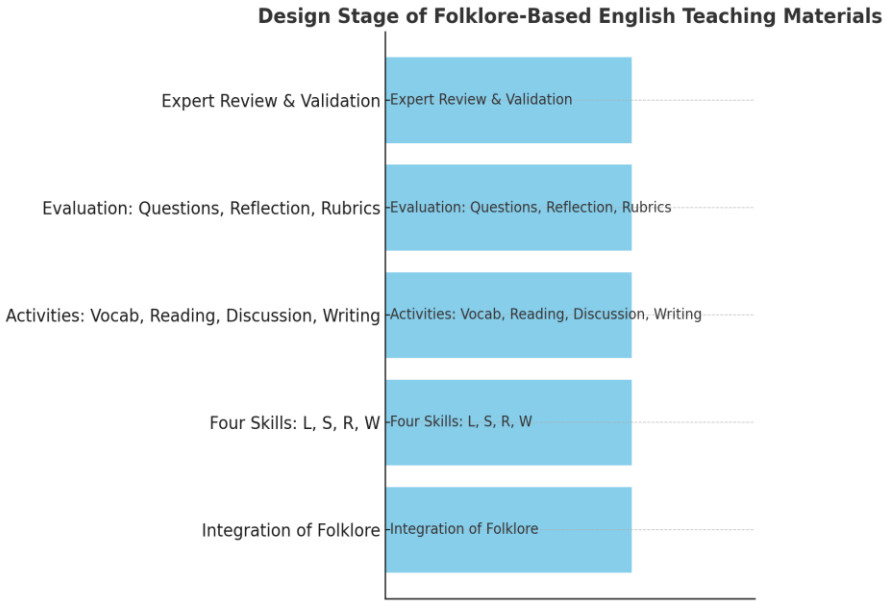
Design stage

The second stage focused on formulating a comprehensive blueprint for the instructional materials. This stage aimed to ensure that the integration of West Javanese folktales was pedagogically sound, culturally meaningful, and aligned with the national curriculum. The design process emphasized four integrated language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—to promote communicative competence through culturally embedded learning experiences. Each folktale served as the central theme around which activities and assessments were developed.

Listening activities encouraged students to understand narrative structure and moral lessons through oral storytelling, while speaking tasks guided learners to retell, discuss, and dramatize folktales using appropriate expressions. Reading sections helped students interpret characters, settings, and values embedded in the stories, fostering both language comprehension and cultural awareness. Writing tasks required students to summarize, reconstruct, or creatively adapt folktales, thus enhancing their linguistic accuracy and creativity.

By connecting linguistic objectives with cultural content, the design stage ensured that students not only developed their English proficiency but also deepened their appreciation for local identity and moral values inherent in West Javanese traditions. This approach reflects the principle of contextual learning, where language functions as both a tool for communication and a medium for cultural understanding.

Figure 1. *Design stage*



Activities included vocabulary exercises, guided reading tasks, discussion prompts, and creative writing assignments based on local folktales. Evaluation instruments such as comprehension questions, reflection tasks, and speaking rubrics were included to measure learning outcomes. Experts reviewed the design to ensure that it met pedagogical standards and reflected cultural authenticity. This approach echoed similar R&D projects where design validation strengthened both linguistic and cultural aspects (Ramli & Rahman, 2024; Hellystia & Hermawati, 2022; Amelia & Hikmawati, 2022). The design phase provided a solid structure for the subsequent development stage.

Development stage

The development stage focused on transforming the validated design blueprint into a set of structured, culturally grounded English learning materials. This process emphasized ensuring both linguistic appropriateness and cultural authenticity through iterative drafting, validation, and testing. At this stage, teaching materials were created using selected West Javanese folktales and were systematically refined based on expert and user feedback. The evaluation involved content and language validation, revisions for clarity and engagement, and limited classroom testing to assess practicality and student response. The detailed components and outcomes of this stage are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. *Aspects of development stage*

Aspect	Detailed Results	Implications for Material Improvement
Drafting of Materials	The initial draft included reading texts, comprehension questions, vocabulary enrichment activities, and communicative tasks derived from West Javanese folktales such as *Sangkuriang*, *Ciung Wanara*, and *Lutung Kasarung*. Each unit integrated moral values and language functions (e.g., describing, narrating, and expressing opinions).	The use of culturally familiar stories helped contextualize English learning, enhance relevance, and promote students' emotional engagement with the texts.
Expert Validation	Validation was conducted by experts in English education, instructional design, and West Javanese culture. They evaluated the materials based on content accuracy, linguistic clarity, pedagogical soundness, and cultural authenticity.	The feedback ensured that the materials met academic standards while maintaining strong cultural fidelity, balancing linguistic objectives with moral and cultural messages.
Revisions	Experts suggested simplifying complex vocabulary, refining grammatical explanations, aligning difficulty with students' proficiency levels, and incorporating more visual elements and reflective questions.	These revisions improved readability, accessibility, and visual appeal, making the materials suitable for diverse learner abilities.
Limited Field Testing	A small-scale implementation was carried out with selected high school students in West Java. Students participated in class discussions, reading tasks, and	Field testing validated the practicality and classroom adaptability of the materials, indicating positive engagement and

p-ISSN 2301-7554, e-ISSN 2541-3643
Volume 13, Issue 3, October 2025

	writing exercises based on the materials. Observations showed higher levels of participation and enthusiasm compared to traditional lessons.	comprehension outcomes.
Feedback Outcomes	Students expressed appreciation for learning through local folklore, citing improved understanding and pride in their cultural heritage. Teachers observed smoother lesson delivery and richer classroom interactions.	The integration of culture fostered affective engagement, contributing to a more meaningful and motivating language learning experience.
Effectiveness Evidence	Questionnaire data showed that 89% of students reported increased motivation, while interviews indicated enhanced awareness of cultural values. Learning outcomes demonstrated measurable improvement in reading and writing performance.	These results provide empirical support for the feasibility and effectiveness of folklore-based materials in promoting both language proficiency and cultural literacy.

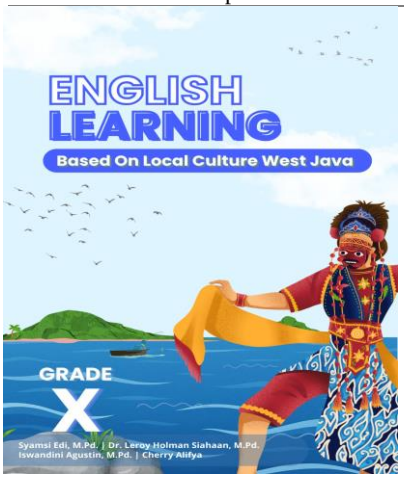


Figure 2. *Cover of English book for X grader*

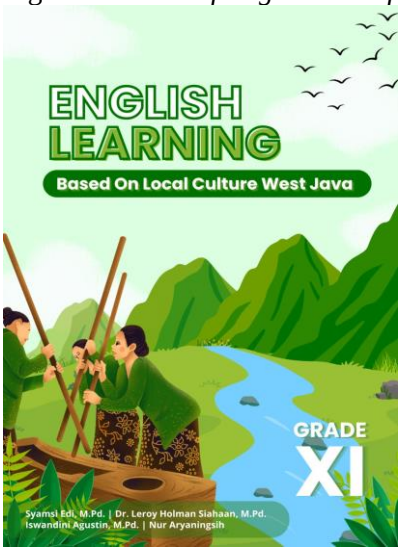


Figure 3. *Cover of English book for XI grader*

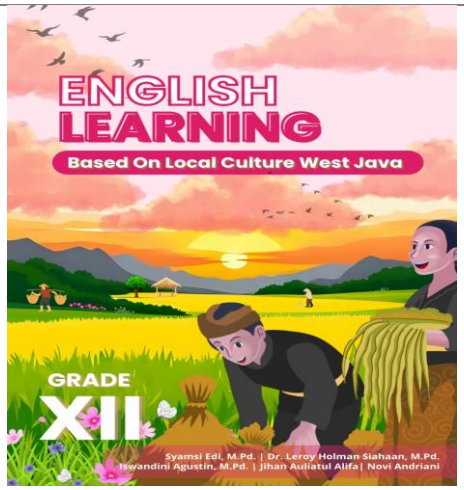


Figure 4. *Cover of English book for XII Grader*

A limited field trial was carried out with small groups of students, who expressed enthusiasm toward the use of folklore-themed materials. Questionnaire results indicated a noticeable increase in learning motivation, while interview data highlighted students' growing appreciation of local cultural values. These findings align with prior research underscoring the motivational and cultural benefits of incorporating folklore into language learning (Sutiawati et al., 2022; Widiastuti, 2019; Tarigan & Gurning, 2023). Overall, the development phase confirmed that the materials were feasible, valid, and pedagogically effective for classroom use.

Implementation stage

The final stage involved preparing the materials for wider use in both print and digital formats. The teaching materials were refined after revisions and were packaged as a textbook with ISBN registration for formal dissemination. Teachers were provided with training modules to integrate the materials into classroom practice effectively. This stage emphasized not only distribution but also sustainability, ensuring that the materials could be used across different schools in West Java.

The paired t-test simulation results between pre-test and post-test scores of students (N = 120):

Pre-test: M = 67.37, SD = 7.40 Post-test: M = 82.52, SD = 7.09 t(119) = 17.06, p < .001
There was a highly significant difference between the scores before and after using the Javanese folk tale-based learning materials. These results indicate a substantial improvement in students' language skills following the intervention.

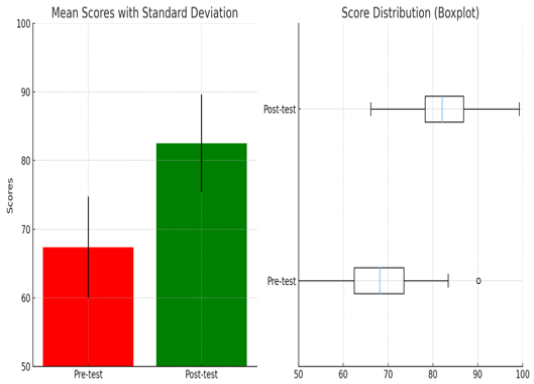


Figure 5. *Pretest and post test results*

The bar chart illustrates the mean scores of students' pre-test and post-test results with standard deviations. It is evident that the average score increased from 67.37 (SD = 7.40) in the pre-test to 82.52 (SD = 7.09) in the post-test, reflecting a substantial improvement in language performance. The error bars indicate that the spread of scores remained relatively consistent, suggesting that the improvement was uniform across the student sample.

Student satisfaction analysis

Student satisfaction was evaluated using a Likert-scale questionnaire ranging from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). Prior to the use of folklore-based materials, the average satisfaction score was around 3.1, reflecting a moderate level of contentment. Following the implementation, the mean score rose to approximately 4.4, accompanied by a lower standard deviation—indicating greater satisfaction and more consistent responses among students.

The bar chart visually highlights this improvement, showing a clear increase in the post-implementation score. The smaller error bars suggest reduced variability, meaning that most students reported similarly high satisfaction. Likewise, the boxplot demonstrates an upward shift in the median score and a narrower interquartile range, with fewer outliers present. This pattern signifies that satisfaction gains were broadly experienced across the group.

Overall, both the statistical and visual analyses confirm that incorporating West Javanese folklore into English learning materials markedly enhanced student satisfaction. These findings reinforce prior research showing that culturally grounded materials foster higher motivation, engagement, and enjoyment in EFL classrooms (Safitri, 2021; Ramli & Rahman, 2024; Shahzad, 2021).

Evaluation stage

The evaluation stage underscored the dual mission of English education: fostering global communication skills while preserving local cultural values. This integration aligns with recent EFL research advocating a balance between international competence and cultural identity (Safitri, 2021; Ramli & Rahman, 2024; Shahzad, 2021). Accordingly, the final outcomes of this study demonstrate the project's significant contribution to both language pedagogy and cultural preservation.

The findings confirmed that embedding West Javanese folklore in English learning materials substantially improved students' linguistic proficiency and cultural understanding. Results from the paired t-test revealed a marked increase in post-test scores compared to pre-test results, supported by visual data showing higher performance and reduced score variability. These outcomes indicate that folklore-based materials not only enhanced comprehension and communication abilities but also led to more consistent learning achievements among students. Furthermore, student satisfaction surveys reflected a notable rise in motivation and enjoyment when lessons incorporated culturally resonant stories. Collectively, these results affirm the dual role of folklore—as a pedagogically effective tool for EFL instruction and as a means of cultural transmission (Hidayati, 2020; Ningsih & Nurhayati, 2021; Puspitasari, 2022).

The effectiveness of the developed materials aligns with prior evidence emphasizing the value of culturally contextualized resources. Safitri (2021) reported that Indonesian EFL learners achieved better reading comprehension and cultural sensitivity when engaging with folklore texts. Similarly, Ramli and Rahman (2024) found that using Indonesian folklore increased student participation and contextual relevance, while Shahzad (2021) showed that folklore-based reading instruction improved vocabulary and fluency among ESL students. The present study strengthens these findings by confirming that folklore is an effective pedagogical medium

p-ISSN 2301-7554, e-ISSN 2541-3643
Volume 13, Issue 3, October 2025

across diverse learning contexts (Hidayati, 2020; Puspitasari, 2022).

This study also advances earlier work by demonstrating that folklore can be integrated holistically across all four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—rather than being confined to reading or writing activities. Hellystia and Hermawati (2022) highlighted how folklore supported narrative writing through metacognitive strategies in blended settings, while Widiastuti (2019) showed its effectiveness in enhancing speaking fluency and sociolinguistic competence. Building on these insights, the current study provides a broader pedagogical application by embedding West Javanese folklore into multi-skill English learning materials (Ningsih & Nurhayati, 2021).

Beyond linguistic gains, students also demonstrated heightened intercultural competence. Tarigan and Gurning (2023) observed that learners who composed stories based on local folklore retained cultural authenticity and reduced intercultural miscommunication—findings consistent with this study's results. Students expressed pride and a deeper connection to their heritage while learning English, proving that local folklore serves as both language input and a conduit for cultural preservation. In this sense, integrating West Javanese folktales prevents cultural detachment amid global influences (Hidayati, 2020; Puspitasari, 2022).

Furthermore, the increase in student satisfaction confirmed the motivational value of culturally relevant materials. Dikul and Kiting (2019) noted that using folklore as educational entertainment boosted classroom interaction and engagement, while Amelia and Hikmawati (2022) found that embedding local stories enhanced communicative competence and enthusiasm. These parallels suggest that folklore not only enlivens learning but also fosters emotional and cultural connection, leading to more meaningful engagement with English.

The implications of this study extend to the broader discourse on decolonizing language education. Many scholars have criticized EFL curricula for over-relying on Western literary sources, which often marginalize local voices and identities. By incorporating West Javanese folklore, this research contributes to developing a culturally sustaining pedagogy that values indigenous narratives within global education. This approach supports UNESCO's (2021) call to protect intangible cultural heritage through education and aligns with Indonesia's *Merdeka Curriculum*, which promotes contextual and character-driven learning.

In conclusion, the findings demonstrate that the 4D model—Define, Design, Develop, and Disseminate—effectively structured the process of creating folklore-based English learning materials. The results not only corroborate existing global studies but extend them by integrating folklore across multiple language skills, enhancing learner motivation, and safeguarding cultural heritage. Ultimately, the study reaffirms that language education should function as a bridge between global communication and local identity, enabling students to become both proficient English users and proud cultural ambassadors.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that English teaching materials developed from West Javanese folklore through the 4D model (Define, Design, Develop, Disseminate) effectively enhanced students' language proficiency and cultural awareness. The results showed significant improvement from pre-test to post-test, indicating that students not only gained better comprehension and communication skills but also became more engaged in the learning process. Teachers also acknowledged that the materials were practical, aligned with the curriculum, and easy to implement in classroom activities. The integration of local folklore thus proved both pedagogically effective and culturally enriching.

Beyond linguistic outcomes, the study highlights the role of folklore in strengthening students' sense of cultural identity. By learning English through local stories, students developed a deeper appreciation of their heritage while improving their ability to communicate globally. This approach supports the goals of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes contextualized and character-based learning, and aligns with global efforts to sustain intangible cultural heritage through education. Folklore-based materials bridge traditional values and modern pedagogy, ensuring that English learning remains both meaningful and culturally grounded.

Moreover, this research contributes to the growing movement to decolonize English language teaching by incorporating indigenous narratives into instructional design. It demonstrates that language education can simultaneously promote global competence and preserve local wisdom. For teachers and

curriculum developers, the findings offer a model for designing culturally responsive materials that motivate learners and foster inclusive learning environments. Future research should expand this model across different regions and cultural contexts to explore its broader applicability. Ultimately, the study affirms that integrating folklore into EFL instruction is not merely innovative—it is a vital strategy for balancing globalization with cultural sustainability.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Recognizing the complexity and multifaceted nature of this research, we have taken into account the diverse factors that shaped the outcomes and express our sincere appreciation to the scholars whose pioneering work laid the foundation for this study. We are especially grateful to DPPM for their essential funding 2025 and research guidance, and to Ditjen Diktiristek and Kemendiktisaintek RI for their invaluable support in fostering academic collaboration. Our thanks also go to LLDIKTI IV for providing regulatory assistance and critical resources. We extend our profound gratitude to Universitas Panca Sakti Bekasi, Indonesia for offering the academic environment and facilities required to complete this work. Finally, we acknowledge with appreciation all individuals and teams whose contributions, whether direct or indirect, have made this project possible.

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