

Exploring the Balance: A Critical Analysis of English Textbooks as Local Content in SDN 04 Maiwa Enrekang

Suhria ^{1,a}, Irmayanti ², Indrawati Natsir³, Asriadi Rasyid⁴

¹ STKIP Paris Barantai

² UPTD SDN 192 Barru

³MTs Negeri 3 Enrekang

⁴Institut Teknologi dan Bisnis Nobel Indonesia

ariariski1992@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to analyze whether English textbooks at SDN 04 Maiwa Enrekang as local content accommodate local content and contain contextual or authentic material. The method used is qualitative content analysis with a directed approach to the book "Speed Up English 6" based on the KTSP Curriculum. Results showed that five of the eight chapters contained aspects of local content, although local culture was not explicitly presented. Moreover, this book contains more grammatical material and material that is not completely contextual or authentic. Even though Indonesia has entered the transition period of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, SDN 04 Maiwa still uses KTSP-based books for English as local content. The research recommends the development of more contextual and authentic teaching materials, as well as strengthening the position of English as a mandatory competency in order to prepare for the upcoming curriculum.

Keywords: Local content, English textbook, Contextual; Authentic; Indonesian Curriculum; Local Content

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis apakah buku ajar Bahasa Inggris di SDN 04 Maiwa Enrekang sebagai muatan lokal mengakomodasi konten lokal dan mengandung materi kontekstual atau autentik. Metode yang digunakan adalah analisis isi kualitatif dengan pendekatan terarah terhadap buku "Speed Up English 6" berbasis Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP). Hasil menunjukkan lima dari delapan bab mengandung aspek muatan lokal, meskipun budaya lokal tidak disajikan secara eksplisit. Buku ini lebih banyak memuat materi tata bahasa dan materi yang tidak sepenuhnya kontekstual maupun autentik. Meskipun Indonesia telah memasuki masa perubahan kurikulum dari kurikulum K13 hingga Kurikulum Merdeka, SDN 04 Maiwa masih menggunakan buku berbasis KTSP untuk Bahasa Inggris sebagai muatan lokal. Peneliti merekomendasikan pengembangan bahan ajar yang lebih kontekstual dan autentik, serta penguatan posisi Bahasa Inggris sebagai mata pelajaran wajib dalam mempersiapkan implementasi kurikulum nasional yang akan datang.

Kata Kunci: Muatan lokal, buku teks Bahasa Inggris; Contextual; Authentic; Kurikulum Indonesia;

INTRODUCTION

A dilemma has arisen when English became an international language and the world demanded English language skills (British Council, 2013), while Indonesian education curriculum actually excluded English in compulsory subjects at the elementary level (Sutarsyah, 2017). This policy, however, aims of concern for the cognitive burden of students in school and to avoid that elementary students become unfocused in learning the national language (Abuman, 2014).

One of the elementary schools that has taught English as a local content is SDN 04 Maiwa, it is located in Enrekang Regency, South Sulawesi. The Enrekang Government's policy officially integrates English as a local content in the elementary school curriculum, in line with contextual findings that show that English teaching at the elementary level can be adapted to local needs. This approach opens up opportunities for SDN 04 Enrekang to design and implement English learning materials that are relevant to the cultural context, environment, and needs of students, in accordance with the characteristics of contextual qualitative research that is the basis of this study.

The role of the national curriculum plays a decisive part in determining the status and continuity of English language instruction in Indonesian elementary schools. Under the 2003 Curriculum and the 2006 School-Based Curriculum (KTSP), English was granted space as a local content subject, allowing schools the autonomy to integrate it in accordance with their regional potentials and needs. However, with the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum, English was removed not only from the list of compulsory subjects but also from the local content options at the primary level. Recent studies confirm that since the enforcement of the 2013 Curriculum, English instruction is no longer part of the national core curriculum in public elementary schools (Kemendikbud, 2022). Nonetheless, many schools, including private institutions and community-based initiatives, continue to offer English locally in order to maintain students' early exposure to English language.

The exclusion of English from the core curriculum prompted a policy response from the central government. The Ministry of Education and Culture issued a circular letter that granted schools the discretion to include English as a local content subject. This policy was intended to empower schools to independently and contextually manage English instruction based on their specific local contexts and needs. In this way, although English was removed as a compulsory subject under the 2013 Curriculum, its teaching has been encouraged through local content implementation to ensure that students do not lose access to early English language exposure.

From 2021 to 2024, Indonesia has been undergoing a transition toward the Merdeka Curriculum. Regulation No. 12 of 2024 by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology officially establishes the Merdeka Curriculum as the national standard to be implemented beginning in the 2024/2025 academic year. According to this regulation, English will be gradually reintroduced at the primary level: up until the 2026/2027 school year, English instruction may be offered based on a school's readiness, and by 2027/2028, it will become a compulsory subject in elementary school. During this transitional period, local content remains a vital curricular mechanism. Official documents attached to the Merdeka Curriculum explicitly state that local content may include language subjects, thereby allowing schools such as SDN 04 Enrekang to continue delivering English lessons under the local content framework while preparing for its reinstatement as a core subject.

Against the backdrop of evolving national education policy and the Enrekang region's consistent commitment to English as local content, this study aims to examine the extent to which the English textbook used at SDN 04 Maiwa accommodates local contextual aspects. The analysis focuses on whether the textbook content is grounded in the geographic and socio-cultural realities of Enrekang or instead relies predominantly on authentic materials adapted from external cultures. A content analysis approach is employed to reveal the balance—or lack

thereof—between local and global knowledge within the textbook, in accordance with the contextual qualitative research framework applied at SDN 04 Maiwa.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The 2006 School-Based Curriculum (KTSP) in Indonesia allowed English to be introduced as a local content subject, providing schools with the flexibility to tailor English instruction to regional needs and potentials. This flexibility was part of a broader decentralization effort, enabling schools to adapt the curriculum based on local contexts and student capacities. The implementation of English as a local content subject under KTSP has been met with both opportunities and challenges, as schools navigate the balance between national standards and local needs (Abidin Nurdin & Munawwarah, 2023). In this context, textbooks play a crucial role in delivering both linguistic content and culturally relevant material that resonates with students' local experiences. Local content (*muatan lokal*) is defined as a curriculum component that enables students to recognize and appreciate their immediate cultural and environmental context (Suryana & Kurnia, 2025). Integrating local content into English learning not only strengthens students' cultural identity but also enhances the relevance of lessons when the material reflects their daily lives. emphasizes that English textbooks in elementary schools often lack substantial local cultural content, which can limit their effectiveness in providing contextualized language instruction. This issue is prevalent in various educational contexts, including Indonesia, Malaysia, and Colombia, where textbooks frequently fail to incorporate local cultural elements, thereby missing opportunities to enhance students' cultural understanding and engagement. The absence of local cultural content can lead to a disconnect between students' real-life experiences and the language they are learning, making the process less meaningful and engaging (Wati et al., 2019; Zakaria & Hashim, 2009).

Bhutto & Kazmi (2024) also point out that despite the widespread adoption of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) principles, many English textbooks continue to emphasize grammar instruction over the development of communicative competence. This trend persists due to various factors, including the historical precedence of grammar-focused teaching and the challenges in effectively integrating communicative activities into textbooks. The following sections explore the reasons behind this focus and the implications for language learning:

1. Grammar instruction has been a central component of language teaching for centuries, and its influence persists in modern textbooks. Many textbooks retain a structural approach to grammar, which does not fully align with CLT principles
2. Even textbooks that claim to follow CLT often disguise grammar instruction within communicative activities, maintaining a focus on form rather than genuine communication.

This runs counter to the principles of meaningful learning emphasized in the latest curriculum reforms, such as the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, which encourages context-based and student-centered instruction. The *Kurikulum Merdeka*, or Independent Curriculum, emphasizes meaningful learning by fostering creativity, problem-solving, and adaptability to societal and workforce demands. This approach contrasts with traditional methods that may not fully engage students or develop their competencies in a holistic manner. The *Kurikulum Merdeka* aims to address these gaps by providing educators with the flexibility to design learning plans and

assessments that are more aligned with students' individual needs and the evolving educational landscape. This shift is crucial in overcoming the limitations of previous curricula, such as the 2013 Curriculum, which was often criticized for its rigidity and dense material. Below are key aspects of the Kurikulum Merdeka that highlight its alignment with meaningful learning principles (Kumayas et al., 2025).

In the context of textbook materials, authentic materials and context-based content are essential for ensuring meaningful learning. Authentic materials, such as real-world texts and dialogues, enhance students' exposure to natural language use (Muminova & Do'stova, 2019). Meanwhile, context-based materials that incorporate local geographical, cultural, and social references can boost students' motivation and help them connect classroom content to their lived realities (Butler, 2005). Authentic English materials and context-based content are crucial for meaningful learning, as they provide learners with exposure to real-world language use and enhance their communicative competence. These materials, which include audiovisual and printed resources not originally intended for educational purposes, help bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-life communication. By engaging with authentic materials, learners can develop a deeper understanding of language in context, which is essential for effective language acquisition (Abdul Rahim & Jalalian Daghigh, 2020).

However, many existing English textbooks remain generic and often overlook local specificity. found that English textbooks are often designed with a national audience in mind, with limited adaptation to local contexts. This trend is evident across various educational settings, where textbooks prioritize global or national cultural content over local nuances. The lack of local adaptation can lead to challenges in effectively engaging students and making the learning experience relevant to their cultural backgrounds. This issue is highlighted in several studies that examine the cultural content and contextual relevance of English textbooks in different countries:

1. In Malaysia, the English textbook incorporates both global and local cultural sources, but the global textbook "Think" lacks representation of local culture, indicating a preference for broader cultural themes over localized content (Abdul Rahim & Jalalian Daghigh, 2020)
2. A study in Surakarta, Indonesia, found that only 14% of the skills in English textbooks for elementary schools included local content, suggesting a significant gap in regional representation (Kaltsum, 2019b).
3. In Colombia, English textbooks used in bilingual education often fail to reflect the national context, leading to non-natural learning settings and a disconnect between the material and real language use (Foncesa, 2016)

This generalization reduces the textbooks' relevance to learners in diverse socio-cultural settings. This study is situated within the methodological framework of content analysis, which has been proven effective in evaluating how textbooks represent cultural and contextual elements. Rafiah & Suhria (Rafiah & Suhria, 2021), in their analysis of cultural content in junior high school English textbooks, found a predominance of foreign cultures with limited inclusion of local cultural representation. Moreover, through content analysis of elementary-level English textbooks, concluded that the materials were largely grammar-oriented, with minimal engagement with local culture. These findings reinforce the value of content analysis as a critical

approach for examining the balance between local and global content in language textbooks used in Indonesian elementary schools.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study qualitative content analysis which is using directed approach. Directed approach is used to validate or give judgement to the existing framework or theory conceptually (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Using the existing content published, researcher started to identify the keywords of the concept or the variable as initial coding categories (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999). The subject of the research is the English textbook used for elementary school grade 6th in SDN 04 Enrekang.

The directed content analysis in this study is grounded in existing theoretical frameworks concerning local content integration, authenticity in language materials, and context-based language instruction. Previous research by (Kaltsum, 2019a) and Rafiah & Suhria (2021) informs the initial coding categories used to identify textual representations of three dimensions: (1) local/traditional cultural elements, (2) national cultural or social references, and (3) global or foreign cultural content. These dimensions provide a lens through which the balance of knowledge (local vs. global) in the textbook can be analyzed.

Table 1. *English Textbook Details used in SDN 04 Enrekang*

Title	Speed Up English 6
Grade	6 th (VI)
Author	Dra. Rita Kurniawan Cecille Anca
Editor	Rasti Setya Anggraini
Publisher	Yudhistira
Date of Published	June, 2010
Content	8 Chapter (Lesson 1 – Lesson 8) Two Reviews
Pages	i-iv 1-91
Curriculum	KTSP

The researchers focus on the used are based on local content theory and as the integration of English proficiency the analysis also focus of the use of four skills of English (listening, speaking, reading and writing), in addition the researchers intended to find out the majority content of the textbook either prefer to authentic materials or context-based material. There are three main scope of this research, there are traditional or local content, national knowledge of wisdom or cultures and English or western knowledge of wisdom or cultures. But the main focus of the researcher only to identify the context-based material regarding to traditional or local wisdom or cultures and authentic material scope into English or western knowledge of wisdom or cultures.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The content analysis of Speed Up English 6 revealed important patterns regarding the presence and absence of contextual and authentic materials in the textbook used at SDN 04 Maiwa. Overall, five out of the eight chapters demonstrated some level of contextual relevance to the local setting, although this relevance was often implicit and fragmented rather than fully

integrated. The remaining chapters were found to contain generalized content that lacked meaningful reference to students' immediate social or cultural environments.

Table 2. *Local Content Aspects found in the textbook*

Lesson	Materials	Activity	Page	Aspect of Local Content	Scope	Additional Information
1	Public Place	Listening Writing Reading Speaking	2 3 4 5	Social Aspect	National (Zoo, Restaurant, Airport, Mall) Traditional (Market, Hospital, Library)	These topics are not placed in Enrekang. Thus, these are excluded from local content. These places are existing in Enrekang, the activity also support students to enrich their vocabulary for practicing their English, but some of the pictures used are adopted from abroad. Such the picture of Zoo using the Lynwood Park Zoo placed in North Carolina.
2	My Classroom	Listening Writing Reading Speaking	14 15 16 17	Social Aspect	Both of Traditional and National	This material can be categorized as local content, because it is appropriate with the expression and vocabulary provided in the textbook that students' need in their school life in practicing English.
3	Hobbies	Listening Writing Reading Speaking	26 27 28 29	Cultural Aspect	Traditional (Picture of Climbing Mountain) Western (Playing Basketball, playing piano, Ballet)	The pictures of the material majority show the hobbies that not including local content.

Lesson	Materials	Activity	Page	Aspect of Local Content	Scope	Additional Information
4	At the Market	Listening Writing Reading Speaking	36 37 38 39	Social Aspect	Both of Traditional and National (the use of Rupiah)	This material can be categorized as local content, because it is appropriate with the expression and vocabulary provided in the textbook that students' need in their daily conversation in the market
5	My Home	Listening Writing Reading Speaking	48 49 50 51	Social Aspect	Both of Traditional and National Western Cultures (the story of Cinderella)	This material can be categorized as local content, because it is appropriate with the expression and vocabulary provided in the textbook that students' need in their daily conversation at home. In reading task, the book presented the story of Cinderella.
6	On the street	Listening Writing Reading Speaking	58 59 60 61	Physical aspect	National Western Culture	The figure that was provided on the book should be described physical aspect, but the picture was illustrated and not an authentic picture
7	My School	Listening Writing Reading Speaking	68 69 70 71	-	-	This material focused on grammar. There is no local content aspect.
8	They Have been Playing for 1 Hour	Listening Writing Reading Speaking	78 79 80 81	-	-	The material focused on Present Perfect Continues tenses. There is no local content aspect.

Based on the table analysis above, it can be concluded that the book commonly supported the local content of the young learners' traditional background culture and wisdom. Even though that was not such as specific local content aspect, but at least the young learners can use the material among their environment situation. Despite of that, there too many also material that were not context-based material as follows:

Lesson 1: Public Place

Lesson 1 introduces students to a range of public spaces, including both common national sites such as the zoo, restaurant, airport, and mall, as well as more traditionally grounded facilities like markets, hospitals, and libraries. While the inclusion of these topics provides a valuable opportunity for vocabulary development, the degree of contextual relevance varies significantly across the material. Vocabulary related to markets, hospitals, and libraries aligns more closely with the everyday experiences of students in Enrekang, where such public facilities are accessible and familiar. In contrast, the other locations, especially the zoo and airport, do not reflect the geographical or social realities of the learners and are thus disconnected from their lived environment.

The analysis indicates that although the lexical selection partially supports the notion of local content, the accompanying visual materials diminish its contextual value. For instance, the image representing a zoo is not drawn from local sources but instead uses a picture of the Lynwood Park Zoo located in North Carolina, United States. This choice undermines the intended educational function of local content, which is to help students connect English language learning with their immediate environment. As noted by Ottu et al., (2024), the relevance of instructional material increases when it reflects students' real-life surroundings, not distant or unfamiliar places, this approach enhances language acquisition, motivation, and cultural awareness by making learning more relevant and engaging for students.

This combination of partially relevant vocabulary and culturally foreign imagery exemplifies what Rafiah & Suhria (2021) have described as superficial localization where textbooks may incorporate certain themes that appear locally appropriate on the surface but fail to embed them meaningfully within a local cultural framework. The images used, along with the lack of references to specific places in Enrekang, reduce the possibility of learners internalizing vocabulary through associative, contextual experience.

Furthermore, the lesson's activities such as listening, reading, writing, and speaking, are structured to reinforce vocabulary, but they rely heavily on isolated word recall rather than contextual application. There is limited use of situational language or dialogue rooted in specific local scenarios. This aligns with earlier critiques by Bhutto & Kazmi (2024), who noted that English textbooks in primary education often prioritize grammar and vocabulary over meaningful, situated communication. For elementary-level learners, particularly in rural settings, this approach can result in language input that feels abstract and disconnected from everyday life.

Thus, while Lesson 1 introduces thematically useful vocabulary, it falls short of fulfilling the pedagogical aims of local content. Its partial contextual alignment and reliance on generalized or foreign imagery restrict its effectiveness in supporting culturally responsive language learning. Greater attention to place-based content and localized visual representation would significantly enhance the relevance and impact of the material for learners in Enrekang.

Lesson 2: My Classroom

The theme of hobbies offers an opportunity to connect English learning with students' personal experiences. However, several activities featured in this lesson, such as playing piano or going swimming, may not reflect the actual resources or lifestyle of learners in Enrekang. This

illustrates what (Kaltsum, 2019) identifies as the lack of contextual sensitivity in textbook content, where middle-class or urban assumptions are presented as universal. When learners cannot relate to the examples provided, their engagement and comprehension may be affected. Activities like fishing or riding a bicycle are more relatable within the rural context, yet the textbook does not elaborate on these as culturally situated practices (Jain, 2024). For instance, fishing could be linked to rivers or traditional livelihoods in Enrekang, but it is treated generically, without reference to local settings or values. emphasize that authentic content should not only include real-world topics but also situate them within learners' cultural frameworks to support meaningful learning.

Visuals in this chapter further distance the material from students' everyday life. The characters, settings, and clothing styles appear urban and generalized, lacking visual markers of rural or regional identity. This supports concern that many textbooks fail to reflect local context through images, which limits students' ability to relate new language to familiar scenes or people. In a local content subject, such representation is essential for both cognitive and affective learning. Grammatically, the lesson centers on the structure "*Do you like...?*" which is appropriate for beginner learners. However, in this chapter, young learners were provided with too many expressions commonly used in the classroom, that was very good and including local content. Because after learning the expressions, students can straight use the expression in the real context. As the additional material of this chapter, the author included grammar of giving command in this book, which is good either, but it should not focus on the grammar rules but the function.

Lesson 3: Hobbies

Lesson 3 continues the theme of hobbies but with content and visual elements that lean heavily toward foreign cultural references. Activities such as ballet, playing piano, and playing basketball dominate the material, while traditional or locally practiced hobbies are either absent or insufficiently represented. Even though one illustration includes mountain climbing, an activity potentially relevant to the Enrekang region, the context remains vague, with no textual or visual indicators connecting the activity to the learners' environment. This illustrates what Wati et al., (2019) describe as a missed opportunity to bridge language learning with real-life cultural familiarity, a key component of effective local content integration. The visual representation of hobbies in this lesson largely excludes local identity. For instance, the use of ballet as a representation of "dancing" reflects a Western-centric perspective rather than drawing on traditional dance forms from Sulawesi or other regional cultures. Rafiah & Suhria (2021) found similar tendencies in English textbooks, where global and foreign cultures are more prominently featured than local cultural content. The imbalance between foreign and local elements, especially in textbooks implemented as local content, undermines the curriculum's goals to strengthen cultural identity and contextual learning (Suryana & Kurnia, 2025).

The grammatical focus of the lesson is reinforced through structured sentence patterns and vocabulary tasks. While this reflects a continued emphasis on form, it does not align with the spirit of Communicative Language Teaching or the principles of the Kurikulum Merdeka, which calls for context-based, student-centered learning (Bhutto & Kazmi, 2024). The grammar-heavy structure limits students' opportunity to engage meaningfully with the content, especially when the examples are distant from their lived realities. This lesson reinforces findings from Kaltsum, (2019a), who reported that English textbooks for elementary students often present only a small portion of regionally relevant skills or content. Despite being labeled as local content, the material fails to activate cultural familiarity, leaving learners with vocabulary that is linguistically correct but socially disconnected. The result is a learning experience that is less meaningful and less effective for building both language competence and cultural awareness.

Lesson 4: At the Market

Lesson 4 is one of the few units in the textbook that strongly supports the principles of local content integration. The theme of traditional markets reflects the daily experiences of students in Enrekang, making the lesson highly relatable. The vocabulary and expressions introduced such as naming goods, discussing prices, and using local currency (Rupiah) mirror interactions that students are likely to encounter in real-life situations. This kind of contextual relevance is essential for helping learners connect language use to their immediate environment, as emphasized by Suryana and Kurnia (2025). The functional nature of the language in this chapter also demonstrates good potential for promoting communicative competence. Students are encouraged to practice conversations around buying and selling, which supports the kind of meaningful, context-based instruction advocated by Abdul Rahim and Jalalian Daghigh (2020). These communicative tasks allow language to serve a practical purpose, moving beyond abstract vocabulary lists and creating a sense of purpose in learning English.

However, the chapter includes a grammar focus on countable and uncountable nouns. While this is a relevant structure in the context of market transactions, the way it is presented makes grammar the central feature of the lesson. According to Bhutto and Kazmi (2024), this emphasis on explicit grammar instruction often reduces the communicative value of English lessons. In a lesson that already has strong contextual alignment, grammar would be more effectively taught through implicit use within the dialogues and activities. Overall, this lesson provides a more integrated approach compared to others in the textbook. The social context, vocabulary, and everyday expressions are appropriate for local learners. To maximize its effectiveness, the grammar component should be embedded more naturally within the language use rather than separated as a formal focus. This adjustment would bring the lesson more in line with the goals of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, which encourages meaningful learning through interaction and relevance (Kumayas et al., 2025).

Lesson 5: My Home

Lesson 5 introduces a familiar and relevant theme for young learners by focusing on the home environment. This setting supports the aims of local content by reflecting the everyday interactions and spaces students experience in their own families. The vocabulary and expressions used in the listening, writing, and speaking tasks generally correspond to daily household situations, making the content both accessible and meaningful. As noted by Suryana and Kurnia (2025), incorporating local and familiar social settings into English lessons helps students build connections between the language and their real-life environment. Despite its contextual potential, the lesson places significant emphasis on the past continuous tense. This grammatical focus dominates the learning objectives, shifting attention away from functional communication. Bhutto and Kazmi (2024) argue that grammar-oriented instruction, especially when presented explicitly and in isolation, can reduce the communicative value of textbook content. In this case, while the structure itself may be appropriate for narrative contexts, its prominence within a lesson themed around "My Home" limits the opportunity for learners to engage in naturalistic, everyday use of English.

The reading activity in this chapter features the Cinderella story. On one hand, introducing international folklore can expand students' cultural awareness and enrich their exposure to global narratives. However, the inclusion of this Western tale, without balancing it with local stories or legends, weakens the cultural relevance of the material. Rafiah and Suhria (2021) observed that English textbooks often prioritize foreign cultural content while offering little representation of Indonesian or regional traditions. In a local content subject, the selection of texts should ideally include stories from students' own cultural heritage to strengthen identity and cultural appreciation.

Replacing or supplementing the Cinderella story with traditional folklore from South Sulawesi or local legends from Enrekang would better align with the objectives of local content and the Kurikulum Merdeka. This curriculum emphasizes the importance of meaningful learning and student identity by encouraging the integration of local wisdom into classroom materials (Kumayas et al., 2025). Textbook developers should consider this when selecting narrative texts, ensuring that cultural balance is maintained and learners see their own traditions reflected in their language learning.

Lesson 6: On the Street

Lesson 6 introduces vocabulary and expressions related to streets and directions, a theme that has strong potential to reflect learners' physical environment. Understanding and giving directions is a practical communicative skill, and this topic could have been an ideal space to include geographical references that are familiar to learners in Enrekang. However, the textbook presents generic and illustrated street scenes that do not resemble the physical reality of students' surroundings. This limits the contextual value of the lesson and reduces its effectiveness as local content. Although the aim of describing physical aspects through visual and linguistic cues is pedagogically sound, the illustrated materials are not rooted in local contexts. The street scenes are likely modeled after urban or Western-style infrastructure, lacking any reference to the road networks, traffic patterns, or landmarks typical in rural Indonesia. According to Abdul Rahim and Jalalian Daghigh (2020), authentic materials must reflect learners' actual environments to support meaningful engagement. When learners cannot recognize or relate to the visuals, their motivation and comprehension may be weakened.

This chapter also reflects the broader trend identified by Wati et al. (2019), where English textbooks often present national or global content without proper integration of local geographical identity. The absence of region-specific references or locally meaningful settings leads to a superficial form of localization. While the lesson may fulfill the structural and thematic criteria for national curriculum standards, it fails to embody the localized, student-centered vision promoted by the Kurikulum Merdeka (Kumayas et al., 2025).

To improve contextualization, the textbook could include maps or illustrated paths based on real neighborhoods, landmarks, or traditional transportation methods found in the students' area. This would not only support vocabulary acquisition but also foster spatial awareness through language. The integration of real or localized visual content is essential for grounding abstract expressions in concrete, meaningful experience.

Lesson 7: My School

Lesson 7 focuses on the school environment, a theme with strong potential for localization. However, the textbook misses this opportunity by centering the lesson almost entirely on grammar instruction. The activities revolve around sentence structure and language form, without any integration of contextual or cultural references to students' real school environment. As Bhutto and Kazmi (2024) have emphasized, many English textbooks continue to prioritize grammatical instruction over communicative content, which limits opportunities for authentic language use. The absence of any local content is particularly notable given how relevant this topic could be. Schools in Enrekang, for example, have unique features that could be introduced through classroom vocabulary, local subject names, or descriptions of school routines. According to Suryana and Kurnia (2025), local content should help students connect language learning with familiar experiences. By neglecting to include any visual or textual representations of local school life, this lesson fails to support that goal.

Furthermore, this approach does not align with the principles of the Kurikulum Merdeka, which encourages content to be designed around students' realities and promotes

meaningful, context-based instruction (Kumayas et al., 2025). Rather than using "school" as a platform for student-centered interaction, the lesson reinforces a traditional, form-focused model of language teaching that offers little relevance to learners' everyday lives.

Lesson 8: They Have Been Playing for Hour

Lesson 8 focuses entirely on the Present Perfect Continuous tense. While the grammatical structure is important for language development, the lesson lacks contextual grounding and does not incorporate any elements of local content. There is no indication that the examples, activities, or visuals relate to the students' everyday lives or cultural surroundings. This disconnect reflects a broader trend in English textbooks that prioritize form over meaning, a concern raised by Bhutto and Kazmi (2024), who argue that such an approach often overlooks the communicative needs of learners.

The absence of relevant context is especially problematic given the abstract nature of the tense being taught. For young learners in primary school, language instruction should ideally be linked to concrete and familiar situations. As Suryana and Kurnia (2025) emphasize, local content is intended to make language learning meaningful by connecting it to students' real experiences. In this lesson, however, grammar is taught in isolation, making it more difficult for learners to see the relevance or application of the structure in their daily communication. Furthermore, the lesson does not support the goals of the Kurikulum Merdeka, which encourages student-centered learning based on real-world use and cultural relevance (Kumayas et al., 2025). The textbook's failure to embed the target structure into a meaningful context such as local events, school routines, or traditional activities limits the effectiveness of the instruction. Instead of focusing on how the tense might be used in describing ongoing local practices or habits, the content centers on abstract sentence models that lack functional value for young learners.

In addition, findings that were important according to the researchers such as, the book provided the four skill activities of English which is good, but the presentation of the material mostly grammar-focused approach. The young learners should not overwhelm with too many grammar rules during their learning of English (Miele & Hyslop, 2016). Providing many examples of expression and vocabularies list that useful for daily lives conversation contextually is very good, though. This book is kind of giving many expressions needed for the students regarding their surroundings such classroom, school, home, etc.

CONCLUSION

The present study sought to evaluate the extent to which the English textbook *Speed Up English 6*, implemented as a local content subject at SDN 04 Enrekang, supports the integration of contextual and authentic materials within the framework of elementary English language education. Drawing from a systematic analysis of all eight chapters, showed that five of the eight chapters contained aspects of local content, however the textbook presents an imbalanced approach to local culture development as neither it is contextual nor authentic-based materials. While several themes such as "At the Market" and "My Home" reflect real-life situations that are familiar and relevant to students, the majority of the lessons are constructed around grammar-focused instruction and foreign representations, both in text and imagery. The textbook tends to treat local content superficially, offering limited vocabulary or scenarios that resonate with students' immediate social and cultural environments. Even when local themes are introduced, they are not consistently reinforced through visual representation, communicative tasks, or culturally grounded narratives. This weakens the intended role of local content as a bridge between language and learners' real-world experiences. Furthermore, the emphasis on

grammatical rules and decontextualized examples restricts the communicative potential of the lessons, reducing opportunities for students to meaningfully apply language in their own context.

Rather than facilitating a balanced integration of local and global perspectives, the textbook leans toward generalized content with minimal cultural adaptation. This approach not only narrows the scope of student engagement but also limits their ability to see their identity, environment, and cultural heritage reflected in the material they are learning from. In essence, the instructional design fails to recognize that language learning is most effective when embedded in familiar settings, relatable practices, and context-rich interactions.

The findings of this study underscore the need for a more thoughtful and culturally sensitive approach to textbook development, particularly when English is positioned as a local content subject. Local content must not be confined to thematic labels or vocabulary insertion; it should be embedded throughout the instructional material in ways that are reflective of students' lived realities. Textbooks must do more than teach language, they must empower students by affirming their cultural identity, building relevance, and fostering genuine communicative competence.

As Indonesian curriculum transitions again from the implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* to *Kurikulum Nasional* which makes English as compulsory subject even in Elementary Schools, there is an opportunity to reframe how English is delivered at the elementary level. Educational materials should be redesigned with the dual goals of promoting meaningful language use and strengthening learners' cultural awareness. Such efforts would contribute not only to improved language outcomes but also to the holistic development of learners as culturally grounded individuals capable of engaging both locally and globally.

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