



THE ROLE OF LOCAL CULTURE IN TEACHING READING MATERIALS

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the role of local culture in reading materials and the basic elements of implementing reading sources while teaching. By reflecting local traditions, values, and linguistic nuances, reading materials can enhance relatability, preserve cultural heritage, support language development, foster cultural pride, and bridge cultural gaps.

Local culture refers to the traditions, values, beliefs, and practices that are specific to a given community or region. Reading materials that reflect local culture engage readers more deeply while also instilling a greater feeling of identity and connection to their background. This essay investigates the varied function of local culture in reading materials and its effects on readers. There are various explanations of culture that vary in definitions and are unable to match the universal standard classification of culture since people perceive it differently. Kachru in Hinkel [4] stated that culture is the pattern of meanings embodied in symbolic forms, including actions, utterances and meaningful objects of various kinds, by virtue of which individuals communicate with one another and share their experiences, conceptions, and beliefs. Lado [5] further continued to define culture as “ways of people”. He added that individuals lack the ability to identify culture because they are so used to completing all of the activities that are culturally tied with their life, and he went on to say that a specific research is needed to describe our ways parallelism, inability, and language. Hall in Samovar [6] later explained that culture is everything and everywhere. It means that culture takes control and explains the conditions and circumstances for all the messages may or may not be sent, noticed, or interpreted.

According to the descriptions provided above, culture encompasses people’s attitudes and views, values that they apply in living their lives and it can be said that people’s actions could be culturally bound. Regarding the aforementioned definition of culture, it is extremely appropriate to include cultural elements in students’ reading materials. However, because the major goal of teaching reading is to engage students by picking materials based on their interests and preferences, the cultural content materials used should be relevant to their daily lives. The items in question pertain to local culture and encompass topics such as events, values, perceptions, environment, and culture. Teaching reading materials that incorporate



local culture can be incredibly effective for several reasons. Relevance and engagement are increased when reading materials reflect students local culture. Stories, themes, and situations that mirror their own life experiences can make reading more engaging and meaningful. Local culture in textbooks helps students understand their cultural identity. This can foster a sense of pride and belonging, which can make them more invested in their learning. Local cultural elements can help improve language and literacy skills. In the context of familiar cultural narratives and practices, students can learn new vocabulary and grammar.

The connection between schools and communities can be strengthened by incorporating local culture into reading materials. It can also encourage community involvement and support for educational initiatives by encouraging community involvement and support. Davis [2] stating that students' daily lives, cultures, environments, hopes and fears, and needs must be involved in what is happening around them in the class during the teaching-learning process.

Local culture materials have been shown to have many advantages in the teaching and learning process. These advantages are, in fact, the pedagogical implications of integrating such materials. Students can support their cultural awareness by equipping them with specific materials that are relevant to their actual lives. Developing an understanding of their beliefs, attitudes, way of seeing and values can help students raise their cultural awareness of their mother tongue. Below, we will have tried to highlight the merits of local culture in reading materials.

Local culture can enhance relatability by incorporating it into reading materials. It creates a sense of familiarity and relevance when books, articles, or educational content reflect the cultural context of the reader. Content that resonates with readers' personal experiences and cultural background is more likely to be engaging. Literature set in a specific locale or featuring local customs can make the reading experience more enjoyable. History, traditions, and values can be found in local culture. Reading materials that incorporate local cultural elements can help preserve and promote this heritage. Folktales, legends, and traditional stories passed down through generations can be preserved in written form, ensuring that they are accessible to future generations. A deeper appreciation of cultural heritage is cultivated through books and articles that highlight local customs and historical happenings. Reading materials that reflect local dialects can help improve a language's proficiency. Reading materials include local dialects, common phrases, and cultural references that help readers gain a deeper appreciation for their own language. It is especially important for younger readers who are learning to navigate the complexities of their native language. Reading can improve their language skills by encountering familiar linguistic patterns in context. When people see their cultural experiences and values represented in literature and educational content, it reinforces their sense of belonging and self-worth. This is especially important in multicultural societies, where individuals may feel the need to assert their cultural identity amidst diverse influences. Individuals can build a stronger connection to their roots by recognizing and valuing their own culture through reading. Local culture is important for reading materials to bridge cultural gaps. Culturally rich content can offer readers outside of the local context valuable insights into different ways of life. Cross-cultural



awareness and compassion are cultivated, fostering a deeper appreciation for variety. Books about education, travel, and diverse fiction can be useful for establishing connections between diverse cultural groups, enhancing the reader's global perspective. Teaching and learning experiences can be enhanced by incorporating local culture into textbooks. Learning can be more relevant and engaging when textbooks reflect students' cultural backgrounds. Local contexts or historical narratives that relate to student's heritage can make abstract concepts more concrete and meaningful. Educators who use culturally relevant materials are better equipped to connect with their students and address their unique needs. Local culture can have many benefits, but it also presents challenges. It is important for publishers and educators to avoid stereotypes and ensure that cultural representation is accurate and respectful. Additionally, it can be challenging to balance local cultural elements with universal themes, particularly when creating content for diverse audiences. Reading materials serve as positive cultural tools because they're sensitive and inclusive.

Another reason for introducing local culture materials is the similarity the materials hold and students' background knowledge. Anderson [1] believed that reading is a fluent process of readers combining information from a text with previous knowledge. The learning process is easier than the other way around because students are familiar with the topics. Another reason worth mentioning is that including local culture materials helps the students understand their own culture and exposes them to global communication. According to Faris [3] foreign visitors and tourists visiting some local places might be curious with the particular rituals or custom. This condition can be used by the students to introduce their local culture to the world. By integrating local culture materials into teaching reading, students culture of their mother tongue will be preserved from extinction.

In conclusion, the integration of local culture materials in teaching reading has some fruitful pedagogical implications. Including such materials is expected to aid students in comprehending text more easily, given their prior knowledge and familiarity with the relevant materials. Aside from that, it's expected from the pupils that they'll be genuinely engaged in the learning and teaching process, which will inspire them to think and take part in class discussions. It is also believed that students are capable of promoting and supporting their local culture to global communication as the form of raising their cultural awareness, as the form of raising their cultural awareness.

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