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# TEACHERS' FEEDBACK ON ENGLISH SYLLABUS WITH LOCAL VALUES FOR ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

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## Abstract
The elimination of English subject for elementary school in curriculum of 2013 which has been regulated under the Government of the Republic of Indonesia's Regulation number 32 year 2013 about the alteration of Government Regulation number 19 year 2005 about National Standard of Education affects on the absence of syllabus as guideline for teaching and learning process. Therefore, on previous study, a set of English syllabus for elementary school was developed to provide English teachers with guideline in teaching. To provide students with closer exposure on local character building, the syllabus was developed based on local value. In the process of syllabus development, try out was done to get feedback on its implementation on the syllabus in the teaching process. Moreover, feedback from teachers' forum toward the syllabus was also obtained. The feedback received becomes a valuable input toward the improvement of the English syllabus.

Keywords: teachers' feedback, English syllabus, local values

## Introduction
The elimination of English subject for elementary school from Curriculum of 2013 has been an issue which leads to some problems. This can be seen from the Ministry of Education Decree number 21 year 2016 about the content standard of primary and secondary education which excludes English from the subjects offered for elementary school students. In reality, it has been proven that English has provided communication skills needed for everyone upon seeing the importance of it, many elementary schools still offer English subject as extraculicular that is included in regular schedule and is made compulsary for all students. English subject, although excluded form curriculum, becomes one of the subjects that the students have to take the examination on to determine their graduation form elementary school. Besides, the English score also becomes one of the requirements to enroll junior high school. Thus it intriques a question as to how a student can master and pass the test and achieve minimum score if she/he is not taught English? Responding to the chaos resulted from English subject elimination, Ministry of Education has recently issued a sircular letter stating that now schools have the authority to include English as local-content subject. Whatever its position is, English needs to have syllabus as a guidance for teachers.

This complex problem which can affect many parties needs appropriate solutions. One of the solutions is the development of applicable English syllabus as a guideline to be used by all elementary schools so that the materials taught in elementary schools are the same. Therefore, a firm guideline in the form of syllabus and teaching materials in the form of textbook is on requiry. Syllabus is needed since it is more confined to the local context and is grounded on the accounts and records of the real events in the classroom as the curriculum implemented in the teaching and learning is adjusted to the situation of their own (Nunan, 1988). In addition, local values are chosen as the soul of English syllabus as they can enhance students awareness on the local identity though they are learning foreign language. Learners will not only be motivated from a theoretical perspective, but will also find it much easier to learn English from local cultural material that is directly in line with their schema or background knowledge (Nault, 2006; Khan, 2016; Kristiawan, 2012). Teaching language without the local context in which it is likely to operate, the teaching may prove to be quite boring, irrelevant and un-contextual and resulting in no outcomes (Khan, 2014).

In this study, local values can be defined as "ideas, value, or local view that is wise, full of wisdom, good-value embedded and followed by society" (Nurrahmawati, 2013). Therefore, by integrating the local values into the teaching of English, the teaching and learning of English will prepare young learners to be the next generation of this country who can learn international language which is widely used and at the same time preserve their culture as well. Thus, the English materials that will be based on the local values are expected to accomodate young learners to learn the language and possess strong local character which means that they will not be losing their nationalism in so doing.

In the prior study, English syllabi for grade 1 to grade 6 students of elementary school with local values has been developed by Ratri and Puspitasari (2019). To make sure that the syllabi are suitable for teaching and learning in elementary level with its local values-based design, feedback toward the syllabus from user is really vital. For this purpose, questionnaire was distributed to teachers in the effort of the betterment of syllabus as the guideline for the teachers later. Prior to the development of English syllabus, try out was also conducted and it revealed the lack of English syllabus developed based on the observation of the practice of the syllabus.

This study tried to figure out the teachers' feedback toward the English syllabus with local values for elementary school. Teachers' feedback is significant as unsuccessfulness in the educational process of teaching and learning can be triggered by theoretically injudicious top-down adjustment that pay no attention to practitioners' and other stakeholders' perception (Namaghi, 2017). Therefore, to avoid the failure, teachers' feedback was taken into account to bestow ample of improvement toward the syllabus. The feedback given is not only about the materials, but also about media used on teaching learning that needs to be concerned. Besides, the details feedback toward the syllabus was also given by teachers. All elements in teaching process should be considered to integrate local values in the English syllabus for elementary students. The feedback toward syllabus is also taken into account on what should be improved to make it better and more applicable in the real teaching.

***Review of Related Literature***

One of important factors included in a syllabus is teaching materials. Materials are described in a very simple way as "any structured explanation of the techniques and activities to be used in classroom teaching" (Brown, 1995). Such a description is wide-ranging that it includes books, lesson plans, audio-visual supports, games, or any kind of operation which can be utilized for the purposes of language teaching and practice. Instructional materials are so pivotal for use in the academic process of the teaching and learning be it held inside or outside the classroom as they serve as sources for presentation material, sources of activities that promote communicative interaction, references source for students, sources of stimulation and ideas for activities in the classroom, and as syllabi from which the objectives of the learning that have been determined is reflected on, as well as a support for novice teachers who are still striving to gain confidence (Cunningsworth, 1995). Therefore, instructional materials play crucial role in syllabus.

Teaching instructions and materials are not only to provide students with knowledge, but far more beyond. Instructional activities at schools, by nature, incompass processes to sharpen students' abilities, skills, and character buildings which are supposed to prepare students to be highly competitive generation to respond the challenges of posed to them in the global and modern eras (Anggraini & Kusniarti, 2015). Hence, teachers are entailed to prepare English materials not only to provide students with knowledge and skills but also to build students' character. Sugiyo & Purwastuti (2017) stated that "character education is closely related to these components: moral-tradition knowledge, moral reasoning, affection and altruism, as well as moral tendency". Character building shaped in Indonesian setting for young learners have been widely discussed by cultivating local wisdom which could potentially shape the characters of the nation as well as the identity of the nation because local wisdom covers the local wealth that contains policies or life view points (Wahab, 2012). Local wisdom will equip students with good deeds in the middle of globalization and modernization era which tend to offer something instant. The introduction of local wisdom to students could be done by integrating it to the English teaching materials. English teaching materials are not supposed to only present theories, but also set examples and provide opportunities for students to explore further knowledge and skills. Only then will this enable students to develop their firm characters at their growing stages. Consequently, students are more well-prepared to be ready and competitive being in the globalization and modernization eras, as well as becoming more mature

Integrating local wisdom in instructional activities into the teaching of foreign language helps students to keep their real identity as Indonesian though they learn foreign language (Albantani & Madkur, 2018). The application of this concept is not only to equip the students with linguistic competence but also to provide them with cultural competence. There has been a question raised on why the local wisdom needs to be involved in the teaching of foreign language. In response to the question, Meliono (2011) stresses that education is one of the suitable media that is precise and effective to generate a young generation who is able to create an inquiring mind, wise, open-minded, and constructive attitude. This general values of local wisdoms can be both explicitly and implicitly implanted into the process of teaching and learning aspects: materials, instruments, methods and so forth.

Besides, in local wisdom formulation, there should be also nationalism aspects as a unifying tool for the variety of ethnics existing in Indonesia. At the time being, in the Curriculum 2013, the affective emphasis and thematic integrative learning would provide support for character education in foreign language learning. Learning that is both integrated and contextual practices can contribute in capturing indigenous issues within the culture. Foreign language learning is highly relevant based on contextual learning to apply.

Unfortunately, the integration of local values in English teaching for young learners is challenging as English subject is excluded for elementary curriculum since 2013. However, it is still offered as extracurricular as many parties still believe that English is a vital course to be mastered by young learners. The urgency of learning English at primary school is considered fundamental by Chern (2003) for the purposes of cultivating international viewpoints while students are learning English and to take maximum advantage of students' critical period for language learning. However, Pinter (2006) and Paul (2003) noted that unlike many second language (L2) learners, young English as a Foreign Language (EFL) children who have limited opportunity of English exposure and language use or have no immediate need or strong motivation to use or learn English, thus those will contribute to students' less motivation in learning English. Therefore, the exposure of English outside classroom is one of essential keys for success English learning. However, English learners have usually been taught the target language in a classroom situation (Hanania & Gradman, 1977).

To make the materials more understandable, the English materials for young learners are arranged gradually. The grading refers to the term in which the materials are organized in the syllabus or coursebook, including the ordering of items and the pace at which the students progress through the course (Cunningsworth, 1995). Therefore, to promote learning for young learners, graded materials is one of the important factors to develop syllabus.

After the implementation of English teaching, assessment is the significant factor to be concerned. Assessing young language learners is different from testing adults. Assessing English for young learners cannot be delivered discrete by skills, it can be tested integrately by formal or informal test. Findings from Rea-Dickins and Gardner suggest formal and informal tets can be performed in assessing young learners, it aims to examine the language targets that young learners may be expected to achieve (Chou, 2014).

## Method

This study is a survey by design. Survey is frequently used to help describing and exploring the behavior of human that this design is commonly used in social research (Singleton and Straits, 2009). Survey research was chosen as the design as it helped in attaining information from individuals obtained from their responses to questions raised (Check and Schutt, 2012). In doing so, survey study can make use several instruments and one of them is questionnairre. Thus, this study on Teachers' Feedback on English Syllabus with Local Values for Elementary School Students incorporated questionnaire as the instrument. As many as 50 teachers were voluntarily involved in this research as the respondents. Those teachers are teaching English in all different grades in almost all elementary schools in the City of Batu,

in East Java Province. They were, under their consent, requested to complete the questionnaire on their responses to the syllabus for English for the first to sixth grades of elementary students. Since they were teaching different levels, those teachers were responsible to respond to certain syllabus for particular grade. However, it is important to note that most of those teachers are teaching in some grades within the schools so some schools have only two teachers and each of them is responsible to handle two or three grades. Once the data were obtained, they were to be analyzed by classifying and describing the data to gain understanding on the syllabus offered. The results of which would provide insights as to whether or not revision is necessary for the betterment of the product which in this case is in the form of the syllabus.

**Findings and Discussion**

English syllabi with local values have been developed and they need feedback from English teachers who will use the syllabus for the implementation of English teaching and learning in the future. Therefore, feedback from teachers was earned by means of questionnaire that was distributed during the focus group discussion held. Feedback from teachers about the syllabus is summed up in the table below.

Table 1. Feedback on syllabus

| No. | Factors | Feedback |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Curriculum | 1. The themes presented in the syllabus are suitable with the themes presented in Curriculum 2013<br>2. The Basic competence should be in line with the Curriculum 2013 |
| 2. | Materials | 1. The materials is suitable with students' level.<br>2. There is still mentioned about tense pattern, grammar should be given inductively in skills.<br>3. In one theme, there should be mentioned 4 skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) |
| 3. | Local Values | 1. The local values are integrated in the materials in many ways (culture, good habits, local habits, local materials)<br>2. Theme 7 in grade 5 is not suitable with local values since the theme is the 7 wonders. |
| 4. | Assessment | 1. The assessment needs to be more specific into 4 skills (reading, listening, reading and writing)<br>2. The syllabus uses thematic as in Curriculum 2013, therefore, the assessment should be in line with core competence 3 and core competence 4 |

The feedback is categorized as 4 factors, they are curriculum, materials, local values, and assessment. Curriculum is the essential thing in developing the syllabus. The current curriculum inserted in the syllabus with local values should be the next concern. Since Indonesia applies Curriculum 2013, the syllabi developed are based on the themes presented in Curriculum 2013 for elementary school (Ratri & Puspitasari, 2019). Next, basic competence presented in the curriculum 2013 should be clearly pictured in the syllabi. Therefore, the purpose of the teaching and learning is in line with the curriculum.

The next one is about the materials presented in the syllabus. The data obtained indicates that the materials employed are suitable with the level of the students. It is graded from easy to difficult level. The grading is aimed to trigger the learning process through the materials ordering and the speed of students' improvement (Cunningsworth, 1995). Therefore, graded materials is one of essential factors which is to be concerned in developing this syllabus for stimulating learner for young leaners. Besides, the development of the materials also needs to take sequencing the activities into account. Tomlinson (2013) stated that the activities in the materials can be flexible in the sense that readiness activities precede experiential activities and there are strong underlying reasons in doing so such as positioning intake response first before inpt response. It is with expectation that students will progress from what they have previously comprehended to what they are supposed to think about.

Futhermore, teachers feedback concerns on the giving tense pattern for elementary students. There are still some spots of the syllabus mentioning about tense pattern explicitly. It should be avoided since teaching grammar for young learners should be given inductively in skills (Ratri et al, 2018). It is quite hard for elementary students to think of something which is not in a concrete area of students' thinking like grammar. Grammar, for young learners, develops at their own pace depending on the quality and quantity of the language exposure and the mediator (Brumfit et al, 1991). Therefore, grammar will be given integrated in the language skills offered which are reading, listening, writing and speaking while giving language input more frequently for students. In accordance with that, the following feedback about materials stated that it the materials developed for each language skill should be clearly stated in the syllabus.

Other than that, local values which are the soul of all materials in the syllabi has been integrated well. The local values are integrated in the materials in many topics (culture, good habits, local habits, local materials). However, one of the themes in grade 5 is not suitable with local values since the theme is the 7 wonders. It is suggested that the theme is changed into something available locally. In accordance, Septy (2016) mentioned that cultural awareness/understanding may become an important issue in English communicative competence. Especially for young learners, the more local the materials are, the more familiar they are for the students. Therefore, materials selection which is really close to the students experience is highly demanded to make it possible for the students to relate to their real world. Besides, this cultural resource could relate to the process of character building (Albantani & Madkur, 2018). Therefore, the culturally based resources have to be considered in selecting teaching-learning materials. Then, lessons from local wisdoms, in particular, may be taken from the content of local legends,

folklores, special places in the village, certain traditional/monumental objects, building, rivers, mount/hill, forest, and the like. The lessons from local wisdom may contain particular meaning of norms and values to understand. The essential values of local wisdom can be delivered through social context which is to be specific through educational pedagogical to the communicant, namely cognitive (know about something), affective (formation attitude), and conative (behavior, act to do something) (Selasih & Suhardana, 2018).

The assessment is the next entity that is considered to be a concern from teachers' feedback. Teachers evaluated that the assessment presented in the syllabus was too global. Thus, it should be made more specific for each skill (listening, writing, speaking, and reading). In this case, the reasearchers do not share the same ideas on assessment issue for young learners since assessing young learners can be integrated and can be through formal and informal way. Findings from Rea-Dickins and Gardner (2008) suggest that it is not always appropriate to use informal classroom tests as research tools. Formal tests may need to be used to examine the language targets that young learners may be expected to achieve. Informal test like games, songs and stories were used to facilitate pupils' learning and memorisation of English vocabulary; it was essential to use formal tests to examine how much the pupils had learned by the end of the course (Chou, 2014). Moreover, McKay (2006) highlighted several particular demands and recommendations regarding testing young learners, such as brief and varied tasks, pictures, and attractive typography. The syllabi developed use thematic based that is in accordance with Curriculum 2013. Therefore, the assessment should be in line with core competence 3 and core competence 4 presented in curriculum 2013.

***Feedback on Try Out***

Try out was done in 2$^{nd}$, 3$^{rd}$ and 5$^{th}$ grades. This try out was conducted in one meeting in each class to perform a topic in the syllabus developed based on local wisdom. Feedback was given toward the implementation of the syllabus. The feedback given is summed up in the following table.

Tabel 2. Teachers' feedback on try out

| No. | Criteria | Feedback |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Materials | a. The topic delivered is suitable with local wisdom<br>b. Some materials presented in the try out does not really match with local values. |
| 2. | Teaching Method | a. Method used is really fun and engaging |
| 3. | Teaching scenario | a. It reflects local values in teaching elementary students.<br>b. The teaching and learning is fun and involving local values in its process. |
| 4. | Media | a. Most pictures used as media (flashcard) shows vocabulary which is close to students' real life, some of them should be more local. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 5. | Students' response | a. Students are engaged to teaching and learning process<br>b. Students respond positive in the teaching process |

The feedback of try out done three times in different classes shows that there are five aspects to be discussed, namely: media, materials, teaching method, teaching scenario, and students' response. The teaching and learning was fun with the integration of local wisdom. The materials with local wisdom are given by exposing more materials on things which are really close to students' real life. It aims to get students understanding more to the topic discussed since they know or get into it on daily basis. The local values help them to grab the materials better since they facilitate students to learn things that are dear and familiar to them. Feedback for betterment was also given by the teacher-observer. It mentioned that the materials given to the students involve local values. Yet, some of the topics of the materials were not something the students are familiar with in real life. The feedback was intended for 2nd grade students which was about animals. The unit discussed turtle and the teacher found that the animal was not something that was common for students in their real life. As the suggestion, teacher proposed for a change from turtle to more familiar animals such as rabbit or hen. Overall, the local values integrated in the instructional materials can promote character education which is an attempt to establish morality as a pillar of life that is valuable, meaningful and efficient, as well as a basis for creating a decent society that is just and loving and has moral principles, viewpoints, moral thinking, decisions and self-knowledge (Lickona, 1991). The local values will secure Indonesian people's good lives in today's globalization and information age (Sugiyo & Purwastuti, 2017).

Teaching scenario used in the try out inloves local values where life skill is inserted there. Life skills are an instructional orientation that aims to make any aspect of learning meet the demands of orientation. Educators are attempting to prepare, coordinate, execute and assess learning outcomes by also concentrating on life skills, while learners are preparing to acquire and master life skills in order to live independently or to maximize the use of potential / self and environmental resources. Consequently, life skills must be owned by every component of learning, especially by educators who interact directly with learners through the learning preparation based on life skills content (Selasih & Sudarsana, 2018).

Moreover, the media used in the classroom is flashcard representing vocabulary and words of which students are acquainted with in real life which in turn promote the local wisdom. Furthermore, the media should also be in line with the materials given. Beside the enjoyable media, students' response toward the teaching process in try-out session showed good attitude since they enjoyed the activities in English class. They were actively enganged in teaching process and they took pleasure to be involved in the activities.

## Conclusion

English language teaching could be suspected to open access for foreign cultures to infiltrate. This situation may create conflict with local/national cultures and values/norms of Indonesia. Upon the development of English syllabus with the local wisdom, teachers' feedback is highly demanded for the betterment of the

syllabus. Feedback focuses on the media, materials, method, and assessments with the integration of local values. Therefore, with the integration of local values, it is important to take into account of how students keep maintaining their identity and integrity reflected in their characters as well as their spirit of nationalism. After the syllabi were revised based on the teachers' feedback, the development of English textbook with local values based on the syllabus would be conducted for the following research in contributing good English teaching and learning process without setting aside Indonesians students' core culture and values. However, views on cultural competence in the globalization era is worth to be explored as world now becomes a "big community" with English as lingua franca. Further researcher is recommended to investigate the effectiveness of insertion multicultures to English language teaching.

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