

Integrating Dayak Local Wisdom into Literacy Instruction in Indonesian Language Subjects at the Elementary Level

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ABSTRACT

Indonesian language instruction in elementary schools is expected to develop students' literacy competencies while fostering cultural identity. However, literacy activities often provide limited opportunities to integrate local wisdom, particularly Dayak culture, resulting in less contextual and culturally meaningful learning experiences. This study aimed to examine the implementation of Dayak local wisdom-based literacy in Indonesian language learning and explore its contribution to students' literacy development and cultural awareness. A qualitative descriptive design was employed at SD Negeri 1 Kalampangan, Palangka Raya. Participants included 24 fourth-grade students, one classroom teacher, one principal, and one librarian selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected over three months through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. The data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model complemented by inductive thematic analysis, while credibility was established through triangulation and member checking. The findings indicate that integrating Dayak folktales, traditional songs, storytelling, and culturally relevant learning activities enhanced students' reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills while strengthening their appreciation of Dayak culture, cultural identity, and social values. The implementation also increased student engagement by connecting literacy instruction with authentic local contexts. Nevertheless, limited availability of Dayak-based teaching materials and teachers' varying cultural knowledge constrained instructional implementation. Integrating Dayak local wisdom into literacy instruction represents an effective culturally responsive approach that simultaneously promotes literacy development, character education, and cultural preservation in elementary education. Expanding culturally relevant learning resources and teacher professional development is essential to support sustainable implementation.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Elementary school represents the initial stage of formal education, where children begin to learn the basic skills of reading, writing, and speaking in a particular language. The implementation of literacy programs at the elementary level enables children to acquire these foundational skills, which are crucial for academic success at higher levels and essential for navigating everyday life (Kharizmi, 2019). Literacy is defined as the ability to read and write. Literacy skills—which include listening, speaking, reading, and writing—serve as the foundation for successful student learning activities (Samsiyah, 2017). Therefore, fostering a culture of literacy in schools is of utmost importance. Basic literacy skills, especially reading and writing, should be prioritized within the education system, as reading offers numerous benefits (Kurniawan & Parnawi, 2023).

In the context of Indonesian language learning, the goal is not only to develop linguistic skills but also to shape students' character and appreciation of cultural values. The goals of teaching the Indonesian language at the elementary level include enabling students to appreciate and benefit from literary works in order to develop their personality, broaden their life perspectives, and enhance their linguistic knowledge and abilities (Susanto, 2013). According to Kurniawan et al. (2020), the objectives of Indonesian language instruction are to guide students in using language for learning, to express ideas fluently and clearly, and to communicate effectively with others—learning to use language, learning about language, and learning through language. Language skills in the school curriculum encompass four key aspects: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Ali, 2020). As Ramelan (2017) points out, the teaching of the Indonesian language in elementary schools essentially aims to develop all four of these language competencies. However, the development of literacy should not only focus on linguistic aspects but also on critical thinking, cultural awareness, and communication. Literacy involves more than just the ability to read and write—it also encompasses the development of critical thinking skills (Nuryani, 2016; Oktariani, 2020). Furthermore, communication skills—both oral and written—are integral to literacy, as they enable students to express their ideas effectively in various contexts.

Despite the recognized importance of cultural and civic literacy, Indonesian language instruction often lacks contextualized cultural materials that reflect local heritage, especially within the Dayak community. According to Joyo (2018), literacy movements within Indonesian language instruction can be linked to local wisdom, considering that the values upheld by communities are not yet fully understood by students. One approach to enhancing literacy is by integrating local wisdom. Local wisdom contains rich cultural, moral, and social values that are relevant to the daily lives of the local community (Suarningsih, 2019). However, as noted by Asip (2023), current Indonesian language instruction at the elementary level tends to focus on formal aspects such as grammar, spelling, and writing conventions. This emphasis may overlook elements of local wisdom and culture, potentially diminishing students' interest and motivation to learn.

The integration of Dayak local wisdom into literacy learning can provide not only culturally relevant materials but also foster students' sense of identity and pride. A local wisdom-based approach to learning can reinforce students' sense of identity and pride in their cultural and traditional backgrounds (Santoso et al., 2022). By integrating Indonesian language literacy with Dayak local wisdom in elementary school instruction, it is hoped that a more diverse, inclusive, and meaningful learning environment can be created for students—while simultaneously contributing to the preservation of local culture. Dayak culture, which is rooted in values such as communal decision-making (*musyawarah*), respect for nature, and social solidarity, offers significant potential for strengthening cultural and civic literacy. The Dayak culture reflects a harmonious relationship between humans, the environment, and the community. These values are highly relevant for integration into cultural and civic literacy education, as they enrich young generations' perspectives in facing global challenges without losing their cultural roots.

Multicultural education aims to create equitable and inclusive learning environments that respect and incorporate diverse cultural backgrounds, empowering students to develop intercultural competence and awareness of social justice (Banks, 2019; Nieto & Bode, 2018). One effective approach to achieving these goals is place-based learning, which connects educational content to the students' local

environment, community, and culture, making learning more relevant and contextualized (Gruenewald, 2003; Sobel, 2004). Through this approach, students gain not only academic knowledge but also a sense of belonging and responsibility toward their environment and cultural heritage. Similarly, culture-preserving pedagogy centers on embedding cultural knowledge, values, and practices into the learning process, especially in Indigenous education contexts, with the goal of sustaining traditions and cultural identity (Battiste, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995). This pedagogy emphasizes validating students' cultural identities and supporting the transmission of knowledge across generations, thus making education meaningful both academically and culturally. By integrating these three approaches, education can offer inclusive, contextualized learning experiences that strengthen students' cultural identity.

In the context of local wisdom as a support for cultural literacy in Indonesian language learning, educators can facilitate learning activities by providing or guiding students to read texts embedded with local wisdom. The values of local wisdom play a significant role in human life as social beings (Pujiatna, 2021). Currently, however, literacy materials based on Dayak local wisdom remain limited in number and variety, even though libraries in several schools in Palangka Raya have begun to include Dayak storybooks, legends, and folktales. These efforts, while promising, still fall short of capturing the full richness of Dayak traditions. Given this context, this research aims to explore how Dayak local wisdom can be effectively integrated into literacy activities in Indonesian language instruction at the elementary school level. The goal is to create meaningful learning experiences while preserving local culture and enhancing students' cultural and civic literacy.

Research Question:

How is Dayak local wisdom integrated into literacy activities in Indonesian language learning at the elementary school level?

Theoretical Framework:

1. This study is grounded in three interrelated theoretical perspectives:
2. Etnopedagogy, which emphasizes education rooted in local culture and values;
Contextual learning theory, which highlights the importance of connecting learning materials to students' real-life experiences and environments;
3. Multicultural literacy theory, which promotes inclusive literacy practices that reflect cultural diversity and identity.

Previous research by Oktaviani and Ratnaasari (2020) has shown that ethnopedagogy, as a learning approach implemented through activities using local wisdom-based media, is more effective. The use of media based on local excellence is often accompanied by various play-based activities, thereby creating learning environments that are active, creative, effective, and enjoyable. This indicates that ethnopedagogy can be successfully applied in elementary school learning when it is integrated with innovative instructional activities, such as those involving media rooted in local wisdom. Another study by Muzakkir demonstrated that a more strategic implementation of ethnopedagogical approaches in learning can be achieved through value-based cultural education in teaching and learning contexts. The integration of culture into education may include, for example, the use of *Tari Seudati* (a traditional Acehese dance) in mathematics lessons, manuscripts and cultural heritage in language learning, *kupiah riman* (a traditional cap) in art and craft subjects, local customs as media for social studies, and *Megeude-geude* (a traditional sport) in physical education. Thus, this study seeks to contribute to the growing body of research on contextual, culturally rooted literacy instruction, particularly by highlighting how Dayak local wisdom can enrich the Indonesian language curriculum and foster deeper cultural understanding among elementary students.

2. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design to explore the implementation of literacy based on Dayak local wisdom in Indonesian language learning at SD Negeri 1 Kalampangan Palangka Raya. This approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the processes, perceptions, and practices related to the integration of local culture into literacy activities.

2.1 Research Subjects and Sampling Technique

The research subjects included 24 fourth-grade students, the homeroom teacher of Class IV (female), the school principal (male), and the head of the school library (female). Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in classroom instruction and the development or management of culture-based learning materials. The students were aged between 9 and 10 years, representing various ethnic backgrounds, including Dayak, Banjar, and Javanese.

2.2 Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected over a three-month period using three main techniques:

- 2.2.1 Participant Observation, to record classroom interactions and the integration of Dayak cultural elements in instructional activities.
- 2.2.2 Semi-Structured Interviews, conducted with teachers, school leaders, and library staff to explore their strategies, perceptions, and experiences regarding the implementation of culture-based literacy.
- 2.2.3 Documentation, which involved collecting relevant materials such as lesson plans (RPP), student writing samples, culturally-based reading materials, and multimedia tools used during instruction. The instruments included observation checklists, interview guides, and documentation forms.

2.3 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1994), consisting of three interrelated steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. During data reduction, the researcher organized and condensed data from interviews, observations, and documents based on emerging categories. In the data display stage, information was presented in the form of narrative descriptions, matrices, and thematic groupings to facilitate pattern recognition and interpretation. In the final stage, conclusions were drawn inductively and continually refined through a cyclical process of verification.

In addition to the interactive model, thematic analysis was employed to analyze qualitative data more deeply. Interview transcripts and observation notes were manually coded using an inductive coding process. First, initial codes were generated from raw data without predetermined categories. These codes were then grouped into themes that reflected key findings, such as:

- a. Local Culture-Based Literacy Practices
- b. Strategies for Cultural Integration
- c. Student Engagement and Response

The themes were reviewed for coherence and relevance, and then interpreted in relation to the research objectives.

2.4 Data Validity

To enhance the credibility of the findings, the researcher utilized triangulation of sources and methods, comparing results across different informants and data collection techniques. Member checking was also conducted by sharing preliminary findings with key participants to ensure accuracy and alignment with their intended meanings. These strategies followed the validity procedures suggested by Creswell (2012).

2.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were strictly observed throughout the study. Approval was obtained from the school administration, and informed consent was secured from all participants, including written parental consent for students. Personal identities were protected through pseudonyms, and all data were stored securely and used solely for research purposes.

This study was conducted in a single elementary school (SD Negeri 1 Kalampangan Palangka Raya), which presents a limitation in terms of generalizability. While the findings offer valuable

insights into local culture-based literacy practices in a specific context, they may not be fully representative of other schools or regions with different cultural, institutional, or socio-economic backgrounds. Future research is encouraged to involve multiple schools or broader comparative studies to strengthen the applicability of findings across contexts.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Findings

3.1.1 Implementation of literacy based on local Dayak wisdom in Indonesian language learning in elementary schools

Based on the results of interviews obtained by researchers, it was found that there was an implementation of literacy based on local Dayak wisdom in Indonesian language learning at SDN 1 Kalampangan Palangka Raya. The results of the interviews show that Dayak local wisdom is understood as cultural heritage which includes values, traditions and knowledge passed down from generation to generation. As stated by the Class Teacher:

"In my opinion, Dayak local wisdom includes the values, traditions and knowledge passed down from generation to generation by the Dayak people. This concept includes a way of life that respects nature, customs, folklore, and cultural arts such as dance, music, and carvings. As a teacher, I understand this local wisdom as a source of education that is rich in moral, social and environmental values"

The integration of local Dayak wisdom in Indonesian language learning is considered very important. This is because this process can increase students' awareness and appreciation of their own culture, help preserve cultural heritage, and create more contextual, relevant and meaningful learning. This approach also encourages students' sense of pride in their local cultural identity. As stated by the class teacher:

"It is very important, it can increase students' awareness and appreciation of their culture and can preserve culture. Integrating local Dayak wisdom is important because it helps students recognize and appreciate their cultural identity. This also creates contextual, relevant and meaningful learning, and encourages a sense of pride in local culture"

In practice, teachers integrate local Dayak wisdom through various literacy activities which include writing, listening, speaking and reading skills. As stated by the class teacher:

"I integrate local Dayak wisdom in Indonesian language learning, utilizing a literacy approach that includes aspects of writing, listening, speaking and reading. In terms of writing, I ask students to write short stories or essays inspired by Dayak folklore or cultural values. To support this activity, I provide access to the library to first read Dayak folklore there first."

"In listening activities, I use documentary videos, or Dayak folk tales which I show in class using Infocus, I get these videos from YouTube. Students are then asked to analyze the content or answer questions based on the story they witnessed. Speaking, to practice speaking skills, I encourage students to tell stories orally about their experiences related to Dayak traditions or values. Listening: Students are invited to listen to traditional Dayak songs available on digital platforms such as YouTube. After that, they were asked to discuss the meaning of the lyrics or cultural messages contained in the song."

Learning Indonesian based on local Dayak wisdom has had a positive impact on students from various cultural backgrounds. Even though most of the interview students were not from the Dayak tribe, they felt enthusiastic and benefited from this approach. One of the students stated, *"I feel happy because I can learn more about the Dayak culture where I live."* The students showed a greater sense of appreciation for Dayak culture. One of the students said, *"I feel more open and appreciative of the unique culture around me after learning this."* Another student added, *"I feel proud of my cultural heritage."* Activities such as writing short stories, composing poetry, dancing, and creating group stories based on Dayak folklore foster students' creativity. One student said, *"We once made a project to write short*

stories based on Dayak folklore," while another said, "We once wrote a poem together about the nature of Kalimantan based on Dayak folklore." The implementation of Dayak local wisdom-based literacy activities involved various forms of reading, writing, listening, and speaking practices integrated with local cultural content. The following table summarizes the literacy activities implemented during the learning process.

Table 1. Forms of Literacy Activities Based on Dayak Local Wisdom

Literacy Activity	Learning Media Used	Literacy Skill Developed	Cultural Value Introduced
Reading Dayak folktales	Story books, digital texts	Reading comprehension	Respect for culture
Listening to traditional songs	YouTube videos, audio recordings	Listening skills	Cultural appreciation
Writing folklore-based essays	Worksheets, library references	Writing skills	Creativity and cultural identity
Group storytelling discussions	Group discussion activities	Speaking skills	Gotong royong and cooperation
Watching animated Dayak stories	Animated videos/documentaries	Critical thinking and interpretation	Moral and social values



Figure 1. Literacy Activities through Animated Dayak Story Films

Teachers use various methods and media to make learning more interesting, such as folklore books, songs, dances, digital videos, and group discussions. One student said, "Teachers usually explain stories with pictures or videos, so that it is easier for us to understand." This learning also strengthens students' moral and social values. One of the students said, "Teachers usually start the lesson by telling a story, then we are invited to discuss the values in the story."

3.1.2 Sources and literacy reading materials based on local Dayak wisdom in Indonesian language learning in elementary schools

The interview results show that the integration of local Dayak wisdom in Indonesian language teaching is carried out actively and creatively by teachers to make learning more relevant and interesting for students. Teachers use various elements of Dayak culture, such as folklore, songs and traditions, to teach language skills and increase students' understanding of local culture. As one respondent stated, "One example of a folk tale that I often use is the legend 'The Origin of Nusa Island,' which I integrate into learning narrative texts." Through this activity, students are invited to read or listen to the story, then asked to identify the structure of the text. Traditional songs such as "Malauk Manjala" are also used to practice listening, speaking and understanding the meaning of the lyrics. As explained, "Students listened to the song via digital media, discussing the cultural message it contained."

In addition, teachers adapt lesson materials to Dayak culture to increase relevance for students. For example, when teaching descriptive texts, teachers use images of Dayak, Mandau or Betang house carving motifs to help students describe objects based on observations. Teachers also connect lessons to students' daily lives, such as using example sentences related to local cultural activities when

discussing grammar. The literacy sources used are very diverse, including textbooks containing Dayak folklore, cultural articles from the internet, digital media such as video documentaries, podcasts, and material from e-books. Teachers also get inspiration through discussions with colleagues from the Dayak tribe. As one teacher mentioned, *"I also utilize materials from e-books and online learning platforms that provide traditional Dayak folklore and songs."*

These findings show that the integration of local Dayak wisdom not only enriches Indonesian language learning but also strengthens students' cultural identity. Through this approach, students not only learn language skills but also understand relevant and meaningful local cultural values. The use of teaching materials that integrate local Dayak wisdom in learning has had a positive impact on students. The following are some of the main findings based on interviews with six participants: Teachers use various media to introduce Dayak culture, including folklore books such as the Legend of the Batu Dragon and the Origin of Nusa Island, traditional songs, as well as animated videos and documentaries from digital platforms. One student stated, *"The teacher also uses video stories about Dayak legends that we watch together in class."*

The reading materials used depict values such as mutual cooperation, respect for nature, honesty, and courage. Another student added, *"Yes, the reading materials show that most students feel that the reading materials presented are interesting and relevant to their lives. However, there is a desire for a wider variety of reading materials, such as comics or picture books with modern illustrations. One student expressed, "I want reading materials such as comics or picture books about Dayak stories to make them easier to understand." Teachers also share real experiences or personal stories related to Dayak culture, such as Tiwah traditional rituals or hunting traditions. This adds depth to students' understanding of local culture. A student said, "Teacher once told about the experience of someone who participated in Dayak traditional rituals such as Tiwah. That's very interesting to me."*



Figure 2. Local Cultural Reading Book Literacy Activities.

Although sufficient reading material is available, several students indicated that the quantity is limited and the variety is lacking. They hope that there will be more diverse and in-depth reading materials about Dayak culture. One student commented, *"There are enough available, but I have read almost everything there is, so if there were more books specifically about Dayak stories, it would be better."*

3.1.3 Integration of literacy based on local Dayak wisdom in the Indonesian language learning curriculum in elementary schools

The results of the interviews show that the use of local Dayak wisdom in learning Indonesian has a positive influence on students' enthusiasm and understanding. Even though the Dayak regional language is only introduced in the form of simple words or sentences, this effort still has a significant impact on students' connection with local culture. As one teacher stated, *"Yes, but it only introduces a few words or sentences that can be used in everyday life."* Student responses to the use of local Dayak wisdom were generally very positive. They become more enthusiastic because the learning material feels relevant to their lives. As stated by the teacher, *"Activities such as reading folklore or listening to traditional songs keep them interested and enrich their understanding of local culture."* This approach is also considered more interesting by students than learning that only focuses on textbooks.

In terms of linking learning to everyday life, many students can recognize Dayak cultural values through folklore, traditions, or experiences that are familiar to their lives. One teacher explained, *"Through folklore, traditions, or cultural values taught, they often recognize familiar practices or experiences in their lives."* However, not all students have the same understanding, especially those who do not come from the Dayak tribe or environment. Based on interviews with six participants, the following are the main conclusions regarding learning based on Dayak folklore and culture:

- a. Most of the students stated that they had studied Dayak folklore, such as the Nusa Legend, Tingang Bird, and various stories about Dayak traditional rituals and dances.

Student 3 said, "Yes, I learned about folklore such as the legend of Nusa. That is a favorite story."

Learner 5 added, "I learned about Dayak dance. It helped me understand local culture better."

- b. Teachers use creative and diverse approaches to teach Dayak folklore and culture, including: Read the story and ask students to write a summary or discuss the moral message.

Student 1 said, "The teacher usually reads the story, then we are asked to write a summary or discuss the moral message."

- c. Use media such as video, audio, and animation to provide a more interactive learning experience.

Student 6 said, *"The teacher uses audio stories, video documentaries, and group discussions to explain the material."*

- d. Relate folk tales to tasks such as writing essays, composing poetry, and reading stories aloud to practice critical thinking and speaking skills.

Dayak folklore is often used in various learning contexts:

In learning narrative texts or procedures to describe traditional culture or activities.

Student 4 stated, *"The topic of traditional Dayak dance is taught in the procedure text."*

In explanatory text to discuss traditional rituals or cultural uniqueness.

Student 5 said, *"The teacher connects the topic about Dayak traditional rituals with explanatory text."*

- e. Almost all students feel enthusiastic about studying Dayak folklore because of its close cultural relevance to their lives.

Student 2 said, *"Very interested, because I understand more about the local culture in Kalimantan."*

Student 6 added, *"Learning Dayak culture adds to my motivation because the material is close to everyday life."*

- f. Although folklore is frequently used, some students note the limitations of reading materials or supporting media.

Student 1 stated, *"It's not in the book."*

Learner 6 also noted that most of the material came from live stories or digital media.

Students stated that learning Dayak folklore increased their appreciation for local culture and taught them moral values, such as courage, honesty and mutual cooperation.

Student 5 said, *"I feel more appreciative of Dayak culture after learning about it."*

Learner 3 added, *"Folklore is part of the culture where I live and is a new experience for me."*



Figure 3. Activities: Reading Poetry in the Local Dayak Language

3.1.4 The impact of integrating Dayak local wisdom literacy in Indonesian language learning at SDN 1 Kalampangan Palangka Raya

The application of local Dayak wisdom in learning has had a positive impact on improving students' literacy skills, especially in reading and writing. As stated, "Students become more enthusiastic about reading folklore or texts based on local culture because they feel the material is close to them." Apart from that, writing activities inspired by Dayak culture also encourage students' creativity and self-confidence. In fact, students who are not from the Dayak tribe show high enthusiasm for this learning, because they see it as something new and fun. Another significant impact is increasing students' moral and social understanding, including a sense of pride in local culture and inter-ethnic tolerance. The teacher stated that, *"They can learn about tolerance between different ethnicities,"* which shows the positive effect of culture-based learning on students' character development.

There are several challenges in implementation, such as teachers' limited knowledge about Dayak culture, lack of diverse teaching materials, and minimal updating of Dayak stories in learning media. One way to overcome this obstacle is to involve students in sharing their stories or personal experiences. The teacher also stated that, *"I invite students to document their stories through writing,"* as an effort to create new learning resources. In carrying out literacy activities, students most enjoy listening to stories, especially through media such as animated videos, documentaries, songs and folk tales. This is supported by the statement that, *"Children prefer to watch animated cartoons of Dayak stories."* This activity is not only fun but also effective in introducing Dayak culture to students.

Overall, learning based on local Dayak wisdom not only improves students' literacy skills but also enriches their understanding of cultural and social values, making it an interesting and meaningful approach to the educational process. Based on interviews with six participants, the following are the main points that reflect their experiences, views and aspirations regarding learning Dayak culture:

- a. Most students feel proud and more connected to Dayak culture after learning about it.
Student 1 stated, *"I feel proud and more interested in studying Dayak culture."*
Learner 6 said, *"I feel more connected to local culture after learning about Dayak."*
- b. Dayak folklore teaches important values such as mutual cooperation, honesty, respect for parents, and love for nature.
Student 1 said, *"The value of mutual cooperation and love of nature is very useful, especially in everyday life."*
Learner 5 added, *"The value of simplicity and closeness to nature is very useful in everyday life."*
- c. Students feel enthusiastic because the teacher uses a varied and interactive approach.
Listening to stories is a favorite of many participants. Student 1 said, *"Listening to stories makes it easier for me to understand the storyline and moral message."*
Visualizations such as videos and animations are also preferred. Student 5 said, *"I am more enthusiastic, especially when the teacher uses visual media such as video."*
- d. Group discussions and story writing also attract students' attention because they actively involve students.
- e. Students have memorable experiences, from writing poetry to performing stories.
Student 3 stated, *"I remember most when I wrote a poem about the nature of Kalimantan based on Dayak folklore."*
Learner 6 said, *"I want to do story shows more often."*
- f. Students have certain learning media preferences:
Listening: *"I like listening because the teacher often presents the story in a very interesting way."* (Student 4)
Reading: *"Reading allows me to understand details of the story that I might miss when listening."* (Student 2)
Writing: *"Writing helps me express my thoughts in a creative way."* (Student 6)
- g. Students want to explore more aspects of Dayak culture that are not widely known, such as:
Story of the origins of dance and its meaning (Student 1)

- Traditional songs and the stories behind them (Student 2)
- Carving art and its symbols (Students 4)
- Traditional musical instruments and stories about their use (Student 6)



Figure 4. Local Cultural Arts Performance Activities.

3.2 Discussion

The findings demonstrate that integrating Dayak local wisdom into Indonesian language literacy instruction provides meaningful opportunities to strengthen students' literacy competencies while simultaneously reinforcing cultural identity. Rather than functioning merely as supplementary cultural content, Dayak folktales, traditional songs, storytelling, and community values became contextual learning resources that enabled students to connect literacy activities with their everyday experiences. Students showed greater enthusiasm for reading, writing, listening, and speaking tasks because the learning materials reflected the social and cultural environment familiar to them. This finding supports the principles of ethnopedagogy, which emphasize that local knowledge serves as a valuable educational resource capable of making learning more authentic and culturally meaningful (Battiste, 2002; Oktaviani & Ratnaasari, 2020). It also reinforces place-based education, which argues that learning becomes more relevant when instructional content is connected to learners' local communities and lived experiences (Gruenewald, 2003; Sobel, 2004).

The implementation of culturally responsive literacy practices also reflects the principles of culturally responsive pedagogy. Teachers intentionally incorporated Dayak stories, cultural symbols, and traditional practices into literacy instruction through reading comprehension, essay writing, storytelling, poetry composition, and multimedia-based discussions. These instructional strategies allowed students to recognize their cultural heritage while simultaneously developing language proficiency. According to Gay (2010), culturally responsive teaching enhances academic achievement because it validates learners' cultural backgrounds as legitimate sources of knowledge. Likewise, Banks (2019) argues that multicultural education promotes inclusive learning environments by integrating diverse cultural perspectives into classroom practices. The present study extends these perspectives by demonstrating that the integration of Dayak cultural resources encourages not only literacy development but also students' appreciation of cultural diversity, including among learners from non-Dayak backgrounds.

The findings further indicate that literacy development occurred through socially mediated learning processes. Classroom activities such as collaborative storytelling, group discussions, shared interpretation of traditional songs, and collective reflection on moral values encouraged students to construct knowledge through interaction with teachers and peers. These practices are consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which emphasizes that cognitive development occurs through social interaction within meaningful cultural contexts. Teachers acted as facilitators by scaffolding students' understanding through guided questioning, multimedia resources, and collaborative

learning experiences. Consequently, literacy learning extended beyond decoding written texts toward higher-order processes involving interpretation, critical thinking, and cultural reflection. Such findings suggest that literacy instruction grounded in local culture can simultaneously foster language competence and social learning.

An important contribution of this study is the identification of cultural identity as an educational outcome accompanying literacy improvement. Students reported greater pride in Dayak culture, stronger appreciation of local traditions, and increased awareness of values such as mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), environmental responsibility, honesty, and respect for cultural diversity. These findings suggest that local wisdom functions not only as instructional content but also as a medium for character education. This observation is consistent with previous studies indicating that local wisdom strengthens students' cultural awareness and moral development through contextual learning experiences (Pujiatna, 2021; Santoso et al., 2022). Compared with previous ethnopedagogical research that primarily examined instructional effectiveness, the present study demonstrates that sustained literacy activities can simultaneously reinforce students' cultural identity and civic values through continuous engagement with indigenous cultural resources.

Despite these positive outcomes, the study also identified several implementation challenges. The limited availability of Dayak-based reading materials, insufficient digital learning resources, and teachers' varying levels of cultural knowledge constrained the depth of instructional integration. Teachers frequently relied on self-developed materials, YouTube videos, and personal experiences to supplement existing textbooks. While these adaptations demonstrate considerable instructional creativity, they also reveal structural limitations in curriculum support. Similar challenges have been reported in studies on culturally responsive education, which emphasize that successful implementation requires institutional commitment, adequate instructional resources, and continuous professional development for teachers (Banks, 2019; Gay, 2010). Therefore, strengthening collaboration among schools, local cultural institutions, and educational policymakers is essential for producing high-quality teaching materials that accurately represent Dayak cultural heritage.

Overall, this study contributes to the growing literature on culturally based literacy by illustrating how local wisdom can simultaneously support academic and character development in elementary education. The findings suggest a conceptual pathway in which culturally relevant instructional materials increase student engagement, encourage meaningful social interaction, strengthen cultural identity, and ultimately improve literacy outcomes. This integrated relationship demonstrates that literacy instruction should not be viewed solely as the acquisition of reading and writing skills but as a broader educational process that develops learners' cultural competence, critical thinking, and social responsibility. Consequently, integrating local wisdom into language education offers a sustainable strategy for preserving indigenous cultural heritage while promoting inclusive, contextualized, and culturally responsive learning environments in Indonesian elementary schools.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that integrating Dayak local wisdom into Indonesian language literacy instruction contributes not only to improving elementary students' literacy competencies but also to strengthening their cultural identity, social values, and engagement in contextual learning. By incorporating culturally relevant resources such as Dayak folktales, traditional songs, storytelling activities, and local traditions, literacy learning became more meaningful, enabling students to develop reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills while fostering appreciation for cultural diversity and indigenous heritage. These findings highlight the educational value of ethnopedagogical and culturally responsive approaches in creating inclusive and contextually grounded learning environments. Nevertheless, this study is limited by its implementation in a single elementary school with a relatively small group of participants, which restricts the transferability of the findings to different educational and cultural contexts. In addition, the study primarily relied on qualitative evidence and did not examine the long-term effects of culturally based literacy instruction on students' academic

achievement or character development. Therefore, future research should involve multiple schools across diverse cultural settings, employ mixed-methods or longitudinal designs, and investigate the effectiveness of locally developed digital learning resources and teacher professional development programs in supporting sustainable implementation of culture-based literacy education.

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