



INCORPORATING WAYANG BEBER AS ENGLISH TEACHING MATERIALS TO PROMOTE ISLAMIC VALUES IN BUILDING STUDENTS' CHARACTERS

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Abstract.

Integrating English language teaching with cultural contents is significantly pivotal in preserving its values of the local culture. Ironically, it has not gained much attention regarding the integration of Pacitan's local wisdom in English language teaching. Furthermore, English language teaching involves learning not only grammar and vocabulary, but it is also essential to learn about cultures. Additionally, enhancing students' character development by merging local wisdom into English learning materials can promote Islamic values to safeguard the harmony and tolerance in local community. Wayang Beber, as one of Pacitan's local wisdoms, stipulates that its values can both enrich educational contents and encourage essential character traits among students. This paper employs library research to gain deep understanding about the depiction of *Wayang Beber* as one of learning materials utilized in English language teaching. The results of the research denote that integrating local culture, Wayang Beber, not only the local culture can be preserved but also learning materials can be more various and interesting.

Keywords. wayang beber; english language teaching; islamic values; character building

INTRODUCTION

Character Building: Local Wisdom and Islamic Values

In the era of globalization, the function of education is not only transferring knowledge but also internalizing values to shape the characters of learners in order to create young generations that are both intellectual in mind and character. In other words, building students' characters starts from early for students, especially young students who have not developed the ability to define that the comprehension of fairness as reciprocity (Nucci et al., 2014). The essence of molding students' character from young age by instilling character education is to expect that the future generations are not only knowledgeable but also morally upright. It is in line with The National Education System law of 20/2003 article 1 which states that the objectives of education are to develop potential to have religious potential strength, self-control, personality, intelligence and noble character. Hence, character building has become a focal point in the curriculum to expand students' competencies in dealing with the obstacles they might face in life and performing their role in the future (Chang & Muñoz, 2006).

As stated previously, it is believed that moral and character education, which is ingrained in children from a young age, will positively impact their views and daily behavior patterns (Rumainum, 2010). To put it another way, character education can be regarded as one of the solutions in dealing with moral degradation, specifically among adolescents (Neina et al., 2015). Moreover, it is a matter of fact that currently with the massive flow of information and technology contributes to the decrease of Indonesia's



and cultural identity and the decline of nationalistic values of young generations. This circumstance is exacerbated by the lack of resources based on local wisdom and tradition integrated in into learning materials (Laili, 2017).

The significance of the character-building education assists younglings to access knowledge, skills, and attitude which can help them give positive contribution to the society (Athuman, 2023). By having such character, young generations have the ability to choose and filter the upcoming culture either from local or foreign which is contradictory with the values and character of Indonesia's culture.

Education is associated with not only the process of transferring knowledge, but also internalizing values to develop the students' character. In this circumstance, teacher needs to create innovative and creative learning materials relevant to the learners' cultural background and personalities. The objective of integrating academic learning materials and students' cultural background is to strengthen the comprehension of their cultural identities and at the same time to increase the students' engagement in learning activities (Rahmawati & Taylor, 2018). It is thought that local wisdom values will strengthen the community's strong character once they have been solidly established and familiarly introduced to society (Manuhutu et al., 2023). In Islamic educational settings, this challenge is even more pertinent as educators strive to foster moral and ethical values in line with Islamic teachings. One creative and culturally enriching way to achieve this is through incorporating traditional arts, such as *Wayang Beber*, as English teaching materials.

The issues of character education in building noble character have become concerns in education nowadays. As the result, the government encourages the educators to integrate local wisdoms values as well as Islamic values into learning materials. Additionally, in this era of advanced technology, besides academic competence, students must be equipped with Islamic character and awareness of religious values (Djamdjuri et al., 2023). Islamic values are ideas and viewpoints that society adopts regarding core Islamic principles as the rules for daily living. Islamic values encompass a wide range of topics in this setting, including social interactions, morality, ethics, and religious duties (Astuti et al., 2024). Islamic Values is regarded as the principle to manage human's behavior which is taken from Islamic teachings based on the Holy Qur'an and Al Hadits (Forster, 2014). The principle in Islamic values comprises faithfulness, piety, equality, gratitude, goodness, promises, health, sincerity, accountability, hard work, justice, consultation, trust, self-confidence, discipline, persistence, thrifty, resignation, patience, honesty, diligence, responsibility and respect (Forster, 2014).

Meanwhile, local wisdom is a country's cultural identity or personality that allows it to absorb culture from other countries and even transform it into its own traits and skills (Manuhutu et al., 2023). Local wisdom is a collection of values, perceptions, attitudes, behaviors, and responses in the sensitive interplay of the living system with nature and its environment. The application of local wisdom models and ways of community adaptation in living with the natural atmosphere is a local cultural behaviour, which revealed the way of life of the people who still adhere to local customs. It is clear that local wisdom, which is a by-product of local culture, is also capable of resisting globalization because it provides principles for the development of national character. Additionally, local wisdom can be used as the content of character education.



As one of the educational institutions, schools have a very pivotal role in educating character for students. Character education is pertaining to the development and transformation of the individual and encompassing education in homes, schools, and social networks within society. The importance of character education is that there is a transformation process that mold students' character to be better and to have emotional intelligence, social intelligence and spiritual intelligence (Athuman, 2023).

Wayang Beber and Its Values in Wayang Beber Story

The relatively ancient Wayang Beber art dates back to the end of the Hindu era in Java. Wayang Beber begins by painting Wayang stories from the Mahabharata epic before moving on to Panji legends that date back to the XI century, when the kingdom of Jenggala existed, and reaching its peak during the Majapahit era in the XIV–XV century (Prilosadoso et al., 2020). Because it takes the shape of sheets (beberan) that are shaped into characters in the puppet story, it is called wayang beber. The purpose of Wayang Beber is the same as that of puppets generally (Athuman, 2023).

Originating from the Dusun Karangtalun region, Gedompol Village, Donorejo, Pacitan Regency, Wayang Beber is a traditional art performance of Pacitan culture. Beginning with a leaf depicting the Ramayana and Mahabharata Epic, Wayang Beber is linked to a picture on paper that tells the tale of Panji Asmarabangun and Dewi Sekartaji. In Karangtalun, Gedompol Village, Pacitan Regency, East Java, Wayang Beber was first recognized as a traditional art form that promoted the wisdom of the local culture. At the time, it was thought to be a spectacle of theatrical acts that were highly appealing to the general public. The storylines of each group have been enhanced and have gained widespread popularity throughout the region, except from the romance between Panji Asmarabangun and Dewi Sekartaji.

Wayang Beber is a theatrical production that expresses the wisdom and ideas of the indigenous people. The local community's vision for society and the environment has produced this wisdom. The younger generation, which should be the audience and stewards of culture and the environment, particularly the Beber wayang, is today's most active audiences (Pujiono et al., 2020). In Gedompol Village, wayang beber is regarded as both a valuable art piece and a heritage that not everyone can play with or touch. The art can only be preserved, stored, and performed by the Wayang Beber storyteller.

Wayang beber serves a variety of purposes, such as social-economic and ritual/spiritual. Inseparable from the Gedompol residents, Wayang Beber promotes harmony and communal ideals. Wayang beber plays a crucial role in preserving and strengthening the solidarity of its supporters. Wayang Beber offers very high moral standards and guidance, such as teaching people to live cautiously, to always reflect, and to never forget the power of God. It also offers guidance on how to live in society by refraining from saying things that could damage relationships with others. The relationship between humans and God, between humans and nature, and between humans should all remain balanced.

The story told in the Wayang Beber performance comprises values of local knowledge. The Wayang Beber story contains local knowledge values such as a person's devotion to their relationship, the willingness of officials, aristocracy, or superior groups to engage with common people, and the perseverance to try to fulfill one's dreams or desires (Margana, 2017).



Integrating Wayang Beber into English Materials

Teachers must modify the content to accommodate varying language proficiency levels while maintaining the cultural and moral elements in order to successfully include Wayang Beber into English instruction (Margana, 2017). Simple Wayang Beber stories can be chosen by teachers to begin with, and they can then translate them into English. These tales can be used to teach writing, grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. Students might be asked to summarize a Wayang Beber story, identify important words, or rewrite the conclusion to represent different moral conclusions, for instance.

Teachers can also utilize the stories as inspirations for creative writing projects, urging students to come up with fresh personas or situations that share similar Islamic principles. Students will be better able to relate language acquisition to character development if this is combined with conversations on how these ideals fit into Islamic beliefs. By displaying footage of Wayang Beber performances or encouraging students to make their own visual depictions of the stories, teachers can also include multimedia components. This multisensory strategy reinforces language and moral concepts while accommodating various learning styles and maintaining student engagement.

Teachers can use this distinctive art form to introduce grammar, vocabulary, and story structures in an interesting way. Students can connect with their cultural heritage while honing their language skills by translating Wayang Beber stories into English. To inspire students to consider their own character development, it can be helpful to emphasize the values found in these stories that are consistent with Islamic teachings, such as justice, courage, compassion, and honesty.

Hence, this paper attempts to introduce Wayang Beber as one of Pacitan local wisdoms to academic audiences so that it can be well known and culturally well-preserved. Additionally, by learning the values of local culture in Wayang Beber in building students' character can promote Islamic values as well. Eventually, by integrating local culture in English language teaching can expected as another interesting alternative of teaching materials.

METHOD

This study employed library research to review some previous research that address the integration of local wisdoms into English materials to promote Islamic values in building students' characters. There were five articles from 2017 to 2024 gathered through web searches. They were analyzed and synthesized in order to unveil the integration of local wisdoms into English materials to promote Islamic values in building students' characters.



Table B.1 Sample of Table Analysis

No	Author (Year, name of Authors, Title)	Method	Aim	Results
1	Kusumah P. et al., (2024, Analyzing the Integration of Islamic Values in English Language Teaching in Islamic Schools: Teacher's Perception and Strategies)	descriptive qualitative approach	describing teachers' perception of integration of Islamic values in ELT, exploring teachers' strategies to integrate Islamic values to ELT,	(1) teachers' perception of integration of Islamic values in ELT are formulated as follows: (a) perception toward the recent curriculum (b) perception toward the spiritual aspect in the curriculum (c) perception about the importance of integrating islamic values into ELT. Then (2) teachers' strategies to integrate Islamic values to ELT are carried out through ways (a) classroom activities, and (b) through content.
2	Manuhutu et al., (2023, Integrating Maluku Local Wisdom as English Teaching Material to Build Students'	Library Research	description of 'papeda' as one of Maluku's local wisdom that can be used as teaching	Each design of teaching and learning activities combined with local wisdom has useful properties that



	Character in Globalization Era)		material to build students' character with the principles and moral values from their culture that will prepare them to face the era of globalization	can be developed, practiced, and applied in the classroom.
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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. WAYANG BEBER FOR TRANSFERRING ISLAMIC VALUES

The utilization of Wayang Beber as English teaching materials have function in promoting Islamic values which are described as follows;

a. An individual's loyalty to his/her partner

Considering the story contained in *wayang beber* there are main characters. They are Panji Jaka Kembang Kuning or Panji Asmarabangun and Dewi Sekartaji. Both of them have undivided loyalty to their lover. As the story told, it was said that Panji Jaka Kembang Kuning was in disguise and wandered patiently in searching of Sekartaji who left the palace. He wanted to bring Dewi Sekartaji back to the palace. Similarly, Dewi Sekartaji in her adventure, also kept her loyalty to Panji Jaka Kembang Kuning. In the middle of her adventure, she met Raja Klana. Raja Klana who disguised himself as Gandarepa overtly tried to persuade and seduce Dewi Sekartaji to be his wife. However, Sekartaji did not fall to his charm, instead she kept refusing him and waiting for the arrival of Panji Jaka Kembang Kuning devotedly. Derived from this story, there are some values which are in line with This the principles of Islamic values. They are faithfulness, trust, hard work and persistence.

b. The willingness of officials, nobility group or superior group to interact with ordinary people.

Both Jaka Kembang Kuning and Dewi Sekartaji were coming from noble families with high social status. Even though they have noble lineal ancestry, the both have characters to respect people from ordinary background. It only shows that Jaka Kembang Kuning and Dewi Sekartaji have great hearts and were not hesitant to immerge and interact with ordinary people during their life. Based on the story depicted in Wayang Beber, it also has the similar concept as taught from Islamic Values. Islamic value guide us to be equal and kind to people from various backgrounds, particularly those from ordinary ones.



c. Persistence to achieve ideals or wish

In *wayang beber* story there is also moral message related to persistence to attempt to achieve an ideal or wish. It can be seen from the attempt that has been taken by Panji Jaka Kembang to do anything to achieve in searching Dewi Sekartaji. There were many hardships that were encountered by Jaka Kembang when looking for Dewi Sekartaji. It starts from Jaka Kembang leaving the palace, finding Dewi Sekartaji, meeting and bringing her back to the palace before eventually getting married with her. His strong persistence and tenacity deserve to be a role model as he kept searching the unknown and would have not returned to the palace before he found what he sought after successfully. The moral values of the story need to be taught to students that they need persistence and also strive for the best to attain what they want to achieve in life. This kind of character is similar to what is described in Islamic values that also instill persistence, hard work and diligence to be possessed by every person.

2. THE EXAMPLE OF UTILIZING “WAYANG BEBER” AS ENGLISH TEACHING MATERIAL

Based on the story depicted in *Wayang Beber*, it can be developed to English teaching materials. The teaching activities involved listening, reading, speaking and writing to promote character building.

a. Listening Activity

A range of listening comprehension exercises that relate to the topic that the teacher plans to teach might be set up. As an example, to incorporate "wayang beber" story into the teaching and learning process, the teacher could compose a brief monolog (comprising of one or two paragraphs) for the student to read. She also poses a number of inquiries concerning it. These questions could come in the form of multiple-choice or true/false statements. Students should pay close attention to the teacher in order to comprehend all of the information (whether general or specialized) before replying to those questions.

b. Reading Activity

Teachers can arrange reading comprehension activities that are connected to the lesson they want to teach. For example, the teacher distributes a narrative text about “*Wayang Beber*” and its story. To arouse students' interest in reading, he instructed them to read the text first. They can then discuss together about the content of the text they have read. In addition, in this activity, the teacher does not ignore the grammar of the text. Language features and general organization of narrative texts should be explained by the teacher. The teacher then asks the class to determine the genetic structure of the text in relation to the text.

c. Speaking Activity

This activity first divides students into several groups consisting of 2-3 people. The next step is the teacher playing a recording containing the story about Dewi Sekartaji and Panji Asmarabangun which is depicted in *Wayang Beber*. Next, the teacher gives several questions related to story. The teacher also discusses difficult vocabulary for students along with the correct pronunciation. After that, as homework, students are asked to make a short



monologue video to retell the story. Following that, they can post it to and share it on their social media accounts, including Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. This particular activity or exercise intends to promote students' self-assurance, independence, and inventiveness.

d. Writing Activity

The first step is that the teacher has students break into small groups of five or six students each. One student in each group volunteers the first sentence about the story contained in Wayang Beber and the others adds on to it. With this structure, students will be participating frequently, contributing every fifth or sixth sentence to the story. The next step is after having practiced building a story cooperatively—first by adding one sentence, at a time—students are ready to try making extended contributions to a group effort. They should assemble in small groups consisting of five students each. Instruct each student in the group to begin writing a story individually by instructing them to write only a description of the setting of this story—where and when does it take place? Allow students for 5 to 6 minutes for the writing. At the end of this time, ask the students to stop and pass their paper to the person sitting on their left. Each student now has another group member's story in front of them. They should read what has been written so far and then ask them to introduce the main characters. Who are they? What do they do? What do they look like? What else do they know about them?. From this kind of activity, students are not too dependent on the teacher but make students become independent. In addition, this activity familiarizes students in terms of attitude and respect for the learning outcomes of their friends. In addition, students are taught how to develop a culture of collaboration when it comes to learning-related issues.

CONCLUSION

A distinctive and culturally appropriate method of promoting Islamic principles and developing students' character is through incorporating Wayang Beber into English teaching materials because the local wisdom values in Wayang Beber have similar principles as in Islamic Values. In addition to internalizing Islamic Values in building students' character, improving language proficiency, this method can help students to in learning English Language while also get to know more about their local culture. As the result, not only the local culture can be preserved but also learning materials can be more variative. In other words, teachers can establish a dynamic learning environment that promotes both intellectual and spiritual development by fusing traditional storytelling with contemporary teaching methods.

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