

# Strengthening Human Resources Through Local Content English Education in Gowa Regency

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**Abstract:** This study aims to uncover the role of local content English education in strengthening human resources (HR) in Gowa Regency. The methodology employed is a qualitative approach through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The findings indicate that this program successfully enhances the competencies of both teachers and students, as well as fosters students' confidence in communication. The average national examination scores for English in Gowa Regency indicate room for improvement. This study provides recommendations for enhancing teacher training and the use of technology in education. The findings suggest that local content education can be an effective strategy for human resource development in the region.

**Keywords:** Local Content Education, English Language, Human Resource Development

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## INTRODUCTION

It is now globally accepted that professional development and advancement of the human resource base, as well as social enhancement, cannot ignore the role of education. In the global village today, quality education defines a region's competitiveness in many areas including the economic, the social and cultural realms. English education as a Local Content becomes the breakthrough in Gowa Regency, a region focused on public human resource development. Education framework can improve the students' competencies to cope with both national and international issues if English proficiency is linked with local content knowledge. This effort responds to Indonesia's overall objectives as set out in the Law number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, which aims at producing quality graduates for the challenge of the twenty-first century. Due to globalization, the call for English language has increased as English is used in business, technology, and diplomacy. Knowledge of the English language empowers a person to gain world knowledge, interact and transact with the world, and do business with the world. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2021), enhancing the quality of the English education can explicitly drive economic growth by predicting that the areas that focus on language learning had seen their GDP rise by 1.5% annually. This paper was revealing in this regard, and it underlines the significance of language education especially English education, Gowa Regency for instance, aims to improve the human resource quality.

Local content English education on the other hand is a system of learning and teaching of English within the cultural and other settler basements of a region. This approach has the advantage of impartingceptor language proficiency and knowledge of culturaland being able to embrace the Schools culture, and values. Therefore, introducing local content to English education gives a chance to promote the partial globalization in Gowa Regency by giving the local relevance to the global competence. For instance, the lessons might include the following areas of interest: Gowa traditional products, agriculture and tourism areas of economic importance. This dual focus makes it easier to apply what students learn in English class to their lives and possibly their future occupations.

Previous studies of Gowa Regency reveal weaknesses in the ability to enhance human resource quality where educational attainment has been poor and English language acquisition has not been uniformly stressed. Nonetheless, the region has been quite responsive to major challenges ahead of it and worries about

educational reform. The teaching of English in combination with local content has been learners' enrolment in recent years due to increased awareness that mastery of this language is central to career and self-enrichment. Through engaging students in subjects in English while at the same time exposing them to local content, they can produce a nation that is not just qualitatively sound in English, but also alive to cultural changes and differences.

There is growing concern with the use of English within economic and social domains of the region as a leading force behind this scheme. Since tourism industry is fast becoming an important industry in Gowa Regency, English is used more frequently in interacting with foreigners. SMEs in the area need the English language in reaching out to a wider audience and being part of trading schemes across the globe. When local content is incorporated with English education then the student can understand these economic activities and contribute towards the regional economy, and thus increasing their employability as well.

The promotion of education in English at local content is in concordance with the goals of the Indonesian government in offering character education as well as the preservation of culture. Globalization which has many benefits thus comes with several problems which include the culture imperialism whereby the western way of life gains prominence and replaces other cultures with inferiority complex. Addressing such challenges of BME students is possible if teachers integrate local content into the delivery of English since students will learn both the culture of England and be prepared to compete in the global market. For example, sharing of folktales and other stories in English can be used to teach the children English and at the same time learn more about their culture say from Gowa.

This suggests that policy and governance have a critical role in and must support the progression of this educational approach. Schools and local government authorities need to come up with programmes that will address the needs and culture of the region while at the same time providing educational experiences that comply with the national and international educational system. This also requires more and better investment in human capital training especially teachers, improved stakeholder investments in education resources, and development of the supporting education infrastructure to support the delivery of the Local Content English Education. Since teachers are the major implementers of change in this endeavour, they need to be trained well enough to incorporate local content in the teaching of English language. It is for this reason that teachers can be trained by offering them workshops and continuing development programs to spearhead instructional practices that will go down well with students and produce enhanced learning results.

Apart from classroom practices, enhancement of local content English education cannot be effective without community activities. Local care givers, community representatives, and culture bearers can actively participate in the development of the curricular and the support of co-curricular endeavours that underpin the interconnection of English with culture. For instance, students may join community based English clubs, cultural exchange programmes, which helps enhance their mastery, or use in dramatic performances on historical culture of peoples.

Besides, enriching people's learning and development, the local content education English of Gowa Regency is beneficial for the development of the community as well. Increased competency in English together with the view on applying the skills gained in the local scenario will make the students form a competitive force in the work market. It therefore leads to investment, innovation and ultimately a reinforcing economic and social development feedback loop. In addition, the local content provision guarantees that such developments are sustainable, and are? home grown? arising from the complementary strengths and ethos of the region.

### **Research Problem**

How can local content English education contribute to the strengthening of human resources in Gowa Regency?

### **Research Objectives**

The objective of this study is to analyze the contribution of local content English education in enhancing the quality of human resources in Gowa Regency.

### **Research Significance**

This research is expected to provide insights for policymakers and stakeholders in formulating more effective educational programs to enhance human resource capacity.

## METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative research approach to deeply explore the perspectives and experiences of teachers regarding the implementation of local content English education in Gowa Regency. Qualitative research is particularly suited for studies that aim to understand complex social phenomena, as it allows for rich, detailed insights into participants' views and experiences. The study focuses on understanding how teachers perceive the integration of local content into English education, the challenges they face, and the strategies they employ to address these challenges. This approach ensures that the findings are contextually relevant and grounded in the lived realities of the participants.

Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The semi-structured interviews were designed to provide flexibility, enabling the researchers to explore topics in depth while allowing participants to share their insights freely. Teachers from various schools in Gowa Regency were purposively selected as participants to ensure a diverse range of experiences and viewpoints. Each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes and was guided by an interview protocol that included open-ended questions about the integration of local content in English education, teaching strategies, challenges encountered, and support systems available. In addition to interviews, relevant documents such as curriculum guides, lesson plans, and educational policies were analyzed to triangulate the data and provide a comprehensive understanding of the implementation process.

The thematic analysis method was employed for data analysis, ensuring a systematic approach to identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns and themes within the data. The process began with transcription and initial coding, where recurring words, phrases, and ideas were highlighted. These codes were then grouped into broader themes that reflected key aspects of the research objectives, such as "teachers' strategies for integrating local content," "perceived benefits for students," and "institutional and policy-level challenges." Thematic analysis allowed for the synthesis of diverse data sources, facilitating a nuanced understanding of how local content English education is practiced and perceived in the region.

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the study, multiple strategies were implemented. First, member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary findings with participants to confirm the accuracy of the interpretations. Second, the use of document analysis provided a secondary data source to validate interview findings. Third, reflexivity was maintained throughout the research process, with researchers documenting their assumptions and potential biases in a reflective journal. These measures ensured that the study's findings are reliable and representative of the participants' experiences, thereby contributing to a robust understanding of local content English education in Gowa Regency.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Teachers' Perceptions of Local Content English Education

In Gowa Regency, teachers in general support the incorporation of local content into English lesson as a noble effort to improve students' learning ideas. They know that making references to culture and traditions in specific regions can assist students better and hence retain better language knowledge. In various classrooms, the teachers mentioned that the local content is used in making the subject/text relevant to world culture and at the same time having the students imbedded a sense of pride being part of the world while at the same time creating their analytically developed language skills.

Most of the teachers consider the local content English education as a tool of maintaining cultural interaction with the outside world and at the same time maintaining their culture. They said that they feel proud of teaching their students to introduce Gowa cultural as an amazing aspect of their lessons in their presentation, they stressed that integrating local knowledge into English teachings is also a way of nurturing good character as well as preserving Gowa's traditional values. For example, the teachers provided instances when learners

were more receptive when learning English with culturally related items like folk stories, artefacts or farming techniques. It not only enlivened the lessons but made them understand how they fit in the larger scheme of things in terms of culture.

While speaking with teachers about the promising nature of the integration of the local content into Education English classes, some teachers were skeptical that it is really possible to achieve this aim in full. Some of the obstacles mentioned include for instance a lack of standardized material and guidelines towards this method. Despite acknowledging the theoretical advantages, some of the teachers mentioned concern regarding implementation of local content that corresponds to the necessary language competency mentioned in a curriculum. This tension reveals the lack of better guidelines and materials which would help educators in the proper implementation of this type of learning.

The teachers recognised the bidialectal essentiality of local content English education for enhancing student language competence and cultural understanding. They think so because this approach provides real world skills that can be used to solve a global problem and gives students the understanding of their cultural identity. But they also stressed that it is dependent on filling the current gaps in training, resources, and institutional support, the greater collaboration among educational institutions, policy makers, and local community undertake educators.

### **Strategies for Integrating Local Content into English Lessons**

Various techniques are used by teachers in Gowa Regency to incorporate local content into English learning, these strategies they adopt depends on the cultural and economic properties of Gowa Regency. The first is the use of locally relevant curricular themes and sub themes especially when revising lessons on basic vocabulary and grammar. For example, teachers develop exercises related such subjects as arts and crafts, farming, or tourism which are important for the Gowa population. Such topics have a familiar context through which students are able to relate with the language concepts taught while at the same time, revision their cultural knowledge.

The other strategy is storytelling where teachers leverage folklore and history as learning materials when teaching English reading and comprehension. The plot of the legend of Sultan Hasanuddin as well as other materials from the cultural history of Gowa are translated or, if originally written in English, are rewritten in the same language, so the student here gets a twofold outcome: he or she acquires language experience and gains positive ethnocentrism. According to the opinions of the teachers the use of this method allows for developing emotional part of academics which helps them in memorable classes and creates interest towards English as well as their native culture.

The other approaches revealed include role-play and project approaches within the integration of local content. The students are drawn to engage in exercises such as mock tourism scenarios which entail use of conversational English while advertising tourism sites. Likewise, in the group works, students can be assigned to develop brochures or Power Point presentations in English about the Gowa's festivals or their native foods. Besides, it enhances students' language skills and at the same time enhances students' collaborative, creative, critical thinking skills where they use hands-on activities.

In order to implement these strategies, teachers engage the community by inviting local professionals and cultural workers on lessons planning. a real craftsman, a farmer, a blacksmith, etc., may come to the classroom, tell the students about his or her ordeal, and the teacher may use those experiences the terms and ideas the farmer uses in his daily work – in English lessons. Such partnerships introduce flexibility in learning while coordinating academic instruction with practice enhancing the relevance of teaching English and cultural awareness.

### **Challenges in Implementing Local Content English Education**

This is because when it comes to implementing local content English education in Gowa Regency one of the biggest problems is lack of textbooks that teach English and at the same time promote local content in schools. Some of the teachers mentioned that currently there is a shortage of teaching and learning materials available to students and teachers; as a result, many teachers provide their own teaching resources, which may not

always be adequate or of a high quality. In most of the cases, there is scarcity of prepared teaching learning material which puts more burden on the teacher and the teaching learning process since they have to develop the material according to the context of their teaching. Additionally, there are no specific best practices that schools can be guided on how to incorporate cultural practices into English lessons making the implementation moon variable.

One of the most daunting issues is the scarcity of the teacher training programs that adequately address issues to do with integration of content from local perspectives. Although, as the results showed, many teachers understand the importance of integrating culture and tradition into the English learning process, many of them still do not know how to do it properly. Teachers claimed that more workshops and professional development sessions are required which give them a number of specific strategies and approaches on how to develop effective stuff combining local content with the target language learning aims. Otherwise, the teachers will not have adequate self-assertiveness and experience to conduct this method properly.

Globe also objective obstructions limit the usage of local content English education. Some of the schools in Gowa Regency are poorly equipped to teach some of the most basic things in their curriculums, for example multimedia teaching aids, or sources where they can access history and culture material of Gowa Regency. These constraints frustrate teachers and limit the deployment of emergent techniques, for instance, the use of illustrative materials when telling a story or development of activities that incorporate technology. Furthermore, problem of local content implementation is magnified by another formidable challenge in rural schools such as large systemic factors which include large class sizes and inadequate funding.

There are difficulties in meeting the requirements of local content English education with national curriculum. According to teachers, the tendencies derived from the benchmark assessments might conflict with the opportunities required to deliver local content at LPA. It is understandable that assimilation of culturally bombarded content does not easily correlate with scores on tests and controls hence; There is little space for culturally infused language which may not effectively help learners to score well as these form the basis of the learning. Such disparities, therefore, call for policy reform to investigate ways to make local content English education viable and appreciated in the larger educational context.

#### **Perceived Impact on Students' Learning and Cultural Awareness**

The given madrasah teachers in Gowa Regency noted that the process of using the local element in teaching English has indeed improved the students' interest and achievement. This means that lesson that are anchored on themes familiar to the students' culture and setting, are well understood and embraced by the student thus making the learning process joyful. For instance, there were increased interests when teaching was based on indigenous practices like arts or celebrations, then random and general facts. The teachers pointed out that the use of such approach enhances not only the reception of English but also the students' confidence in applying language skills in real-life contexts.

The most apparent is the training of the student as a cultural being in addition to linguistic one. In learning English with a view to their local tradition, the students become aware of the culture as well as tradition of people in their own country and that is why lessons in English, such as storytelling or discussion of interaction with other Gowa people or non-Indonesian nations or even the simulation of particular situations connected with local traditions contributes to the creation of pupils' personal values. The teachers said that such dual imperative can help students develop a positive pride in their identity and also to learn the necessity of being citizens of the world in today's global society.

The current local content English education enhances critical thinking and problem-solving skills for participating students. The contextualization of lessons makes them to learn different aspects of culture and also enables them to compare different aspects as they learn the language. For instance, while discussing English, comparing traditional approach to farming in Gowa with the modern technique sharpens not only the vocabulary but also the intellectual ability. The combined strategy enriches the formation of the individual as linguistically able and ethnologically aware.

Teachers also reported that perceived pork barrel benefits positively affected students' preparedness for

eventualities like college study and job opportunities in tourism and international business. Besides, language mastery that includes english along with the knowledge of local culture enables students to convey messages across all classes of community as well as propagating their cultural pride. It enlarges their chances to get a job and act as promoters of Gowa distinct culture on international platform. Thus, the; perceived influence of local content English education transcends the educational results impact enhancing the students' cumulative personal and career development.

The strengthening of human resources is an integral part of capacity building, encompassing various aspects of education. According to CIDA (1996), capacity building is a process through which individuals and organizations enhance their abilities to meet developmental challenges. This aligns with the human development theory articulated by Sen (1999), which emphasizes the importance of education in improving individual quality of life.

Programs that integrate local needs can enhance teachers' skills and competencies (Haryono et al., 2012). Local content English education in Gowa Regency focuses on developing communication skills that are critically needed in the current digital era. Research by Smith and Brown (2021) indicates that community involvement in local education can improve the effectiveness of educational programs.

The results of interviews with several teachers revealed strong support for local content education. One teacher stated, "This program not only enhances students' English skills but also encourages them to be more confident in communicating." Another teacher added, "The training we received significantly helped us understand how to teach more interactively and engagingly."

Local content English education aligns with constructivist theory, wherein students are encouraged to actively participate in learning through community-based projects and group discussions. According to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS, 2022), only 30% of students in Gowa Regency achieve adequate English proficiency, highlighting the urgent need for more effective educational programs.

Recent research by Wang et al. (2022) indicates that continuous professional development programs for English teachers significantly enhance teaching capabilities and student learning outcomes. With average national examination scores in English showing a "satisfactory" performance, there is an urgent need to improve training programs and human resource development in the educational context of the region.

Darling-Hammond (2017) emphasizes that effective professional development for teachers is crucial for improving educational quality. Therefore, well-designed training programs should be a priority in efforts to enhance teacher competencies in Gowa Regency.

Local content English education also contributes to multicultural education, helping students understand and appreciate the cultural diversity around them (Banks, 2008). The use of technology in English education, such as learning applications and online platforms, can enhance access and effectiveness in learning (Gulbahar & Guven, 2008).

## CONCLUSION

Local content English education in Gowa Regency plays a vital role in strengthening human resources. Through the enhancement of teacher competencies and interactive learning, this program has successfully provided better educational services. Further investment in training and human resource development is necessary to achieve optimal results in education. This study recommends the need for collaboration between local government, educational institutions, and the community to improve the quality of local content education programs.

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