Localizing Literature: The Use of Non-Native English Reading Sources for English Department

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Abstract   The present study aimed to investigate the English literature students' perception on the use of local sources used as alternative reading sources. The study was conducted in survey research. The instrument used was questionnaire and interview for 50 students. The findings indicate that despite being insufficient in terms of grammatical accuracy, naturalness of the text, and the poor layout, these local sources can also improve the students' understanding toward the reading materials. The main advantages for the students identified in the study were actually the affordability and the accessibility of the learning materials. However, the students also suggest that these local sources should be continously improved so that these materials can be more interesting for the students to read.

Keywords: Localizing literature; the use, teaching media, English reading sources, higher education context

Abstrak   Penelitian ini mengkaji persepsi mahasiswa Sastra Inggris terhadap penggunaan sumber belajar yang ditulis oleh penulis bahasa Inggris lokal. Penelitian ini dilakukan secara survey. Instrumen yang digunakan adalah kuesioner dan interview kepada 50 mahasiswa/i. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa walaupun terdapat kekurangan dalam hal ketepatan tata-bahasa, teks yang kurang alami, serta tata letak buku yang kurang baik, sumber bahasa Inggris lokal ini juga bisa memperbaiki pemahaman bacaan para mahasiswa. Keuntungan utama yang dapat ditemukan dalam kajian ini adalah karena murah dan mudahnya materi lokal tersebut diperoleh oleh para mahasiswa. Namun, para mahasiswa juga menyarankan bahwa sumber belajar yang ditulis oleh penulis lokal ini terus diperbaiki agar dapat lebih menarik untuk dibaca.

Kata Kunci: Melokalkan karya tulis; Penggunaan, media pengajaran; sumber bacaan bahasa Inggris, pendidikan tinggi

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INTRODUCTION

The use of English in the world has been increasingly important. It affects every walk of people's life. The use of English in pedagogical setting has also been significant. The main reasons for incorporating English in higher education setting is generally to prepare the students to be more competitive in the job markets or in research. Although some of the international languages may have also gained their importance in public life, the brand of English, which is currently dubbed as a global language, makes people in all over the world learn it.

The use of native English reading soures in learning English, for some prescriptive advocates, is a necessity in that it can help the students acquire the sense of being the native (Fitri et al., 2020). The use of native-like English reading sources can also improve the learners' understanding toward the different ways of thinking or lives adopted by the English native speakers (Fitri et al., 2020). Therefore, the reading materials of English program (See e.g., Richard, 2001) particularly in most of the reading materials are commonly taken from native English reading sources rather than non-native ones.

The present study aimed at highlighting the issue of the use of local sources, which are incorporated into the English literature reading materials. The use of the local literature, which is written in English is beneficial since it can arouse the students' interest and improve the students' understanding easier (Alamsyah, 2016). Up to now, the use of reading materials in English literature is mostly dominated with English native reading sources. In spite of its originality, the use of English native reading sources is not always easy to find. Secondly, the scarcity and the expensiveness of reading materials has also forced the institution to provide a more global yet more affordable materials, e.g., European, Japan, or even latin American. The use of reading sources in English is undoubtedly important to support the students' learning process since it can help improve the students' comprehension as well as production (Tomlinson, 1998). However, with the rising trend of students centered paradigm the use of localized learning material, which is relatively more relevant to the students' background, is deemed worth-considering. The research questions are formulated as the following: 1) What is the students' perception toward the use of local English sources

for their college English study? 2) What is the student's perception on the affordability and accessibility of the locally-made English sources? 3) What is the students' perception on the kinds of English sources frequently read by the students?

The concept of pedagogy at the moment increasingly focuses on the students as the most important factor of learning process (Quyen, 2007). Specifically, the objective of student–centered classrooms is to create a learning environment which is constructed by the teacher and students rather than transmitted directly by the teacher (Garrett, 2008). With this concept, the students are commonly taught to be more active rather than just being passive. With this concept, the students are treated as active organism determining the success of the learning process (Quyen, 2007). Lastly, this concept also emphasizes the students' differences as well as the students' background (Nunan, 1991).

Tylor (cited in Kottak, 2008) suggests culture as "the complex whole including knowledge, belief, arts, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society". The existence of culture and its connection to attitudes in education has actually been acknowledged by many scholars. Slavin (2009), for example, postulates that by the time children enter school, they have absorbed many aspects of the culture in which they were previously raised e.g., language, belief, attitude, ways of behaving, and food preferences. Therefore, it can be assumed that students' cultural background will continuously be with the students' regardless of their activities, e.g., studying, working, and socializing (Hinkel, 2012).

Specifically, Tilaar (2005) suggests that students' cultural background be incorporated as it constitutes an inseparable element of pedagogical process. Likewise, Muamaroh (2013) reinforces that merely adopting the teaching process and classroom techniques set by certain countries, e.g., British, Australia, and North America can incur a potential harmful impact when it is done without considering local culture. Atkinson, (as cited in Palmer, 2013) coins the concept of cultural conflict, which is commonly considered as the incompatibility between the students' cultural background and the cultural presentation given during the foreign language class.

Since most of local short stories are morally or value laden stories, e.g. the values adopted from religious teaching, local customs, traditions, morals, heroic

stories, etc., (Bunanta, 2003, as cited in Rahiem & Rahiem, 2012), these kinds of stories will generally incur more benefits to the students since they can provide not only cognitive or motoric aspects, namely English, but also a chance to preserve the values which are closely relevant to the students' identity, either as a person or as a citizen in this beloved country. However the challenge regarding the use of local short story is also huge, some problems persist, e.g. the low quality of the textbooks, teachers' competence in presenting the short story, etc. Zacharia (2003), for instance, reveals that many Indonesian teachers strongly prefer the teaching materials from English speaking countries, especially for teaching pronunciation and listening skill and not many Indonesian teachers use locally produced materials, due to the fact that there are many Indonesian ELT books are of low quality. Secondly, the teachers' performance in presenting the quality teaching method regarding the use of short story remains a big issue to resolve this is because there are still many Indonesian teachers who are under qualified (Ashadi, 2014).

One of the important factors in supporting the learning process is the availability of the book. Until now, the existence of good quality book is mostly produced by foreign or native English publication. There are some widely acknowledged global publishers, which have published numerous English books and are quite expensive and beyond the reach of the ordinary students. Some of these publications are mostly used by international schools or those who are learning in expensive English courses or institutions. Globally, British Council estimates that the value of the global market for digital English language learning products and services reached $1.31 billion in 2011 (British Council, n.d., 9).

Despite being lucrative, Indonesian English publication is not clearly identified. IKAPI (2019) indicates that there are approximately 30. 000 books published in Indonesia annually reaching 8 billion rupiah. This data is based on the research in 2015, whatsoever. Further facts indicate that the most profitable publication in Indonesia comes from children books, fictions, and religions.

The use of local sources is actually beneficial not only for the students but also for those involved in the publication as they will also get some financial reward from this publication. Pedagogically, Alamsyah (2016) confirms that local sources can benefit due to some considerations such as the relatively similar

schemata, appreciating the students' background, etc. With this argument, the use of local sources in any kinds of form can actually be used in any pedagogical context, including in higher education context.

METHOD

Research Design

The present study merely focused on the students' perception toward the locally written English learning sources along with the relevant causes which may underline these arguments. By identifying the students' perception, the researchers and other relevant stakeholders can possibly obtain sufficient data on the possibility of the use of locally written English sources for English department. It has been quite evident that the students usually faced some difficulties to obtain some English learning materials, which are mostly beyond the reach of those coming from the ordinary groups.

The present study was conducted in survey research (Creswell, 2008). Survey research was considered as the simple research which allows the researchers to identify factors which are considered important. The use of Likert scale options permit the participants to choose their opinion conveniently (Cresswell, 2008).

Despite being limited in the choices, the use of scales allows the researcher to identify important factors which may be useful to support the research findings. The participants were also selectively interviewed so that they can clarify what they have chosen in their questionnaires.

Participants

The participants of the present study are the active students and are currently studying English in semester three. There were 50 students who were recruited purposively (Frankel, & Wallen, 2006). The concept of taking participants purposively is based on their statement indicating their willingness to participate in the study and to fill in the questionnaire honestly.

Sources of Data and Data Analysis

The sources of data taken in the study were the students' responses indicated in their reflective statements. The items were made in reflective formats in order to identify their perceptions more naturally.

Instruments

The instruments are written in self-evaluative or reflective statements to make the students feel more aware of their condition. The instruments are written in the students' native language to allow them to closely read the each statement. The instruments are explained in detail to the students prior to the commencement of the research in order to make them aware of the statements. These statements are given earlier so that the students can be more aware of these statements, which are actually related to their personal condition.

Data collection Procedure

The participants were recruited purposively. The term purposive is related to the researcher's consideration that the participants recruited could provide more relevant information for the researchers. The main factors being considered as the purposive factors were the students' willingness to accept the role as the participants and their willingness to have their perceptions exposed on the survey study.

The number of the students was 50 students from two classes of English literature department. The students recruited are active students and currently studying in semester III and IV. Prior to the administration of the survey research, the would-be participants were given sufficient information regarding the study and its potential benefit for the lecturers and the institution if they were able to fill the survey honestly. The instrument given was written questionnaire, which was shared to their WA messengers, some interviews were only given to support the findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The students' perception toward the use of local English sources for studying

Self-Evaluative Statement			
A. **Students' perception toward the use of local English sources for their college English study**	**Yes**	**No**	**Doubted**
For me, it is okay to learn English from any source.	40 (80%)	6 (12%)	4 (8%)
For me, learning English should use real	25 (50%)	20 (40%)	5 (10%)

Self-Evaluative Statement			
A. **Students' perception toward the use of local English sources for their college English study**	**Yes**	**No**	**Doubted**
sources written by native English speakers.			
For me, learning sources written by local writers is not bad.	35 (70%)	6 (12%)	9 (18%)
For me, English sources written by the native writers are very good in terms of quality.	35 (70%)	10 (20%)	5 (10%)
For me, English sources written by local writers are very good in terms of quality.	10 (20%)	23 (46%)	17 (34%)
For me, English sources written by the native writers provide some information on global affairs, which are very interesting.	35 (70%)	6 (12%)	9 (18%)
For me, English learning sources written by the local writers are easily understood.	27 (54%)	10 (20%)	13 (26%)
For me, English learning sources written by local writers offer simpler vocabulary.	30 (60%)	16 (32%)	4 (8%)
Locally written English sources offer more understandable grammar.	29 (58%)	8 (16%)	13 (26%)
English sources written by native English writer offer more complex vocabulary.	26 (52%)	12 (24%)	12 (24%)
I can easily understand the English learning materials written by the local writers.	33 (66%)	9 (18%)	7 (14%)

Based on the findings above, it can be interpreted that the students are willing to accept whatever the reading sources for them. The data shows that there are 40 students (80%) who voiced their willingness to accept the reading sources regardless of their origin. However, it is important to highlight that the students tend to consider that native writers generally have good writing quality compared with the locally written materials and this is shown with 35 (70 %) students indicating their agreement. However, the students also think that the local is basically acceptable as it provides more simple grammar and vocabulary

to the students. This is shown with 30 (60 %) and 29 (58 %) students indicating their agreements.

This finding partially confirms what Rodliyah et al. (2014) has already researched in that the students of English basically accepted whatever the learning materials they have. Specifically, Rodliyah (2013) found that some of the reasons in accepting local culture texts by the students are because of the possibility for improving the students' confidence toward their own culture.

The students' perceptions on the affordability and accessibility of the locally-made English sources

B. Student's perception on the affordability and accessibility of the locally made English learning sources.	Yes	No	Doubted
Locally written sources are more affordable and accessible.	36 (72%)	12 (24 %)	2 (4 %)
Native English written sources are very expensive and difficult to find.	35 (70 %)	9 (18 %)	6 (12 %)

Another important aspect of accepting locally-written English sources is mainly due to its affordability compared with native written materials. The data shows that 36 (72 %) students perceive that locally made English sources has more benefit in terms of affordability compared with the native written sources.

This finding slightly disconfirms what Rodliyah et al. (2014, 116) have found in that readability is found to be the important criteria for their participants. Specifically, Rodliyah et al. (2014, 116) found that almost 50 % of their respondents perceived that both local and foreign sources are equally easy to understand. This is important to note that Rodliyah et al. (2014) researched the students who were selected and were studying at public state university. These students should have got relatively higher English capacity compared with the participants, who are currently studying in a private English college at the moment. Furthermore, the present study confirms Mudra's finding (2014) in which using English native written materials tend to be more difficult for the students. Mudra (2014) suggests that it is important to consider the students'

learning goals and classify based on student experience learning or familiarity of the topic. Lastly, the students' perception on affordability of the locally written English learning sources are basically relevant to what Richards (1998) and Harmer (2007) have emphasized that the affordability is one of the important criteria for the students in learning English. Further study should be done in order to identify the priority in determining the learning materials for the students in higher education context.

The students' perception on the English sources frequently read by the students

C. Students' perception about the kinds of English sources frequently read by the students	Yes	No	Doubted
Locally English sources commonly read and found by me are local literature.	28 (56%)	16 (32%)	6 (12%)
Locally made English learning sources frequently read by me are related to English grammar.	35 (70%)	8 (16%)	7 (14%)
Native English written sources frequently read by me are related to grammar.	28 (56%)	9 (18%)	13 (26%)
Native English written sources frequently read by me are short stories/novels/fictions.	15 (30%)	12 (24%)	13 (26%)
Native English written learning sources that I really want to read are short stories/novels/fictions.	35 (70%)	6 (12%)	9 (18%)
Locally made English sources that I want to read are short stories/novels/fictions	37 (74%)	7 (14%)	6 (12%)

Based on the above data, it can be interpreted that basically short stories, novel, and the other fictions belong to the most favorite reading sources for the literature students. Regardless of their origins, and the writers of the sources, fictions belong to the most preferred reading sources for the students as voiced by 37 students or approximately 74 %. One thing noteworthy is that the students also like to read local sources in the form of grammar. The necessity of learning

grammar for literature students who mostly work in the company tend to prioritize the accuracy rather than fluency.

This finding is relevant to what Alamsyah (2016) has suggested in that the short story can possibly become one of the alternative in providing the sources for reading material. Besides, the use of local short story can also help the students to appreciate their own cultural background as well as improving their confidence.

In addition, the finding of the present study slightly support what Crystal (2003) has postulated, which means that the most current need for learning English will be mostly for formal activities, e.g., working, cooperating, doing research, and not simply enjoying literature (See e.g., Crystal, 2003). Besides, the students, who are mostly working students will probably emphasize more on their accuracy as one of the important factor to support their jobs. Further study should be conducted to non-working students so that the tendency of preferring the locally written material and the grammar –oriented sources can be identified more accurately.

CONCLUSION

Basically, the use of locally made sources can benefit not only the students of English but also the other stakeholders of English education context. For instance, the students who are found to like reading short stories may find the books written by the locals, thus encouraging the local to write more in English. This in turn will also benefit the publication companies and the governments. Besides, the use of locally made has also been proven beneficial in terms of simplicity and affordability.

Compared with foreign or native English sources, which are of high quality but very expensive to the students, the use of locally made sources can be very beneficial to the students as well as to the lecturers who are serving and teaching the students. However, it is also important to note that the production quality of Indonesian learning materials should be continuously improved. For instance, the publishers can possibly improve the lexical aspects of their published books so that these learning materials can be more naturally meaningful to learn. The criticism of "learning the Indonesian English" should be anticipated by

improving the lexical aspects of the books by, for instance, hiring the native speakers, who can possibly revise or edit the books.

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