

UTILIZING LOCAL CULTURE MATERIALS TO SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AT A HINDU UNIVERSITY

Ni Nyoman Tantri¹⁾

¹⁾ Institut Agama Hindu Negeri Tampung Penyang Palangka Raya
ninyomantantri.03@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study explores the integration of the local culture of Central Kalimantan, specifically Batang Garing/ Batang Haring, which represents the Tri Hita Karana (THK) philosophy rooted in the Dayak Hindu Kaharingan community, into English language teaching at a Hindu-based university. Batang Garing, revered as the "Tree of Life", symbolizes the harmonious relationship among God, humans, and nature, highlighting moral balance, cultural identity, and sustainability. This study addresses the lack of culturally relevant English teaching materials that incorporate learners' local values and experiences. It aligns with the goals of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) and Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), emphasizing inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive education.

Employing a qualitative design within the ADDIE framework, the study conducted a comprehensive need analysis through questionnaires and interviews with three English teachers and twenty-five students. Findings reveal that although students recognize the importance of English for academic and communicative purposes, they still face significant challenges in listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Their motivation and engagement increase when learning materials relate to their cultural backgrounds.

The study affirms that local culture materials, integrating Batang Garing values, not only enhance students' language proficiency but also promote moral development and cultural sustainability. Embedding local wisdom into English language teaching offers a valuable pathway for achieving sustainable education in both local and global contexts.

Keywords: *Local Culture Materials, Need Analysis, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, proficiency in English is essential for students in higher education. One of its benefits is accessing a wide range of learning resources that can help them become more competent in their particular subject. Hence, English is taught in all universities, including those with non-English departments. English is categorized into two, namely, as a core subject and as a supporting subject (Akhroh & Semarang, 2020). The contents of the English course at higher education are adjusted according to the characteristics of the university concerned. It is in line with the decree of the Minister of National Education Number 232/U/2000 that the institutional curriculum is structured institutionally (Kemendiknas, 2000)).

The primary objective of teaching English to non-English majors is developing students' language proficiency to meet academic and personal goals. The Hindu religious study program at Institut Agama Hindu Negeri Tampung Penyang Palangka Raya (IAHN TP) uses a General English framework to teach English, with a focus on fundamental language skills that are relevant in a variety of

contexts. In order to encourage and actively involve students in the learning process, it is imperative that the materials utilized are contextual and suited to their requirements. This means that they should represent students' cultural backgrounds and real-life experiences.

According to preliminary analysis of the English curriculum and students' performance records reveal that students at IAHN TP Palangka Raya face significant struggle in all four English language skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Many students obtain unsatisfactory grades, and interviews with English teachers indicate a general lack of active psychological engagement in the classroom. Despite physically attending classes, students' interest and involvement levels are still low. Limited utilization of technology-based resources, poorly contextualized instructional materials, and ineffective teaching techniques are some of the factors causing these difficulties.

Furthermore, while the goals of learning English stated in the curriculum is to provide graduates who are not only capable of using English as an international language but also to be able to communicate the basic principles of the Hindu religion as the basic body of knowledge of the learners studying at Hindu religious departments. In fact, for a long period, the topics of the teaching materials are still not represented in the knowledge based on Hindu subject matter as stated in the curriculum. Moreover, the provided English materials are compiled without following a systematic process, such as through the needs analysis of the learners. Thus, the available teaching materials do not successfully achieve the goals of English learning. Furthermore, the provided resources have not been modified to align with the *Merdeka Belajar*- focused Indonesian National Qualifications Framework Curriculum (KKNI), which is the curriculum used in this department.

Enhancing language proficiency and promoting moral and cultural sustainability are two benefits of integrating *Batang Garing* values aligned local culture resources into English instruction. Goal 4 (Quality Education) and Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), in particular, which promote inclusive, equitable, and sustainable education that maintains cultural variety, are in line with such integration (Nations, 2025; UNESCO, 2025). To create responsible global citizens, education for sustainable Development (ESD) promotes integrating sustainability ideas and cultural identities into curricula.

In order to fill in the gaps, this study investigates the creation of culturally relevant General English resources that incorporate local knowledge at IAHN TP Palangka Raya. In line with *Batang Garing* beliefs, it seeks to shed light on students' requirements and preferences for language learning resources, supporting the institutions' mission to promote high-quality instruction in line with sustainable development principles.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative design within the analysis phase of the ADDIE framework to identify students' needs in developing local culture-based English learning materials at IAHN TP Palangka Raya. The participants were purposefully selected, consisting of three English teachers and five sophomore students as interviewees, and twenty-five freshmen as questionnaire respondents. Semi-structured interviews and questionnaires with an emphasis on students' needs, preferences, and learning challenges were used to gather data (Kholis & Azmi, 2023). The data were analyzed qualitatively using content and narrative analysis, while quantitative responses were summarized in percentage distributions and interpreted following the framework of Miles and Huberman (Sugiyono, 2009).

3. RELATED RESEARCH/ LITERATURE REVIEW

Integrating local culture into English language teaching makes learning more meaningful and relevant to students' lives. Language and culture are inseparable,

and when English is taught through learner's cultural contexts, it enhances motivation, participation, and identity formation (Kramersch, 2001). In Indonesia, the inclusion of local wisdom in the curriculum is mandated to promote engagement and learning achievement (Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No.3, 2020). Incorporating the Dayak Hindu Kaharingan symbol *Batang Garing*, which reflects the *Tri Hita Karana* philosophy, gives students at IAHN TP Palangka Raya a meaningful and culturally rich foundation for learning English (Kumara et al., 2025; Mau & Sukawati, 2019; Murtini et al., 2025). The *Tri Hita Karana* philosophy, which serves as a moral and ecological foundation for education, places an emphasis on harmony between God, people, and nature (Dharmayanti & Sawitri, 2024; Redana & Mujiyono, 2023). By incorporating its ideals into English language instruction, students can develop their linguistic proficiency and cultural understanding while also promoting character-based and sustainable learning (Adnyana & Sasia, 2018).

Since the learners are dominated by the Dayak culture, namely the adherents of Hindu Kaharingan, the English teaching materials should consider the unique characteristics of the learners real-life underpinning the concept of *Tri Hita Karana*. Then, it is highly urgent to address the parallelism of *Tri Hita Karana* concept to Hindu Kaharingan. In line with this, Mau & Sukawati (2019) introduce *Batang Garing* as the local wisdom of Central Kalimantan which is in line with the concept of *Tri Hita Karana*, the basic concept of Balinese Hinduism. It depicts an impartiality and harmonious relationship of three dimensions (God, human, and nature) as a source of peace in life. *Batang Garing/Haring* derives from *Bahasa Sangiang*, the ancient language of Dayak ethnic and written in *Panaturan*, a religious scripture of Hindu Kaharingan, symbolizing as the tree of life. It owns three branches that represents three appreciations as a guideline of life (*haring hatungku tungket langit*), namely: 1) *kayu gambalang nyahu*, reflects the relationship between human and God; 2) *kayu pampang seribu*, to address the relationship between human and fellow humans; and 3) *kayu erang tingang*, which symbolizes the relationship between human and nature. Thus, as a local wisdom, *Batang Garing* is elucidated as a basis and goal of life for the Dayak ethnic in Central Kalimantan.

Furthermore, integrating local culture in education aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), which advocate inclusive and culturally responsive learning (UNESCO, 2025). By promoting sustainability, respect for diversity, and social peace, local wisdom like *Tri Hita Karana* transforms education into a means of fostering environmental consciousness and global responsibility (Antini & Artini, 2025; Metera et al., 2025; Sholicha, 2022). Therefore, integrating the principles of *Batang Garing* and *Tri Hita Karana* into English language instruction not only protects cultural heritage but also equips students to actively contribute to sustainable development on a local and global level.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Findings

The results of students' voices were examined in this part in light of the necessity of developing local culture English learning materials for Hindu higher education context. Result from a questionnaire asking students about their experiences learning English, as well as their needs, desires, and challenges, particularly in Hindu Education Study Program at Institut Agama Hindu Negeri Tampung Penyang Palangka Raya become the quantitative data in this study.

The learners' demographic information, which included their age, gender, school graduate, parents' education, and parent's occupation as well as the learners' experiences on English professional development, the level of English proficiency, and the learners' daily English use. Details information in the following table was the demographic information of the learners.

Table 1. Learners' Demographic Data

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	< 20 years old	21	84
	> 20 years old	4	16
Gender	Male	11	44
	Female	14	56
School Graduate	SMA	19	76
	SMK	6	24
Parent's education	SD	9	36
	SMP	10	40
	SMA	0	0
	Diploma	1	4
	Bachelor	2	8
	Master	0	0
	Doctor	0	0
Parent's work	Others	3	12
	Farmer	23	92
	Civil servant	0	0
	Merchant	0	0
	Self-Employed	0	0
	Others	2	8

The following figure illustrates the students' experiences enrolling in any English language programs. The first figure showed that totally the learners almost never experienced in a course or program that could support their English skills. Eighty percent of students admitted that they had never participated in any activities at enhancing their English.

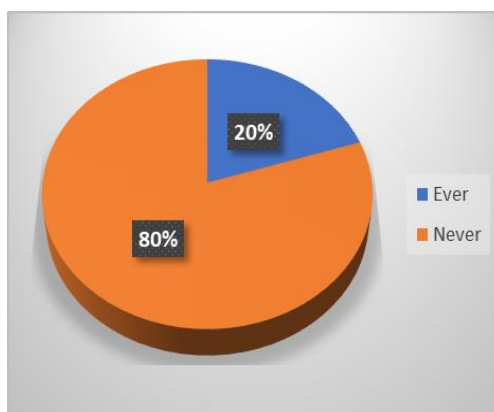


Figure 1. The learners' Experiences on English Program

Additionally, figure two showed that the findings related to the students' level of English proficiency. As demonstrated by the data, the learners were at the lowest level, with 80% of them in the beginner level, 12% in the advanced level, and 4% in the intermediate level.

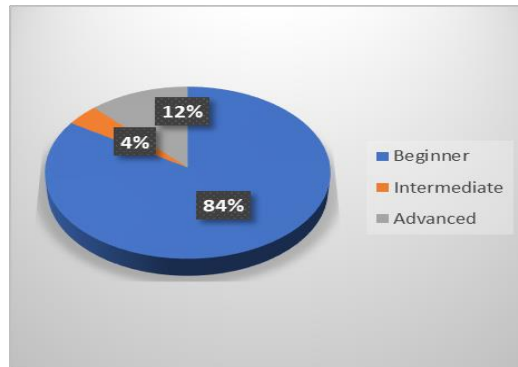


Figure 2. The Learners' English Proficiency Level

The learners' English profile also demonstrated by daily usage of English. The findings demonstrated that learners' daily usage of English varied in frequency. In the range of 12%, several of the students had previously practiced regularly. While the range of learners who hardly ever used English and those who never used it in their everyday activities were similar, some of the learners had encountered it on a daily basis. The total of 48% of students who reported using English occasionally provided the answer.

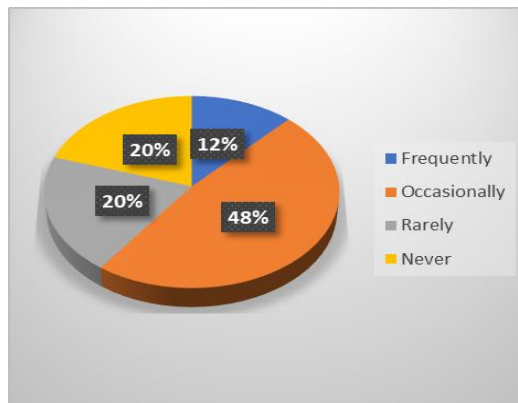


Figure 3. The Learners' Daily English Use

Furthermore, the learners' insight regarding the value of English language proficiency in bolstering their academic pursuits were classified as very significant, important, rather important, and not important. The results showed that speaking was one of the skills that the students were most worried about. Next were writing, listening, grammar, vocabulary, reading, and pronunciation. The following is how it was illustrated in figure 4.

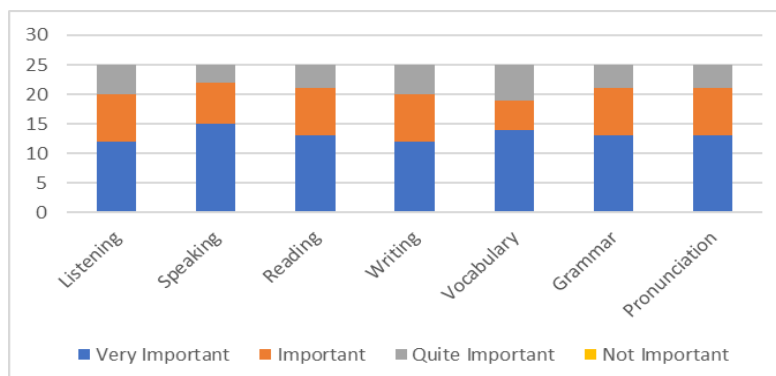


Figure 4. The Learners' Preferences Language Skills

The findings shown in Figure 5 then showed that, on average the eight criteria, the eight criteria for developing local culture English learning materials at a Hindu university were 12.5%. The criteria for learning resources that students required were shown below.

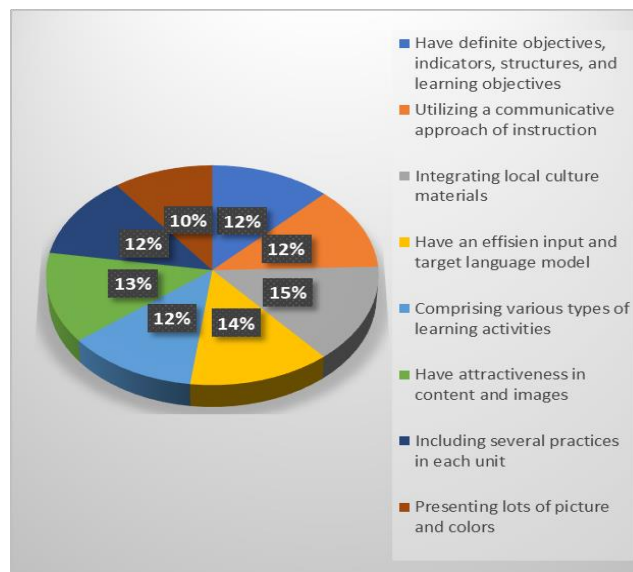


Figure 5. The Criteria of Learning Materials Needed by the Learners

The subjects or topics selected for the materials were also taken into consideration in order to assess the learners' needs in developing local culture English learning materials which relate to *Batang Garing* as the representation of *Tri Hita Karana* as well as addressing the theory of culture proposed by Koentjaraningrat that viewed culture into three: cultural ideas, social practices, and cultural objects/ artifact. The findings demonstrated that out of the six theme presented to the students, local custom or ritual was the one they preferred or found most interesting. Traditional cuisine, regional folklore, traditional games, holy sites, and customary law were the next topic covered.

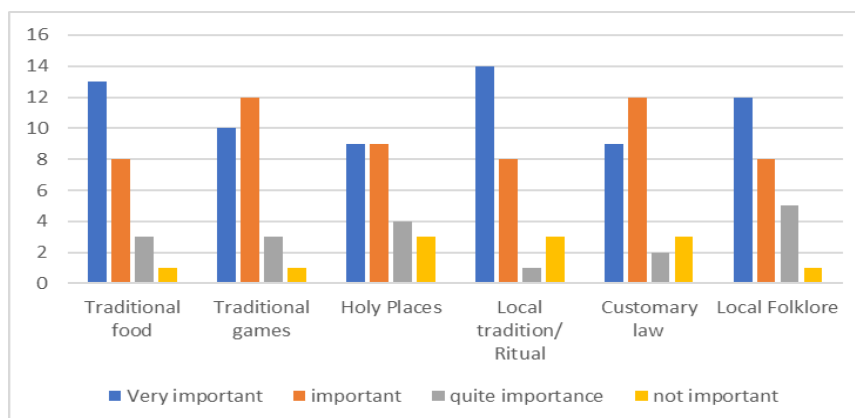


Figure 6. The Topic of Local Culture Needed by the Learners

The next findings was the method of learning preferences. The data of the study showed that the learners' method preference was dominated by games, simulation, and role-plays, project-based learning, followed by group discussion, group presentation, individual assignment, teacher lecture, and problem-based learning.

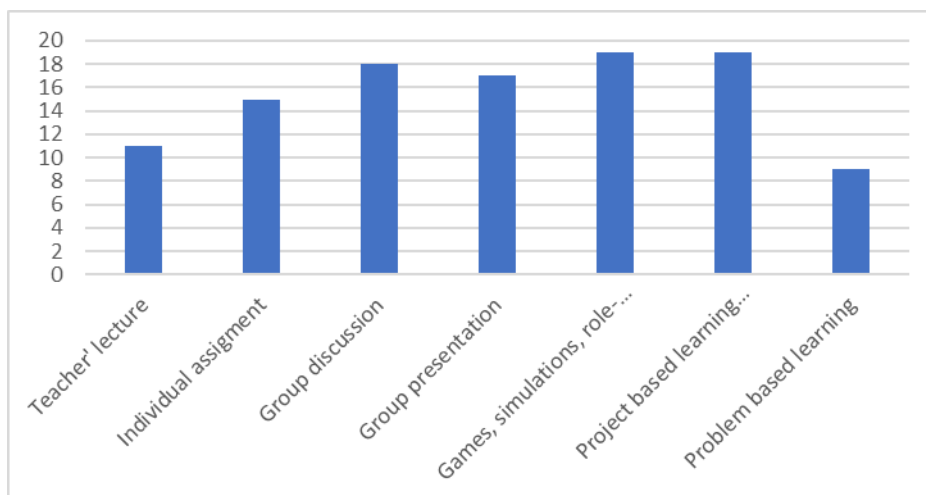


Figure 7. The Learner's Learning Preferences

The disadvantages of learning English were also mentioned by the students, even as the information about their needs and desires was provided. Both receptive (reading and listening) and productive (speaking and writing) language abilities were the source of the challenges. Figure 8 showed that speaking was the most difficult skill for the students to acquire. It was followed by reading skills to be hard experienced by the learners. Meanwhile, both listening and writing skills showed balance difficulties for IAHN TP learners.

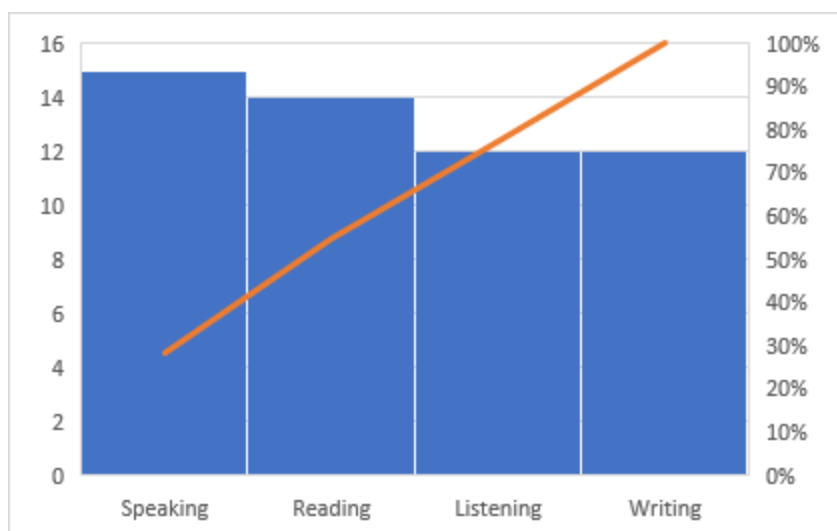


Figure 8. The Learners' difficulties level on each skill

The questionnaire results have been clarified. The next step was to be describe the qualitative data from the interview. Five main topics were used as interview guidance, namely the learners' motivation in studying English, the difficulties of learning English, the needs of the topic of local culture learning materials to learn, the media used for learning, and the learning approach.

The data from the questionnaires have been elucidated. Then it came to describe the qualitative data from the interview. Five main topics were used as interview guidance: 1). The learners' motivation in studying English; 2). The difficulties in learning English; 3). The topics of local culture English materials related to Batang Haring; 4). The media employed in learning; and 5). The method utilized in learning.

The following summary provides insights from students and the English teachers of Hindu Education Study Program regarding the five topics from the interview results.

Table 1. Interview results from Students and Teachers

No	Topics	Statements
1.	The learners' motivation in studying English	Most students perceived English as a challenging subject due to their limited vocabulary mastery and difficulties in pronunciation and comprehension. Many students showed a lack of confidence in their ability to learn, especially when they came across foreign words or when their pronunciation and spelling differed, which made them hesitant to speak in front of others. Additionally, most students found the materials linguistically heavy and less relatable to their cultural experiences. Overall, the students' voices emphasize the need for contextual, culturally relevant, and interactive English materials that foster both linguistic competence and learning motivation.
2.	The difficulties in learning English	The students' difficulties in learning English showed the majority of students struggles with all four language abilities, with speaking, writing, and reading being the most difficult. Several students expressed that they struggled to comprehend reading texts and found challenging to generate and organize ideas during writing activities. Listening also appeared to be a problematic skill for some learners, particularly when understanding different accents or fast speech. However, several students felt that speaking was the most challenging skill. They acknowledged that they struggled with fluency and felt nervous about making mistakes when attempting to speak freely. Pronunciation issues also made it difficult to participate in class discussions, which led to hesitancy and decreased confidence. Students also admitted that a major factor in these difficulties was their little exposure to English outside of the classroom. Overall, these findings indicate that students' difficulties in learning English stem not only from linguistic limitations but also from a lack of authentic practice, motivation, and exposure to meaningful language use.
3.	The topics of local culture learning materials to learn	The students considered necessary to make English learning more engaging and meaningful. The students expressed a strong preference for learning materials that are relevant to their field of the study and closely connected to their local culture. The students also mentioned that when teachers provided the familiar topics to learn, they could comprehend the lesson more effectively. The finding highlights how crucial it is to contextualize English instruction through local culture-based materials, which not only improve linguistic proficiency but also foster a sense of belonging and cultural awareness of the students.
4.	The media employed in learning	Most students acknowledged that teachers has utilized modern instructional tools such as projectors and Power Point slides to support classroom learning. However, teachers found these methods dull and uninspiring because they frequently used slide-based lectures without any multimedia integration or interactive elements. Many students said that teacher-centered lessons were common, with teachers explained the materials and assigning activities at the conclusion of the class. Low classroom engagement was thought to be caused by the sparse use of diverse media types, such as audio resources, interactive exercises, or images related to cultural themes. Students also noted that, with little usage of digital or interactive platforms, printed textbooks continued to be the main source of knowledge.
5.	The method utilized in learning	Most students agreed that they needs various teaching methods to engage them in learning English both in individual and in group.

4.2 Discussion

The findings reveal that integrating local culture into English learning materials plays an essential role in addressing the challenges faced by students of IAHN TP Palangka Raya. The majority of the students in the Hindu Education Study Program still have trouble pronouncing words correctly, speaking confidently, and having a large vocabulary. Additionally, they are not exposed to English outside of the classroom. These challenges imply that students' learning is not adequately supported by traditional materials, which are frequently divorced from their

circumstances. English-language resources have greater significance, relatability, and motivation when they mirror students' cultural experiences.

Additionally, students indicated a significant desire to learn about local cultural subjects like customs, traditional food, folklore, and holy places. When the content represented their values and community, they felt more involved. Because it embodies harmony between God, people, and nature, *Batang Garing*, the local wisdom that represents *Tri Hita Karana*, provides a rich framework for such integration. Students can simultaneously improve their language skills and cultural awareness by using *Batang Garing*-based learning resources. This method contributes to the notion of education that promotes cultural preservation and sustainable development by enabling them to learn English while still feeling proud of their background.

Another crucial element has to do with classroom procedures. Projectors and Power Point slides are example of technology that teachers have started utilizing, yet students still find the lessons boring and teacher-centered. Project-based learning, role-playing, presentations, and gaming are among the more dynamic and engaging activities that they like. These choices demonstrate that students would to participate more actively as opposed to passively. Through the integration of interactive techniques and resources rooted in local culture, educators can establish a more engaging and significant environment. This combination promotes students to utilize English in authentic contexts that are meaningful to their culture and familiar to them.

Finally, there are more extensive educational advantages of incorporating local culture into English instruction. In addition to strengthening their understanding of regional knowledge and values, it helps students grow more comfortable speaking English. This kind of approach is in line with the tenets of sustainable education, which emphasizes moral growth and respect for cultural identity in addition to academic success. Thus English instruction at Hindu universities can serve as a bridge between local culture and global communication, fostering the development of knowledgeable, culturally sensitive, and long-lasting students.

CONCLUSION

This study emphasizes how crucial it is to create English language learning resources that are rooted in local culture, especially those that honor *Batang Garing* as the representation of *Tri Hita Karana*. The results demonstrate that IAHN TP Palangka Raya students encounter considerable difficulties in obtaining English language abilities, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing, primarily as a result of learning new subjects. Students are more engaged and enthusiastic when the learning materials relate to their cultural background. Incorporating local knowledge into language instruction not only improves students' language proficiency but also cultivates a stronger sense of cultural pride and belonging.

The integration of local culture into English teaching also supports the goals of sustainable education by promoting harmony between academic growth, cultural preservation, and moral values. Developing materials based on *Batang Garing* encourages students to view English as a tool for expressing their local identity in a global context. Therefore, universities, especially those with strong cultural and religious foundations, are encouraged to design English programs that balance global communication skills with local wisdom. Such an approach can contribute to producing graduates who are not only proficient in English but also culturally conscious and morally grounded citizens.

REFERENCES

- Adnyana, I. B. A., & Sasia, I. K. (2018). Tri Hita Karana Values in Teaching and Learning of Indonesian Language for Foreign Students. *Jurnal Sosial Dan Humaniora*, 8(2). <https://doi.org/https://dx.doi.org/10.31940/soshum.v8i2.983>
- Akhiroh, N. S., & Semarang, U. N. (2020). *Teaching English in Non-English Departments: Empowering Teacher Towards Improvement*. February. <https://doi.org/10.15408/ijee.v4i1.5341>
- Antini, N. K. A., & Artini, L. P. (2025). English Teachers' Perspectives About Tri Hita Karana in dealing with Multiculturalism in the Classroom: A case study in a National School of Bali, Indonesia. *Proceedings of the 6th International Conference on Education and Social Sciences (ICESS 2024)*, 2019, 211–223. https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-392-4_16
- Dharmayanti, P. A. P., & Sawitri, L. P. D. (2024). Integrasi Nilai-Nilai Kearifan Lokal Dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris: Perspektif Tri Hita Karana. *Jurnal Santiaji Pendidikan (JSP)*, 14(1), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.36733/jsp.v14i1.7699>
- Kemendiknas. (2000). *Keputusan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional (Kepmendiknas) Nomor 232/U/ 2000 tentang Pedoman Penyusunan Kurikulum Pendidikan Tinggi dan Penilaian Hasil Belajar Mahasiswa*.
- Kholis, A., & Azmi, U. (2023). A Need Analysis on Developing English Interactive Multimodal E-Book Oriented to 21st Century Skills. *Elsya : Journal of English Language Studies*, 5(1), 85–106. <https://doi.org/10.31849/elsya.v5i1.11804>
- Kramsch, C. (2001). *Language and culture*. Oxford. Oxford University Press.
- Kumara, D. G. A. G., Sutajaya, I. M., & Suja, I. W. (2025). Integrasi Nilai Tri Hita Karana Dalam Pembelajaran Reading Dalam Pembentukan Karakter Siswa. *Jurnal Santiaji Pendidikan (JSP)*, 15(1), 79–89. <https://doi.org/10.36733/jsp.v15i1.10685>
- Mau, D. P., & Sukawati, T. G. R. (2019). The Values of Batang Haring as Local Wisdom in Building the Sustainable Competitive Advantage of Tourism Destination in Central Kalimantan. *Journal of Business on Hospitality and Tourism*, 05(02), 249–263. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.22334/jbhost.v5i2.164>
- Metera, I. G. M., Sugiarka, I. G., Sukrayasa, I. W., Widyastuti, N. P., & Rumbay, C. A. (2025). Designing Ethnopedagogy: The Philosophy of Tri Hita Karana as the Foundation Educational Values. *Advanced in Social Humanities Research*, 3(3), 175–185.
- Murtini, N. M. W., Sutajaya, I. M., & Suja, I. W. (2025). Students' Perceptions of the Integration of Tri Hita Karana Values in Descriptive Writing. *Jurnal Santiaji Pendidikan (JSP)*, 15(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.36733/jsp.v15i1.10545>
- Nations, U. (2025). *Goal 4: Quality Education*. <http://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4>
- Redana, I. W., & Mujiyono. (2023). Implementation of Tri Hita Karana Teachings to Shape the Character of Early Children. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Sciences*, 1(2), 241–252.
- Sholicha, Y. M. (2022). Traditional Philosophy Tri Hita Karana-Oriented Education in Supporting Sustainability Education. *Proceeding International Conference on Islamic Education "Integrated Science and Religious Moderation in New-Paradigm in Contemporary Education."*
- Sugiyono. (2009). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif, Kuantitatif dan R&D*. Alfabeta.
- UNESCO. (2025). *Education for Sustainable Development*. <https://www.unesco.org/en/sustainable-development/education>.