

**A Co-Pilot as Artificial Intelligence and Local Culture Integration in Writing Instruction: A Model to Improve Students' Engagement in Polytechnic**

**M Bambang Purwanto**  
[mbambangpurwanto@gmail.com](mailto:mbambangpurwanto@gmail.com)  
**Politeknik Prasetiya Mandiri**

**Dahnial**  
[dahnial.dp@gmail.com](mailto:dahnial.dp@gmail.com)  
**STIA Satya Negara Palembang**

**Fitri Nurdianingsih**  
[fitrinurdianingsih@ikipbojonegoro.ac.id](mailto:fitrinurdianingsih@ikipbojonegoro.ac.id)  
**IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro**

**ABSTRACT**

This study investigates integrating local culture into writing instruction to improve students' engagement in a polytechnic context. The research employed a Classroom Action Research design in two cycles, involving 30 fourth-semester students in a tourism study program. Local culture-based writing activities were implemented through topics such as describing local tourist attractions and reporting cultural events. Data were collected using observation checklists, students' writing tasks, and field notes, and analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings revealed that integrating local culture increased students' behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. Students became more active in discussions, showed greater enthusiasm, and developed ideas more easily. In addition, students' writing performance improved across organization, vocabulary, grammar, and content. The use of familiar cultural contexts helped students produce more relevant and meaningful texts. The study concludes that integrating local culture into writing instruction is an effective strategy to enhance engagement and improve writing performance in vocational education.

**Keywords:** local Culture Integration; Writing Instruction; Student Engagement; Vocational Education; Polytechnic Students

**INTRODUCTION**

Writing skills are among the important competencies in learning English in vocational education, especially in the polytechnic environment, which is oriented to the needs of the world of work. Polytechnic students are not only required to understand theory but also to produce functional texts, such as descriptions of tourist destinations, activity reports, and professional service information. However, in practice, writing learning often still focuses on general topics that are less relevant to the student's vocational context. As a result, students have difficulty developing ideas, show low engagement, and are less motivated during the learning

process. This condition shows that writing instruction in vocational education needs to be adjusted to the characteristics of students who need real, practical contexts.

Polytechnic students have characteristics different from those of general academic students, namely, a greater emphasis on practicality, context, and the world of work. They tend to understand the material more easily when it relates to a real experience or a relevant professional situation. However, writing that remains abstract makes it difficult for students to connect writing tasks to their future needs. This affects low student engagement in writing activities (Hyland, 2003; Richards, 2006). Student involvement is an important factor in the success of language learning as higher engagement increases the opportunity for students to optimally develop their language skills (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004).

Another problem that arises is students' low motivation to learn writing. Many students find writing activities difficult and less interesting. In addition, the topics used are often unrelated to students' daily lives. As a result, students write only minimally, without developing ideas in depth. Low participation in group discussions also shows that students are not fully engaged cognitively or emotionally in learning. (Taufiqi & Purwanto, 2024). This condition underscores the need for a learning approach that can increase the material's relevance to the student experience (Dörnyei, 2001).

One approach to increasing student engagement is integrating local culture into writing instruction. Local culture can be a source of authentic material that is close to the student experience, helping them develop ideas more naturally. The use of local cultural contexts can also increase a sense of belonging to learning materials, thereby motivating students to participate actively. (Sherly Malini et al., 2026). This approach aligns with the concept of contextual teaching and learning, which emphasizes connecting learning materials to students' real lives (Johnson, 2002).

Although some previous studies have examined cultural integration in language learning, most continue to focus on the context of high school or general education rather than on vocational education. In addition, research specifically examining the integration of local culture into writing instruction to increase polytechnic student engagement remains limited. Some studies emphasize the development of language competence without linking it to the specific local cultural context. (Umar & Purwanto, 2025; Vivin Afini, Fitri Nurdianingsih, Ridayani, 2025). Therefore, there is a research gap that needs to be addressed: how integrating local culture can increase student involvement in writing instruction in the vocational education environment (Kramsch, 1993; Gay, 2010).

Based on these problems, this study aims to describe the implementation of local cultural integration in writing learning in polytechnics, analyze student involvement during the learning process, and identify increased engagement after the implementation of local culture-based learning. In particular, this study seeks to answer the following research questions: how local culture is integrated into writing

instruction in the context of polytechnics, how the integration of local culture affects student engagement, and which aspects of engagement have increased after the implementation of local culture-based learning.

The novelty of this research lies in the integration of local culture, specifically in the context of writing instruction in vocational education, particularly among polytechnic students. This research not only emphasizes improving writing skills but also examines student involvement across behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement in an integrated manner. In addition, using local cultural context as a source of authentic material offers a new approach to writing instruction that is more contextual and relevant to the needs of polytechnic students. This approach is expected to make a new contribution to the development of local culture-based English learning models in vocational education.

In the future, this research is expected to serve as a reference for English lecturers in developing more contextually relevant and meaningful writing instruction. The integration of local culture can be used as a learning strategy to improve student engagement and the quality of their writing. In addition, the results of this study are expected to serve as a basis for future research examining the integration of local cultures into other language skills, such as speaking or reading, as well as in the broader context of vocational education. Thus, this research is expected to make practical and theoretical contributions to improving the quality of English learning in the polytechnic environment.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Teaching Writing in Polytechnic Context**

Writing in the context of vocational education has characteristics different from those of general academic learning. At the polytechnic, writing skills are geared towards practical needs relevant to the world of work, such as writing reports, product descriptions, professional emails, and service information. Therefore, the writing learning approach needs to emphasize the real communication function rather than the theoretical aspect alone. Vocational students tend to understand the material more easily when the writing task is related to the context of their future work. This aligns with the view that language learning in vocational education should be oriented towards English for Specific Purposes (ESP), which adapts language to specific professional fields (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Hyland, 2003).

In addition, the difference between functional writing and academic writing is important in the context of polytechnics. Functional writing emphasizes the use of language for practical purposes, such as creating activity reports, describing tourist destinations, and conducting business communication. In contrast, academic writing focuses more on academic arguments and scientific research. Polytechnic students need more functional writing because these skills are directly related to the

demands of the world of work. Therefore, writing instruction needs to be designed contextually and grounded in real situations so that students can develop professional communication competencies effectively (Richards, 2006; Basturkmen, 2010).

### **Students' Engagement in Language Learning**

Student engagement is an important concept in language learning because it relates to the level of student involvement in the learning process. Engagement not only includes physical participation but also involves students' emotional and cognitive aspects during learning. Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004) classify engagement into three main dimensions: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive. Behavioral engagement includes students' active participation in class activities; emotional engagement is related to interest and enthusiasm for learning; and cognitive engagement refers to students' efforts to understand the material in depth. Factors that affect student engagement include the relevance of the material, learning methods, and the classroom environment. When learning materials are associated with students' real experiences, engagement rates tend to increase. On the other hand, abstract, less contextual learning can reduce student motivation. Research shows that using authentic context in language learning can increase engagement because students feel the material is more meaningful and better suited to their needs (Dörnyei, 2001; Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020).

### **Local Culture in Language Teaching**

Local culture is an important resource in language learning because it can help students understand how language is used in real social contexts. Cultural integration in language learning enables students to develop both linguistic and cultural competence. Kramsch (1993) emphasizes that language and culture are inseparable because language is part of social practice. Therefore, using local culture in language learning can help students better understand language in its context. The culture-based language-teaching approach also encourages the use of authentic materials rooted in local culture, such as texts on regional traditions, tourist destinations, or community activities. This authentic material helps students connect personal experiences with language learning. In addition, using local culture can increase motivation to learn because students feel the material is closer to their lives. This approach also supports contextual learning that is relevant to the needs of vocational students (Gay, 2010; Tomlinson, 2013).

### **Integrating Local Culture in Teaching Writing**

The integration of local culture into writing instruction can be achieved by using culture as writing prompts. Students may be asked to write descriptions of local tourist destinations, reports of cultural activities, or experiences of participating in traditional events. This approach helps students develop ideas more easily by giving them hands-on experience with the topics being discussed. In addition, using local

culture as a writing context increases the relevance of learning to students' lives (Byram, 1997). Another approach is project-based writing grounded in regional culture. In this approach, students work in groups to produce written products such as tour brochures or cultural reports. Some research shows that integrating local culture into writing instruction can improve student engagement and the quality of their writing. Research by Suryani (2018) found that the use of local culture in writing learning increases students' ability to develop ideas. Another study by Fitriani and Jannah (2020) also found that integrating local culture increased students' motivation and participation in writing activities.

## **METHOD**

### **Design and Sample**

This research method uses the Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach with a two-cycle action research design to gradually improve the learning process through planned actions, implementation, observation, and reflection. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers who also serve as lecturers to identify real problems in the classroom and apply interventions, such as integrating local culture into writing instruction, to increase student engagement. The research process is carried out in two cycles, each consisting of planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection, so that the results of reflection in the first cycle can be used to improve actions in the next cycle. The two-cycle design is considered effective because it provides an opportunity for continuous evaluation of learning strategies and allows researchers to systematically and repeatedly observe changes in student engagement. Classroom Action Research also emphasizes improving direct learning practices in an authentic classroom environment, thereby making the research results more relevant to pedagogical needs in the context of vocational education, such as in polytechnics. This approach aligns with the view that CAR is a reflective method used by educators to improve the quality of learning through a continuous cycle of action, grounded in real classroom problems (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; Burns, 2010; Mertler, 2017).

This research was conducted at Prasetya Mandiri Polytechnic, involving fourth-semester students from the D3 Travel Business Study Program as research subjects. The selection of fourth-semester students is based on the assumption that they have acquired basic English skills in the previous semester but still need to strengthen their contextual, field-relevant writing skills. The study included 30 students enrolled in English courses, allowing researchers to observe the dynamics of the classroom as a whole, including group interactions, individual participation, and the level of student involvement during the implementation of local culture-based learning. In addition, the characteristics of students in the Travel Business study program, who are oriented towards the service and promotion of tourist destinations, are an important factor in selecting participants, as the integration of local culture into writing activities is considered in line with their academic and professional needs. With this context, the setting of this research provides an

authentic environment to examine how the use of local culture can increase student engagement in writing learning in vocational education.

### **Instruments and Procedures**

The research instruments used in this study include observation checklists to measure student involvement, student writing assignments as the main data for improving writing skills, and field notes used to record learning dynamics during the application of local culture-based materials. The observation checklist focuses on engagement indicators, including active participation, attention to instructions, group interaction, and initiative in writing. Students' writing tasks were collected from two main activities: Writing Activity: Describing Tourist Attraction (Musi & Ampera River) in the first cycle, and Writing Activity: Cultural Event Report (Festival & Traditional Event) in the second cycle. Meanwhile, field notes are used to record qualitative changes in student behavior, such as increased spontaneous discussion, the emergence of ideas grounded in local experiences, and greater confidence when composing paragraphs. The combination of these three instruments enabled researchers to more comprehensively observe the relationship between increased engagement and the quality of student writing. Interestingly, when students start writing about the Musi River or local festivals, the classroom atmosphere becomes more interactive; Some students even start asking about new vocabulary without being asked, a small but important sign of increased engagement.

*Table 1. Students' Engagement Grid Observation Checklist*

<b>No</b>	<b>Engagement Aspect</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
1	Behavioral Engagement	Students actively follow instructions
2	Behavioral Engagement	Students engage in group discussions
3	Emotional Engagement	Students show enthusiasm
4	Emotional Engagement	Students are interested in local cultural topics
5	Cognitive Engagement	Students develop writing ideas
6	Cognitive Engagement	Students use new vocabulary

This research procedure follows the stages of Classroom Action Research: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection, carried out cyclically in two rounds of action. In the planning stage, the researcher designed writing learning activities based on local culture in Palembang City by preparing Writing Activity: Describing Tourist Attraction (Musi & Ampera River) material for the first cycle and Writing Activity: Cultural Event Report (Festival & Traditional Event) for the second cycle, including the preparation of engagement observation sheets and student writing assessment rubrics. The implementation stage involves writing activities in stages, including brainstorming, group discussions, and individual writing. Furthermore, during the observation stage, the researcher recorded the level of student involvement and collected the writing results for analysis. The reflection stage involves evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of learning in each cycle to

inform actions in the next cycle. This process allows for gradual improvement in students' writing quality and engagement during learning, as each cycle leaves room for refinement based on real-world classroom conditions. Sometimes the changes seem small—for example, students start asking questions about their own vocabulary—but that is where the signs of engagement start to grow.

*Table 2. Stages of Research Procedure*

<b>Stages</b>	<b>Main Activities</b>	<b>Writing Material</b>	<b>Expected Output</b>
Planning	Preparing lesson plans, observation instruments, and assessment rubrics	Tourist Attraction & Cultural Event	Ready-to-use learning design
Implementation	Implementing writing learning based on local culture	Cycle 1: Sungai Musi & Ampera	A Student's Descriptive Essay
Observation	Observe engagement and collect writing results	Cycle 1 & 2	Engagement data and writing outcomes
Reflection	Evaluation and improvement of learning	Cultural Event Report	Improving the quality of the writing

Table 2 shows that each stage in the research procedure is interconnected and forms a continuous cycle of improvement. At the planning stage, the researcher prepares all learning tools so that the implementation process proceeds in a clear direction. The implementation phase focuses on local culture-based writing activities that encourage students to develop ideas from real experiences. Furthermore, the observation stage produces data on student engagement and the quality of their writing. The data is analyzed at the reflection stage to identify improvements for the next cycle. Through this flow, students' writing results improve gradually, from simple descriptions in the first cycle to more structured, culturally rich content writing in the second cycle.

The data collection technique in this study was carried out in stages during the implementation of two action cycles to obtain a comprehensive picture of increasing student engagement and writing results. In the initial stage, the researcher conducted class observations using an observation checklist to record the level of student engagement during the Writing Activity: Describing Tourist Attraction (Musi & Ampera River). This included participation in brainstorming, group discussions, and the writing process. Furthermore, the researcher collected students' writing assignments as the main data to analyze the development of writing skills in each cycle. In addition, field notes are used to record class dynamics more descriptively, such as students' spontaneous responses to local cultural topics, increased interaction, and difficulties that arise during writing activities. In the second cycle, data collection was again conducted through observation and documentation of writing outcomes in the Writing Activity: Cultural Event Report

(Festival & Traditional Event), thereby allowing comparison of results across cycles. The data obtained is then continuously analyzed to monitor changes in student engagement and improvements in the quality of their writing, so that the data collection process not only serves as documentation but also provides a basis for reflection and learning improvement in the next cycle.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis in this study was carried out through three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, to obtain a systematic picture of increasing student engagement and writing outcomes. In the data reduction stage, the researcher selects and focuses on the data obtained from observation sheets, student writing assignments, and field notes, grouping information relevant to changes in engagement and writing quality for each cycle. Data not directly related to the research objectives were simplified, while important data, such as improvements in writing ideas, the use of local cultural vocabulary, and student participation, were retained. The next stage is data display, where the reduced data is presented in tables, narrative descriptions, and comparisons of writing scores between the first and second cycles, making it easier for researchers to see patterns of improvement visually and structurally. Finally, at the conclusion-drawing stage, the researcher draws conclusions based on the trends in the data that emerge, including the relationship between increasing student involvement and the quality of the writing produced. This process is carried out continuously throughout the research, so that the conclusions produced are not sudden, but develop gradually as the data is analyzed in depth.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results of this study present two main findings that emerged during the implementation of local culture-based writing activities in English language learning in polytechnic classrooms. In general, data from observations, student writing assignments, and field notes indicate gradual changes in both the level of student involvement and the quality of the writing produced. At the beginning of the implementation, students still looked hesitant and tended to be passive when asked to write, perhaps because the previous topic felt far from their experience. However, when the material began to focus on local contexts such as the Musi River, the Ampera Bridge, and traditional cultural activities, the classroom atmosphere slowly changed. Discussions became more lively, students began to share experiences, and ideas for writing emerged more spontaneously. Based on these findings, this study focuses on two main aspects: increasing student involvement through local culture-based writing activities and improving the quality of student writing outcomes after applying materials relevant to the local cultural context. These two findings are interrelated because increased student engagement during the learning process directly contributes to the development of their ability to write more structured, meaningful texts.

### Students' Increased Engagement through Local Culture-Based Writing Activities

Implementing culture-based writing activities positively affects student involvement in the writing learning process. In the early stages, some students appear passive, wait for instructions, and are less involved in group discussions. The classroom situation felt stiff—some students even wrote very briefly, as if their ideas stopped halfway. However, when writing activities began to use local topics, such as Describing Tourist Attraction (Musi & Ampera River), students showed greater interest. They discussed the experience of visiting the Musi River, shared stories about the atmosphere of the Ampera Bridge at night, and asked about vocabulary related to local tourism. In the second cycle, through the Cultural Event Report (Festival & Traditional Event) activity, student involvement is increasing. Group discussions became more active, students exchanged experiences attending local festivals, and the brainstorming process took longer because the ideas that emerged were more diverse. This shows that using local cultural contexts helps students feel closer to the material, so they are more active behaviorally, emotionally, and cognitively.

*Table 3. Students' Engagement Improvement*

<b>Engagement Indicators</b>	<b>Before Implementation</b>	<b>Cycle 1</b>	<b>Cycle 2</b>	<b>Improvement</b>
Active Participation	60	72	84	+24
Group Discussion	58	70	82	+24
Asking Questions	55	68	80	+25
Attention to Task	62	75	86	+24
Enthusiasm	59	73	85	+26
Average Score	58.8	71.6	83.4	+24.6

Table 3 shows a significant increase in student involvement after the implementation of local culture-based writing activities. In the initial condition, the average engagement score was 58.8, indicating a low to medium level. Students tend to be passive and less active in discussions. After the first cycle, with the Musi River and the Ampera Bridge as the topic, the average score increased to 71.6. This increase shows that students are starting to become interested because the material relates to their real experiences. In the second cycle, when students wrote about local festivals and cultural events, the engagement score increased even higher to 83.4. The most notable improvement was seen in enthusiasm and the activeness of questioning, indicating that students were not only participating in activities but were also engaged emotionally and cognitively. Overall, an increase of 24.6 points indicates that the use of local culture in writing learning is effective in increasing student engagement during the learning process.

### Students' Writing Improvement Using Local Cultural Content

The study's results show that using local cultural content in writing activities significantly improves the quality of student writing. In the early stages, most students still write with a simple structure, limited ideas, and a relatively limited vocabulary. Their writing tends to be short, often just two or three sentences, with little detail. After implementing the Writing Activity: Describing Tourist Attraction (Musi & Ampera River) in the first cycle, changes began to be observed. Students can add more specific descriptions of locations, tourist activities, and the atmosphere of the place. However, the structure of the writing is still inconsistent. In the second cycle through the Cultural Event Report (Festival & Traditional Event) activity, the quality of the writing improved further. Students can write with a more structured paragraph organization, use local cultural vocabulary, and add chronological information about festival activities. Some students even start using complex sentences and descriptions of the atmosphere, such as the crowd of events or community activities. This change shows that the proximity of the topic to the student's experience helps them develop ideas more naturally and enriches the writing.

*Table 4. The Improvement of Students' Writing Performance*

<b>Writing Aspect</b>	<b>Before Implementation</b>	<b>Cycle 1</b>	<b>Cycle 2</b>	<b>Improvement</b>
Organization	64	72	81	+17
Vocabulary	62	70	79	+17
Grammar	63	69	76	+13
Content	65	75	85	+20
Mechanics	66	72	78	+12
Average Score	64.0	71.6	79.8	+15.8

Table 4 shows a gradual increase in all aspects of writing assessment. In the initial condition, the average student score was 64.0, indicating that writing ability was still in the sufficient category. After implementing writing activities based on local destination descriptions in the first cycle, the score increased to 71.6. This improvement mainly occurred in the content, as students began to include information about the Musi River and the Ampera Bridge. In the second cycle, when students wrote a report on cultural activities, the average score increased again to 79.8. The most significant increase was seen in the content aspect, which increased by 20 points, indicating that students are more likely to develop ideas when topics relate to familiar cultural experiences. In addition, improvements in organizational and vocabulary aspects show that students not only write longer, but also more structured and varied. Overall, an average increase of 15.8 points indicates that integrating local culture into writing instruction effectively improves the quality of student writing.

The study's results show that integrating local culture into writing instruction positively influences three dimensions of student involvement: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. In terms of behavioral engagement, students showed increased active participation during writing activities. They are more

involved in group discussions, follow instructions more focusedly, and complete writing tasks more seriously. Local culture-based writing activities, such as describing the Musi River and reporting on festival activities, make students feel they have firsthand experience with the topics discussed. As a result, engagement with assignments increases as students no longer rely solely on imagination but also on real-life experiences. This condition creates a more interactive classroom atmosphere, where students share ideas and provide feedback on their peers' writing.

In addition, the increase in emotional engagement is evident in students' enthusiasm for the topics used in writing activities. Students show greater interest when the material relates to familiar local cultures. They seem more confident in expressing their ideas, and some students even start using additional vocabulary to describe the local culture in more detail. This impact then extends to cognitive engagement, where students can develop more complex, contextually relevant writing ideas. Student writing not only describes objects in general, but also includes relevant aspects of culture, community activities, and local values. This shows that integrating local cultures not only increases emotional engagement but also strengthens students' thinking as they develop their writing.

This research aligns with previous findings that show integrating local cultures into language learning can increase student engagement. The use of locally rooted materials helps students feel more connected to the learning context and increases active participation in the classroom. (Harpiansi, Anggra Prima, 2025; K et al., 2025; Purwanto et al., 2025). In addition, using cultural context in writing instruction increases student motivation and helps them develop ideas more naturally. (Fadilla & Arief, 2024; Miqawati et al., 2024; Sari, 2016). Both studies emphasize that local culture serves as a bridge between students' experiences and the language skills they learn.

The findings of this study also support the results of research by M Bambang Purwanto et al. (2025) who stated that student engagement increases when learning uses authentic contexts that are relevant to their lives. In the context of language learning, using local culture helps students relate their personal experiences to academic tasks, thereby improving classroom interactions. Another study by Agustina Sari et al. (2024) shows that learning grounded in local culture not only increases engagement but also helps students develop critical thinking skills in writing. Thus, the results of this study reinforce previous findings that integrating local culture is an effective strategy for improving engagement and the quality of language learning.

The results of this study indicate that the proximity of the local cultural context to the student experience is the main factor in increasing involvement and the quality of writing. When students write about familiar topics, their cognitive load is reduced, allowing them to focus more on developing ideas and writing structure. This aligns with student engagement theory, which holds that the relevance of

learning materials to learners' experiences plays an important role in increasing motivation and active participation (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). Therefore, the use of local culture can be seen as an effective pedagogical strategy to improve the quality of writing learning in vocational education.

This study suggests that English lecturers in polytechnics should integrate local culture into their writing-learning strategies. Using local contexts can help students develop ideas more naturally and increase engagement in learning. In addition, this approach supports contextual learning aligned with the needs of the world of work, especially in tourism and hospitality. These findings align with the concept of contextual teaching and learning, which emphasizes connecting learning materials to students' real lives to improve understanding and engagement (Johnson, 2002). However, there are several challenges to implementing local cultural integration in language learning, particularly in educational leadership and institutional policies. Lecturers need support from the leaders of study programs and institutions to develop curricula that accommodate local culture. Without strong leadership support, learning innovations are often difficult to implement sustainably. Research by Komerendo et al., 2025 & Marsinah et al., 2024 shows that educational leadership plays an important role in driving learning innovation based on local contexts. Therefore, further research development needs to examine the relationship between academic leadership and the implementation of local culture-based language learning.

In addition, future research may explore integrating local cultures into the development of cross-cultural communication competencies and student leadership. Learning a language rooted in local culture not only improves writing skills but can also help students understand cultural values and develop professional communication skills. This aligns with the view that language learning plays a role in shaping global competence and student leadership in the era of education 5.0 (Hallinger, 2011). Further research can develop a learning model that integrates local culture, student leadership, and language competence.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study shows that integrating local culture into writing instruction positively affects student involvement and the quality of the learning process. Using topics rooted in Palembang's local culture, such as the Musi River, the Ampera Bridge, and various traditional festivals, makes writing activities more relevant and contextual for polytechnic students. When students write about something they are familiar with, ideas come up more quickly, discussions become more engaging, and the learning process feels more meaningful. The increase in students' engagement is evident in their active participation in group discussions, enthusiasm for writing assignments, and cognitive involvement in developing writing ideas. In addition, integrating local cultures helps students produce more structured, content-rich writing by enabling them to relate personal experiences to the learning materials. Thus, writing instruction grounded in local culture not only increases student

involvement but also makes the learning process more authentic and in line with the characteristics of vocational education.

This research has several advantages and disadvantages that need to be considered. The advantage of this research lies in its use of local cultural contexts close to students' lives, thereby increasing engagement naturally without the need for complex interventions. In addition, the design of Classroom Action Research allows for gradual improvement of learning and provides a real picture of changes in student behavior during the learning process. However, this study has limitations, including a relatively small sample size and a single study program, so the generalizability of the results still needs careful consideration. In addition, the research focuses more on student engagement and writing quality, so it has not explored in depth other aspects, such as critical thinking skills or the long-term impact on professional communication competence. Therefore, further research is recommended to involve more participants, examine different study program contexts, and integrate additional variables, such as student leadership or cross-cultural communication competencies, to yield more comprehensive results.

## REFERENCES

- Agustina Sari, E., Rahma, M., & Purwanto, M. B. (2024). Assessing the tourism value of Temam Waterfall: Environmental and economic perspectives. *LIMEEMAS: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan*, 2(2), 42–51. <https://ejournal.apmapi.or.id/index.php/Limeemas/article/view/35>
- Basturkmen, H. (2010). *Developing courses in English for specific purposes*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Burns, A. (2010). *Doing action research in English language teaching: A guide for practitioners*. Routledge.
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Multilingual Matters.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2001). *Motivational strategies in the language classroom*. Cambridge University Press.
- Fadilla, R., & Arief, Y. A. (2024). Developing a local wisdom-based digital resource for English for tourism in vocational high schools in Banjarmasin. *Acitya: Journal of Teaching and Education*, 6(2), 302–316. <https://doi.org/10.30650/ajte.v6i2.3856>
- Fitriani, S., & Jannah, M. (2020). Integrating local culture in EFL writing classroom. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, 9(2), 120–130.
- Fredricks, J. A., Blumenfeld, P. C., & Paris, A. H. (2004). School engagement. *Review of Educational Research*, 74(1), 59–109.
- Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally responsive teaching*. Teachers College Press.
- Hallinger, P. (2011). Leadership for learning. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 39(2), 125–130.
- Harpiansi, Anggra Prima, & Purwanto, M. B. (2025). Multimedia-enhanced role-play as a pedagogical strategy to improve speaking skills: An action research

- study. *JR-ELT: Journal of Research in English Language Teaching*, 9(2), 160–174. <https://doi.org/10.30631/mss76v06>
- Hutchinson, T., & Waters, A. (1987). *English for specific purposes*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hyland, K. (2003). *Second language writing*. Cambridge University Press.
- Johnson, E. B. (2002). *Contextual teaching and learning*. Corwin Press.
- Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (1988). *The action research planner*. Deakin University Press.
- Komerendo, A. L. K., Ridayani, R., Fadilaturrahmah, F., Marsinah, M., & Purwanto, M. B. (2025). Indonesian to English usage in hospitality staff communication: A linguistic interference analysis. *Wiralodra English Journal*, 9(1), 63–76. <https://doi.org/10.31943/wej.v9i1.359>
- Kramsch, C. (1993). *Context and culture in language teaching*. Oxford University Press.
- Marsinah, M., Hatidah, H., Fitri Indriani, R. A. R., & Purwanto, M. B. (2024). Telok Abang ship culture: A symbol of pride for Palembang residents on Independence Day. *Jurnal Pengabdian Pancasila*, 3(3), 133–144. <https://doi.org/10.55927/jpp.v3i3.11249>
- Mercer, S., & Dörnyei, Z. (2020). *Engaging language learners in contemporary classrooms*. Cambridge University Press.
- Mertler, C. A. (2017). *Action research: Improving schools and empowering educators* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Miqawati, A. H., Wijayanti, F., & Intan Purnama, A. (2024). Integrating local culture in English language teaching: Enhancing authentic materials and cultural awareness. *Journal of English in Academic and Professional Communication*, 10(2), 100–106. <https://doi.org/10.25047/jeapco.v10i2.5096>
- Purwanto, M. B., Hanadya, D., Auliana, N. U., Harapan, E., & Indriansyah, A. (2025). Pundi Kayu Berdaya: Strategi pengabdian masyarakat dalam menggerakkan ekonomi lokal melalui ekowisata. *Jurnal Pelayanan Masyarakat*, 2(1), 45–55. <https://doi.org/10.62951/jpm.v2i1.1301>
- Purwanto, M. B., Yuliana, Y., Nurdianingsih, F., & Despita, D. (2025). Tech meets practice: Shadowing with mobile tools to enhance L2 vocabulary mastery. *Journal CULTURE: Culture, Language, and Literature Review*, 12(2), 87–98. <https://doi.org/10.53873/culture.v12i2.756>
- Richards, J. C. (2006). *Communicative language teaching today*. Cambridge University Press.
- Sari, R. A. (2016). Teaching English for tourism in Bali based on local culture: What do students need? In *Proceedings of the Fourth International Seminar on English Language and Teaching (ISELT-4)* (pp. 221–229).
- Sherly Malini, Rahman, A., Anggraini, J., Hairul, M., & Purwanto, M. B. (2026). Inovasi produk dan pelatihan manajemen bisnis untuk UMKM pakaian tradisional Palembang dalam mengembangkan potensi wisata fashion lokal. *ADM: Jurnal Abdi Dosen dan Mahasiswa*, 3(3), 283–294. <https://doi.org/10.61930/jurnaladm.v3i3.1431>

- Suryani, L. (2018). Local culture-based writing instruction. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 8(1), 45–55.
- Taufiqi, M. A., & Purwanto, M. B. (2024). Promoting religious moderation through English language teaching: Strategies and challenges in Islamic educational settings. *ETERNAL: English Teaching Journal*, 15(2), 192–202. <https://doi.org/10.26877/eternal.v15i2.443>
- Tomlinson, B. (2013). *Developing materials for language teaching*. Bloomsbury.
- Umar, U., & Purwanto, M. B. (2025). Generative AI and the future of creativity: Threat or catalyst for innovation? *Foreign Language Instruction Probe*, 4(1), 32–43. <https://doi.org/10.54213/flip.v4i1>
- Vivin Afini, Nurdianingsih, F., Ridayani, & Purwanto, M. B. (2025). Task-based language teaching as an English learning method for room service and reservations employees: A case study. *Language and Education Journal*, 10(1), 89–105. <https://doi.org/10.52237/2wbzfm80>