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Needs Analysis and Design of an English for Earlier Childhood Model Based on Papuan Folklore

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ABSTRACT

English teaching for young learners in Indonesia is constrained by prospective early childhood (PAUD) teachers' limited readiness and generic materials disconnected from children's cultural contexts. This study identified prospective PAUD teachers' needs and proposed a conceptual design for an English for Earlier Childhood (EEC) model grounded in Papuan folklore. It covered the needs analysis and model design stages of a Research and Development procedure adapted from Borg and Gall. In June 2026, all ten eligible prospective PAUD teachers at Universitas Pendidikan Muhammadiyah Sorong completed a five-item questionnaire; five participated in semi-structured interviews. A literature review and criteria-based mapping of documented Papuan folktales supplemented these data. Questionnaire responses were analysed using score percentages, and interviews were coded thematically. The need indices reached 84% for feeling unprepared to teach English to children, 88% for needing a module with step-by-step guidance, and 92% for interest in folklore-based learning. All five interviewees reported a lack of English materials designed for young children. Of twelve inventoried folktales, six were selected for learning units. These findings informed a preliminary five-step, story-centred model: Story Introduction, Language Focus, Playful Practice, Retelling, and Reflection. A need–theory–design matrix documents the rationale for each step. The proposed model gives prospective teachers a culturally relevant teaching sequence, while its validity, practicality, and effectiveness await expert review and field testing.

Keywords: Needs Analysis; Model Design; Papuan Folklore; English For Earlier Childhood; prospective PAUD teachers

INTRODUCTION

Strengthening twenty-first century competences requires foreign-language literacy to be nurtured from an early age as part of building globally competitive human resources (Copland, Garton, & Burns, 2014; OECD, 2018). As an international

lingua franca, English needs to be introduced appropriately from the level of Early Childhood Education (*Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, PAUD) through play-based, meaningful, and contextual approaches that fit children's developmental characteristics (Cameron, 2001; Nikolov & Mihaljević Djigunović, 2011). Because the quality of early English exposure depends heavily on the teacher, the readiness of prospective PAUD teachers becomes a decisive factor long before any classroom intervention with children takes place.

In practice, however, prospective PAUD teachers in Indonesia are frequently unprepared, whether in pedagogical or professional terms, and lack a systematic model for teaching English to young learners (Pinter, 2017; Suyanto, 2007; Zein, 2016). Instruction tends to be mechanistic and reliant on generic materials that are poorly connected to children's lived experience (Musthafa, 2010; Zein, 2016). Prospective teachers also encounter obstacles in vocabulary and speaking, and in using authentic contexts, so that a contextual and well-directed learning model is required (Setiawan & Axelina, 2022; Nurteteng & Setiawan, 2021). Yet before such a model can be developed, its design must be grounded in an empirical understanding of what prospective teachers actually need.

Papua offers a wealth of folklore as an authentic learning resource that has not been systematically used in teaching English to young learners (Setiawan, Axelina, Dollah, & Rahman, 2025). Folktales are narratively simple, rich in moral value, and close to children's experience, giving them strong potential as media for developing vocabulary, listening, and speaking (Isbell, Sobol, Lindauer, & Lowrance, 2004; Ellis & Brewster, 2014). Recent evidence from a multilingual Eastern Indonesian classroom confirms that contextualising English materials through local folklore improves engagement and meaning-making (Setiawan et al., 2025).

The existing literature, however, provides only parts of what is needed in this context. General EYL frameworks offer principles such as meaningful input, repetition, and the priority of oral skills, but they do not prescribe a culturally specific teaching sequence (Cameron, 2001; Pinter, 2017). Storytelling handbooks provide before-, while-, and after-story procedures, yet they are built mainly on international picture books and are addressed to in-service teachers (Ellis & Brewster, 2014; Wright, 1995). Indonesian local-wisdom models for PAUD focus on children's learning in Indonesian rather than on English (Darihastining et al., 2020; Hidayatullah et al., 2023), while folklore-based ELT studies in Eastern Indonesia have involved older learners rather than pre-service PAUD teachers (Setiawan et al., 2025). What remains absent is a learning model for prospective PAUD teachers in Papua that uses Papuan folklore as its organising basis and whose design is derived from a documented needs analysis.

The term English for Earlier Childhood (EEC) is retained deliberately because it is the formal name of the course in the PGPAUD curriculum and of the funded research programme from which this article originates. It denotes the introduction of English at the earliest stage of formal education (PAUD) and is used here as the proper name of the proposed model; conceptually, the model belongs to the

established field of English for early childhood and young learners (Cameron, 2001; Pinter, 2017).

This study therefore focuses on the front-end phase of model development. It aims, first, to describe the needs of prospective PAUD teachers for an English learning model based on Papuan folklore, and second, to propose an empirically informed and theoretically grounded conceptual design of the EEC model derived from those needs. The findings are intended to serve as the empirical and conceptual foundation for the subsequent stages of product development, expert validation, and effectiveness testing reported elsewhere in this research programme.

LITERATURE REVIEW

English for Young Learners and Model Design

English for Young Learners (EYL) emphasises natural, contextual, and enjoyable language acquisition. Young children acquire language through meaningful exposure, enjoyable repetition, and physical and emotional engagement, with listening and speaking preceding reading and writing (Cameron, 2001; Slattery & Willis, 2001; Pransiska, 2017). Translating these principles into a teachable model requires an explicit syntax—an ordered sequence of learning steps—so that prospective teachers have a concrete framework to follow rather than abstract principles (Enever, 2018; Tomlinson, 2013). Model design in this sense is the bridge between EYL theory and classroom practice.

Storytelling, Play, and Culturally Responsive Approaches

Several established approaches already inform story-based EYL teaching. Storytelling frameworks organise lessons into pre-, while-, and post-storytelling activities that recycle key language (Ellis & Brewster, 2014; Wright, 1995). Total Physical Response links language with movement and suits children's kinaesthetic learning (Asher, 1969). Culturally responsive and culturally relevant pedagogy argue that learners' cultural knowledge should be treated as a resource for learning rather than as background (Gay, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 1995). These approaches supply important principles, but none of them specifies how a local folklore corpus should structure an entire learning cycle for pre-service PAUD teachers.

Needs Analysis in Research and Development

In a Research and Development framework, needs analysis is the foundational stage that ensures the product being designed answers a real problem rather than an assumed one (Borg & Gall, 1983; Branch, 2009). It gathers empirical data on users' conditions, difficulties, and preferences, which then constrain and inform the design (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). For teacher-education products, this means documenting prospective teachers' self-perceived readiness, their access to relevant materials, and their openness to particular approaches before any syntax or module is drafted (Creswell, 2014). Needs-analysis evidence, however, justifies the

relevance of a design; it does not establish its validity, practicality, or effectiveness, which require separate evaluation procedures such as expert review and field testing (Nieveen, 1999).

Folklore and Papuan Local Wisdom as a Design Basis

Folklore functions as both a language-exposure vehicle and a carrier of cultural value; when local folktales are used, children learn language while recognising their own heritage (Haven & Ducey, 2007; Ramdhani et al., 2019). Papuan local wisdom acts as a cognitive and affective bridge: familiar contexts ease the grasp of new vocabulary, and cultural pride raises motivation (Gularso et al., 2019; Fleer, 2010; Hidayatullah et al., 2023). Using folklore as a design basis is thus a pedagogical strategy, not mere ornamentation, and it aligns model design with learners' real experience (Darihastining et al., 2020; Widodo, 2016). Because Papua comprises hundreds of ethnolinguistic communities, however, "Papuan folklore" cannot be treated as a single undifferentiated category; each story should be traced to its community of origin and handled with attention to cultural ownership and sensitivity.

METHOD

Design and Sample

This study employed the first two stages of a Research and Development (R&D) approach adapted from the Borg and Gall model, namely needs analysis and model design, as the front-end phase of a larger development programme (Borg & Gall, 1983; Creswell, 2014). These stages were chosen because the objective was to establish an empirically grounded design before product development and testing. Table 1 shows how the original ten steps were adapted, which steps were used in this article, and what each stage produced. A need indicator was treated as a design requirement when it reached the High or Very High category (≥ 61%) and was corroborated by at least one interview theme.

Table 1. Adaptation of the Borg and Gall R&D Steps in This Study

Borg & Gall step	Status in this study	Activities	Data sources	Output
1. Research and information collecting	Adopted as Stage 1 (Needs analysis)	Needs questionnaire; semi-structured interviews; literature study; folklore mapping	10 prospective PAUD teachers; EYL literature; documented folktales	Needs profile; design requirements; 12 inventoried folktales, six selected for learning units

Borg & Gall step	Status in this study	Activities	Data sources	Output
2. Planning	Adopted as Stage 2 (Model design)	Formulating objectives, principles, and syntax; building a traceability matrix	Stage 1 outputs; EYL, storytelling, and folklore theory	Preliminary conceptual design (five-step syntax)
3. Develop preliminary form of product	Deferred	Drafting the module and teaching materials	—	Reported in a later stage
4–10. Field testing, revision, dissemination	Not included in this article	Expert validation, limited and main field tests, effectiveness testing	—	Planned in subsequent stages

The subjects were prospective PAUD teachers of the Early Childhood Teacher Education (PGPAUD) Study Program at Universitas Pendidikan Muhammadiyah Sorong, Southwest Papua. The population consisted of ten active students who met three criteria: (a) they had passed the basic English course in the programme, (b) they had taken or were taking courses on early childhood learning methods and had undertaken teaching practice (PPL), and (c) they agreed to participate. Because the population was small, all ten students were included as questionnaire respondents (R-01 to R-10). Five of them were then selected purposively for interviews to represent variation in initial readiness scores (highest, middle, and lowest). The interviews indicated that participants' prior exposure to English came mainly from general English courses; only one interviewee had attended an English course and tutored children. This group was considered information-rich because its members are the intended users of the model and will be responsible for introducing English in PAUD settings. All data were collected in June 2026 on the university campus.

Instruments and Procedures

The needs questionnaire was developed from the literature on target and learning needs (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987) and on EYL teacher competence (Cameron, 2001; Pinter, 2017). It contained five closed items, each representing one need indicator (readiness, access to culturally relevant materials, need for step-by-step guidance, interest in folklore, and need for play-based activities), rated on a five-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The full wording of the closed items is reported in Table 2. The questionnaire was administered in Indonesian. Because each indicator was measured by a single item, internal-

consistency reliability was not applicable, and the results are interpreted at item level.

Both the questionnaire and the interview guide were reviewed by two lecturers, one in English language teaching and one in early childhood education, for readability, relevance, and appropriateness. Their review led to three revisions: technical terms such as “syntax” were replaced with everyday wording, one double-barrelled item was split, and a short example was added to the folklore item. The interview guide (Instrument 3) contained five core questions: (1) “What has your experience been with English learning for young children?”, (2) “What difficulties do you face when you imagine teaching English to children?”, (3) “How important is the local cultural context in language learning?”, (4) “Which Papuan folktales do you know that are suitable for children?”, and (5) “What materials or support do you need?” Probes such as “So you have never received materials designed for children?” were used to elicit detail. The semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face in Indonesian on 25–26 June 2026 in the PGPAUD discussion room by the first and third authors. They lasted 19–27 minutes, were audio-recorded with the participants’ permission, supported by field notes, transcribed verbatim, and then edited for spelling without changing meaning. Quotations were translated into English by the authors and are cited as [W-0x/B-y], where W is the transcript code and B the question number.

The folklore mapping was carried out on 26–27 June 2026 in four steps. First, an inventory of Papuan folktales was compiled through a document study of folktale books in the university library, regional archives, and digital sources, complemented by the stories named by interviewees in response to question 4. This step yielded 12 folktales, several of which existed in more than one version with different character names and sequences of events. Second, because written documentation was limited and inconsistent, the collected versions were confirmed orally with two local resource persons: a local cultural activist (26 June 2026), who explained the values and taboos contained in the stories and cautioned that certain narratives are sacred and should not be used for general teaching, and a local PAUD teacher in Sorong Regency (27 June 2026), who judged the suitability of the stories for young children and recommended dividing them into short episodes. Third, in a team meeting, each story was screened against six criteria: (1) plot simplicity, i.e., a short linear plot with few characters and settings; (2) contextual proximity, i.e., characters, settings, and objects familiar to children in Papua; (3) value content, i.e., moral messages such as sharing, helping, and caring for nature that can be reflected on with children; (4) language potential, i.e., concrete vocabulary and repeated expressions usable as English targets; (5) child appropriateness, i.e., no violent, frightening, or anxiety-provoking scenes; and (6) cultural propriety, i.e., the story is not sacred, taboo, or subject to special permission for public telling. Fourth, the team classified each story as selected, reserve, or not used, and drafted target vocabulary and expressions for each selected story.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed descriptively. For each questionnaire item, the need index was calculated as the total score obtained divided by the maximum possible score (N × 5 = 50) and multiplied by 100. The indices were then converted into need categories using equal intervals: 0–20% (Very Low), 21–40% (Low), 41–60% (Moderate), 61–80% (High), and 81–100% (Very High) (Riduwan, 2015). Equal intervals were chosen because they are transparent and commonly used in Indonesian descriptive needs studies.

Interview data were analysed through data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). The transcripts were reduced and coded according to the five aspects in the interview guide (experience background, problem identification, perceived cultural relevance, folklore mapping, and product needs), yielding 23 codes, and the frequency of each code across the five interviewees was recorded. The resulting themes were then compared with the questionnaire indicators to identify convergence, elaboration, and divergence. Trustworthiness was enhanced through methodological triangulation between questionnaire and interview data, member checking in which transcripts were returned to the interviewees for confirmation, field notes, and an audit trail of coding decisions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The synthesis of both data types, together with the folklore mapping, informed the formulation of the model's conceptual framework and syntax.

The study was approved by the Faculty of Pendidikan Bahasa, Sosial Dan OLahraga and the PGPAUD Study Program, Universitas Pendidikan Muhammadiyah Sorong (letter No. 014/I.3.AU/SR/FABIO/A/2026). All participants received an explanation of the study's purpose and gave their consent to participate and to be audio-recorded. Participation was voluntary, could be withdrawn at any time, and had no effect on course grades. Participants were identified only by codes (R-01 to R-10 for questionnaire respondents and W-01 to W-05 for interview transcripts), and interviewees' names were reduced to initials in the research records. Recordings and transcripts were stored on a password-protected device accessible only to the research team.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Needs of Prospective PAUD Teachers

Table 2 presents the results for the five questionnaire items. Each percentage refers to one item only and is reported with its total score.

Table 2. Results of the Needs Analysis of Prospective PAUD Teachers

Code	Questionnaire item (translated)	Total score (max. 50)	Need index (%)	Category
N1	I feel unprepared to teach English to young children.	42	84	Very High
N2	I find it difficult to obtain English materials that are culturally relevant to children in Papua.	38	76	High
N3	I need a module that provides step-by-step guidance for teaching English to children.	44	88	Very High
N4	I am interested in using Papuan folktales as the basis of English learning.	46	92	Very High
N5	I need examples of play-based English activities for children.	40	80	High

Note. N = 10. Need index = total score ÷ (10 × 5) × 100. Categories follow the intervals described in the Method section (Riduwan, 2015). The need index for feeling unprepared to teach English to young children (N1) reached 84% (42 of 50). The indices for difficulty in obtaining culturally relevant materials (N2) and for needing examples of play-based activities (N5) were 76% and 80%, respectively, while the need for step-by-step guidance (N3) reached 88%. The highest index concerned interest in Papuan folktales (N4), at 92%. All five indicators therefore met the decision rule for becoming design requirements. N2 obtained the lowest index, suggesting that access to culturally relevant materials was a less uniform problem than readiness or guidance.

The interviews with five participants did more than confirm these figures; they explained the reasons behind them and revealed needs that the questionnaire had not captured. Four themes emerged. First, limited and non-specific preparation. All five interviewees stated that they had never received English materials designed for young children, and four said their experience was limited to isolated words, greetings, or simple songs. “The English I studied at university was general English, such as reading and grammar. There has never been a course or material that specifically teaches how to bring English to kindergarten children.” [W-01/B-1]

Second, linguistic and pedagogical difficulties. Four interviewees mentioned limited vocabulary and doubts about pronunciation, three were not yet used to telling stories in English, and four were unable to arrange a coherent and enjoyable sequence of activities. This theme elaborated the readiness indicator (N1) and pointed to a specific need for vocabulary and pronunciation support, which was not measured as a separate item. “I am afraid of pronouncing words wrongly and then the children imitate me. … I do not yet have a picture of what the sequence of activities should be from beginning to end.” [W-01/B-2] “In English I have to think about the sentence structure first, so the story becomes stiff and the children can get bored.” [W-03/B-2]

The interviews also showed that the readiness gap was not the same for everyone. One participant who had attended an English course felt confident with the language but not with the pedagogy, and two participants mentioned difficulties that the questionnaire did not address, namely managing a noisy class during play and assessing children’s progress. “My difficulty lies more in designing the activities, not in the language. … I also do not yet know how to assess the children, whether they really understand or are only imitating their friends.” [W-02/B-2]

Third, local culture as an entry point, with caution. All five interviewees considered the local context helpful because it is close to children’s experience, and two described folklore as the entry point to language learning rather than an add-on. “When children here are shown a picture of snow or a multi-storey house, they are confused. But when they are shown a picture of a boat, fish, or a bird, they can immediately tell a story.” [W-04/B-3]

One interviewee, however, offered a more cautious view that the questionnaire could not reveal. “It is important, but I think we need to be careful. … Some stories have different versions between villages, and some parts are not suitable for small children, for example the frightening parts. So they must be simplified.” [W-02/B-3]

Fourth, concrete product needs. Four interviewees asked for a module with step-by-step guidance and simple English story scripts, four asked for examples of games, songs, and movements linked to the story, three asked for visual media such as picture cards and posters, three asked for a simple assessment rubric, and two asked for a vocabulary list with a pronunciation guide. One interviewee stressed that written guidance alone would not be sufficient.

> For me, a guidebook alone is not enough. I would be helped more by a direct example, such as a video or a demonstration of how to tell the story, and then picture cards and posters that I can use in class.” [W-05/B-5]

The cautious and divergent views were treated as design information rather than disregarded: they support a story-selection and simplification step before teaching, and they show that some needs (assessment, classroom management, and

modelling) must be met through the module and its supporting materials rather than through the syntax alone.

Results of the Folklore Mapping

The interviewees named six Papuan folktales, with *Asal Mula Burung Cenderawasih* mentioned by all five, followed by *Legenda Danau Sentani*, *Biwar Sang Penakluk Naga*, and *Legenda Pulau Doom* (two each), and *Manarmakeri* and *Asal Mula Buah Merah* (one each). Combined with the document study, the inventory yielded 12 folktales. After the six criteria were applied and the versions were confirmed with the resource persons, six stories were selected as the basis of six learning units, three were kept as reserves, and three were not used. Table 3 presents the six selected stories as they are used in the EEC teaching module, arranged from the simplest to the most interactive unit.

Table 3. Papuan Folktales Selected as the Basis of the Six Learning Units

Unit	Folktale	Region of origin	Core vocabulary	Target expressions	Value reflected
1	*Asal Mula Burung Cenderawasih* (The Beautiful Bird)	Papua (general)	bird, feather, forest, tree, beautiful, fly	Look! It is a bird. The bird can fly.	Being grateful for and caring for the beauty of nature
2	*Kasuari dan Dara Mahkota* (Two Birds, One Fruit)	Papua (general)	bird, fruit, tree, share, friend, eat	Let us share. Thank you, my friend.	Sharing and not being greedy
3	*Legenda Raja Ampat* (Four Eggs, Four Kings)	Raja Ampat, Southwest Papua	egg, island, sea, boat, four, king	One, two, three, four eggs. This is an island.	Respecting one's origins and togetherness
4	*Asal Mula Buah Merah* (The Red Fruit)	Papuan highlands	red, fruit, garden, plant, eat, grow	The fruit is red. I eat the fruit.	Hard work and gratitude for the harvest
5	*Legenda Danau Sentani* (The Big Lake)	Jayapura, Papua	lake, water, fish, mountain, big, swim	The fish can swim. The lake is big.	Caring for nature and living in harmony

Unit	Folktale	Region of origin	Core vocabulary	Target expressions	Value reflected
6	*Asal Usul Pulau Mansinam* (Come to My Island)	Manokwari, West Papua	island, sea, boat, house, people, come	They come by boat. Welcome to my house.	Brotherhood and accepting others

The three reserve stories were *Legenda Pulau Doom* (Sorong City), *Asal Usul Nama Kota Sorong* (Sorong City), and *Legenda Danau Framu* (Ayamaru, Maybrat); they met the criteria but overlapped thematically with the selected island and lake stories. Three stories were not used: *Kisah Biwar Sang Penakluk Naga*, because it contains fight scenes unsuitable for young children (criterion 5); Legenda *Manarmakeri*, because of its sacred content (criterion 6); and stories about *Suanggi*, because of their frightening supernatural theme (criterion 5). These decisions refined the interviewees' initial suggestions: although Biwar and *Manarmakeri* had been proposed with the note that they would need simplification [W-02/B-4; W-03/B-4], the resource persons' input showed that simplification alone would not resolve the concerns. The resource persons also confirmed that animal and nature themes are the most readily accepted by young children, which became a priority in story selection.

Taken together, the data confirm a genuine, patterned need for a contextual, applicable, and culturally grounded learning model, and they establish five design requirements: a step-by-step structure, play-based activities, folklore as the organising content, focused vocabulary and pronunciation support, and careful selection and simplification of stories. Additional needs for visual media, modelling videos, and assessment rubrics are carried forward to the module development stage.

Design of the English for Earlier Childhood Model

Guided by these requirements, the EEC model was designed with a cyclical, story-centred syntax of five steps. Table 4 functions as a traceability matrix: for each step it shows the empirical need(s) and the theoretical principle(s) that led to the design choice. The need for step-by-step guidance (N3) is addressed not by a single step but by the fixed and repeatable sequence of the whole cycle.

Table 4. Syntax and Need–Theory–Design Traceability Matrix of the English for Earlier Childhood Model

Step	**Activity**	**Empirical basis (need / theme)**	**Theoretical basis**
1. Story Introduction	Contextual introduction of a mapped Papuan folktale with pictures or realia; building background knowledge	N2, N4; Theme 3 (local context as entry point; need to simplify stories)	Schema activation; culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2018); story as context (Cameron, 2001; Ellis & Brewster, 2014)
2. Language Focus	Highlighting five to eight target words and chunks from the story with visuals and gestures	N1; Themes 2 and 4 (vocabulary, pronunciation guide)	Meaningful input; listening before speaking (Cameron, 2001; Pinter, 2017)
3. Playful Practice	Practising the target language through songs, games, and movement	N5; Themes 2 and 4 (sequencing activities; games, songs, movement)	Play-based learning (Slattery & Willis, 2001); Total Physical Response (Asher, 1969)
4. Retelling	Prospective teacher retells the story with props or puppets and receives peer feedback	N1, N3; Theme 2 (storytelling in English)	Storytelling practice and oral language development (Isbell et al., 2004; Wright, 1995)
5. Reflection	Reflecting on cultural values, language learned, and one's own teaching	N4 (partly); mainly theory-driven	Cultural identity and heritage (Fleer, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995)

The model was designed to be cyclical and flexible, allowing each step to be adapted to different folktales and to children's varying ability levels. Its underlying principles—meaningful learning, active engagement, and appreciation of local culture—translate the EYL and folklore literature into a usable framework. As Table 4 shows, Steps 1 to 4 respond directly to documented needs, whereas Step 5 is derived mainly from theory and only partly from the expressed interest in folklore. The traceability documented here makes the design rationale transparent and auditable; it should be understood as a preliminary, empirically informed design rather than as evidence of validity, which will be examined through expert validation (Nieveen, 1999).

The findings confirm that the difficulties reported in the wider literature—mechanistic instruction and culturally detached materials—are strongly present among prospective PAUD teachers in this setting (Musthafa, 2010; Zein, 2016). Beyond confirmation, the needs pattern reveals something specific about PAUD teacher education in this context: the readiness gap is both linguistic and pedagogical. Most interviewees struggled with vocabulary and pronunciation, but even the participant who was confident in English did not know how to turn it into a coherent, playful lesson for children who cannot yet read [W-02/B-1]. Since all interviewees reported that their university English was general in orientation, the findings suggest that basic English courses in the PGPAUD programme do not yet prepare students to teach English to children. The lower index for difficulty in finding culturally relevant materials (76%) may indicate that some students can find general materials themselves and need help mainly with materials that are both child-appropriate and linked to local stories, as one interviewee noted [W-02/B-5].

The very high index for interest in folklore-based learning (92%) should be interpreted as evidence of acceptability and perceived relevance, not of validity or effectiveness. Because the data are self-reported, it may also partly reflect social desirability. It nevertheless supports a design grounded in Papuan stories, in line with evidence that local folklore raises engagement and meaning-making (Ramdhani et al., 2019; Setiawan et al., 2025). Rather than imposing a model from theory alone, the present design derives most steps from a documented need, which is the intended function of the needs-analysis stage in R&D (Borg & Gall, 1983; Branch, 2009).

Compared with existing models, the proposed design shares features with storytelling frameworks, which also move from story input to language work and follow-up (Ellis & Brewster, 2014), with Total Physical Response in its use of movement (Asher, 1969), and with culturally responsive pedagogy in treating learners' culture as a resource (Gay, 2018). It differs in three respects. First, folklore functions as the organising basis of the entire cycle rather than as one type of reading material: the story determines the vocabulary in Step 2, the games in Step 3, the retelling in Step 4, and the values discussed in Step 5. Second, the Retelling step positions prospective teachers as rehearsing storytellers, so that the model is a teacher-preparation tool and not only a children's lesson plan. Third, the model draws on a folklore corpus screened for provenance and cultural sensitivity, which responds to the ethnic diversity of Papuan classrooms.

Positioning prospective teachers, rather than children, as the primary users is a deliberate design choice with a multiplier logic: a well-prepared teacher subsequently reaches many children (Enever, 2018; Pinter, 2017). The five-step syntax operationalises this by rehearsing the competences the teachers reported lacking—making English enjoyable, using target vocabulary in context, and telling stories. The present study thus provides four distinguishable kinds of support: needs-analysis evidence (this study), a theoretical design rationale (Table 4), and, in later stages, evidence of validity and practicality from expert review and of effectiveness from field testing. Only the first two are claimed here.

This study has several limitations. The needs data are self-reported and may be affected by social desirability. The participants came from a single study programme, the population comprised only ten students, and only five were interviewed, so the findings should not be generalised to prospective PAUD teachers in Indonesia more broadly. Each need indicator was measured with a single item, which limits measurement precision. Written documentation of Papuan folklore was limited and inconsistent across sources, the corpus of 12 stories is not exhaustive, and cultural verification relied on only two local resource persons. Finally, the design has not yet undergone expert validation or classroom implementation.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study proposes the front-end foundation of the English for Earlier Childhood model. The needs analysis of ten prospective PAUD teachers indicates a strong, patterned need for a contextual, applicable, and culturally grounded English learning model, marked by very high interest in Papuan folklore (need index 92%) and a strong sense of unpreparedness (84%). The interviews added needs for vocabulary and pronunciation support, story simplification, modelling, and assessment guidance, and the folklore mapping selected six Papuan folktales, confirmed with local resource persons, as the content of six learning units. On this basis, a cyclical five-step, story-centred syntax—Story Introduction, Language Focus, Playful Practice, Retelling, and Reflection—was proposed as a preliminary design, with the link between each step and the documented needs and theory made explicit in a traceability matrix. The result is a proposed design emerging from needs analysis, not yet a validated model. It is recommended that this design proceed to product development and expert validation to examine its validity and practicality, followed by field testing to measure its effectiveness in improving prospective teachers' readiness. Future studies should involve more study programmes and larger samples, use multi-item scales, and consult Papuan cultural custodians more widely. Further studies may also enrich the mapped repertoire of folktales and, in the longer term, trial the model directly with young children to examine its impact on children's language acquisition.

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