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## The Effect of Contextual Learning Using Tallu Lolona-Based Explanatory Texts on the Comprehension of Explanatory Texts Among Sixth-Grade Students at Sdn 6 Mengkendek

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### Abstract

*This study aims to analyze the effect of contextual learning through Tallu Lolona-based explanatory texts on the comprehension of explanatory texts among sixth-grade students at SDN 6 Mengkendek. The study employed a comparative quantitative approach with two groups: an experimental class and a control class. Data were collected from observation sheets on explanatory text comprehension, which included 14 indicators, such as the relevance of the material to daily experiences, the ability to connect the text to real-world phenomena, identification of text structure, explanation of cause-and-effect relationships, understanding of the Tallu Lolona concept, text analysis, and reflection. The research subjects consisted of 11 students in the experimental class and 10 students in the control class. The analysis results showed that the average score for the experimental class reached 82.14%, while that of the control class was 44.11%. The average difference of 38.04 points indicates a strong advantage for the group that received contextual learning. An independent t-test revealed a highly significant difference ( $p < 0.001$ ). These findings indicate that Tallu Lolona-based contextual learning effectively enhances students' comprehension of explanatory texts while strengthening their connection to local cultural values. Implicitly, Indonesian language instruction in elementary schools should be designed to be meaningful, contextual, and rooted in local wisdom.*

**Keywords:** contextual learning, explanatory texts, elementary education, local wisdom, Tallu Lolona

### INTRODUCTION

The teaching of Indonesian in primary schools should not be limited to developing literal reading skills; it must also help pupils build a comprehensive understanding of the content of the text, its real-life context, and the underlying values. When studying explanatory texts, pupils are expected to identify the text's structure, understand cause-and-effect relationships, and interpret the meaning of the

phenomena being explained. However, in practice, teaching is still often teacher-centred and positions pupils as mere recipients of information, so that the understanding formed tends to remain at a superficial level. This situation means that pupils are able to answer factual questions, but are not necessarily able to connect the text's content with their real-life experiences, social environment, and

their own frameworks of thought.

The contextual learning approach is considered relevant to addressing this issue because it places pupils' real-life experiences at the heart of meaning-making. Johnson (2002) emphasises that contextual learning helps pupils connect academic content with their everyday lives, ensuring that knowledge does not stop at rote memorisation but develops into functional understanding. In Indonesian language learning in primary schools, this approach is important because texts are not merely reading material, but a means of practising reasoning, interpretation, and reflection. Research by Haziyah, Nugraheni, and Ambastari (2024) as well as Marfuah and Ulfatun (2024) also indicates that the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) model is capable of improving learning outcomes and language skills among primary school pupils when the material is linked to situations close to their own lives.

In the context of SDN 6 Mengkendek, the use of Tallu Lolona as the basis for learning materials provides a strong opportunity to foster meaningful learning. Tallu Lolona is a philosophy of the Toraja people that emphasises harmonious relationships between humans, animals and plants. These values are not only culturally relevant but also contextually aligned with the learning objectives of explanatory texts, which require pupils to understand processes, relationships, and interconnections between phenomena. Studies by Claudia et al. (2024) and Rerung (2024) indicate that the values of Tallu Lolona have great potential for integration into education as they encompass strong moral, ecological, and cultural identity dimensions.

Preliminary observations have shown that, prior to the optimal implementation of contextual learning, pupils' understanding of explanatory texts remains uneven, particularly in terms of their ability to explain cause-and-effect relationships, analyse text content, and relate the reading material to local cultural values. On the other hand, pupils demonstrated a more positive response when the material was linked to their everyday experiences and familiar phenomena. These initial findings suggest that the main issue lies not only in the texts being studied, but also in the learning strategies used to bring the meaning of the texts to life for the pupils.

National education policy also supports the need for learning that is more meaningful, mindful and enjoyable. The Ministry of Education and Culture (2025), through its learning and assessment guidelines and the concept of deep learning, emphasises the importance of a learning process that allows for active engagement, reflection and the connection between knowledge and real life. Biggs and Tang (2011), Mu'ti (2025), Rahmandani et al. (2025), and Turmuzi (2025) position deep learning as an approach that encourages students to understand concepts more holistically, rather than merely memorising information. From this perspective, explanatory texts based on Tallu Lolona serve as a potential vehicle for integrating literacy, cultural reflection, and the development of social-ecological awareness.

Against this background, this article revises and condenses the research material, focusing on the impact of contextual learning through Tallu Lolona-based explanatory texts on the comprehension of explanatory texts among Year 6 pupils at SDN 6 Mengkendek. This revision of the material is based on the references available in

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the observations revealed a clear difference between the two groups. The experimental class achieved an average of 82.14%, falling into the 'very good' category, whilst the control

class achieved only 44.11%, falling into the 'satisfactory' category. The mean difference of 38.04 points indicates that pupils learning through Tallu Lolona-based explanatory texts using a contextual approach demonstrated significantly better comprehension outcomes compared to those learning through conventional teaching methods. Inferentially, the independent two-sample t-test showed that this difference was highly significant ( $t = 10.14$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). This data serves as the primary basis for concluding that the approach used in the experimental class had a positive influence on the comprehension of explanatory texts.

Upon closer examination, the superiority of the experimental class is evident in indicators directly related to interpretation, rather than merely recognising the text form. Students in the experimental class achieved high scores in relating the material to everyday experiences, connecting the text content to real-world phenomena, understanding the Tallu Lolona concept, demonstrating an environmentally conscious attitude, and providing reflective comments on the reading material. Meanwhile, the control class tended to score lower on indicators such as understanding the article and the results of preliminary observations that have been carried out, resulting in a discussion that is more concise, focused, and suitable for a short scientific article.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with a two-group comparative design, comprising an experimental class and a control class. The experimental group received contextual learning through Tallu Lolona-based explanatory texts, whilst the control group followed standard teaching methods. The data were derived from classroom observations that included 14 indicators of student understanding and engagement, covering cognitive, affective, and reflective aspects. These indicators include the ability to relate the material to everyday experiences, connect the text to real-world phenomena, identify text structure, explain cause-and-effect relationships, understand the concept of Tallu Lolona, analyse the text, and provide reflections.

The research subjects comprised 11 pupils in the experimental class and 10 pupils in the control class. The data were analysed descriptively and inferentially. Descriptive analysis was used to calculate the mean, standard deviation, and general achievement categories for each group. Inferential analysis employed an independent two-sample t-test to examine differences in means between groups. As the available data were the results of post-intervention observations, this article focuses on the students' final achievements following the intervention and compares the quality of understanding developed in both classes.

The content validity of the instrument refers to the alignment of the indicators with the learning objectives for explanatory texts and the contextual learning framework based on local wisdom. Initial observational data is also used as an interpretative basis for assessing pupils' prior understanding before learning is developed in a more contextual manner. Consequently, this article not only presents differences in scores but also interprets the pedagogical significance of these differences within the frameworks of CTL, deep learning, and primary school ethnopedagogy.

Group	N	Mean(%)	SD	General Category
Eksperimen	11	82,14	11,32	Sangat Baik

Kontrol	10	44,11	4,91	Cukup
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Table 1. Descriptive statistics of students' explanatory text understanding scores.

concept of Tallu Lolona, relating cultural values to the text's content, analysing the text's content, and offering reflective opinions. This pattern suggests that contextual learning works not only at the level of final outcomes but also in terms of the quality of the thinking processes developed by pupils whilst reading and discussing the text.

These findings are consistent with studies on contextual learning in Indonesian language teaching at primary school level. Haziyah et al. (2024) demonstrate that CTL can improve learning outcomes because pupils learn through situations that are relevant to their own lives. Marfuah and Ulfatun (2024) also confirm that CTL is effective in improving writing skills because pupils understand the material through meaningful connections, rather than merely following procedures. In this study, a similar effect was observed in pupils' ability to comprehend explanatory texts. When the texts they read addressed values relevant to their daily lives, pupils found it easier to construct meaning, recall key details, and formulate more logical explanations.

From a literacy perspective, these results confirm that comprehension of explanatory texts cannot be separated from critical thinking skills and the ability to interpret information. Nurmalasari (2024) positions the comprehension of explanatory texts as part of critical thinking skills in primary school, whilst Aqilah, Poerwanti, and Supianto (2024) demonstrate a link between reading habits and the ability to write explanatory texts. The findings of this study complement these by showing that the teaching strategies employed by teachers also play a significant role in the quality of comprehension. Pupils not only need to read frequently, but also need guidance to connect the text with the realities they experience and the values they understand.

The integration of Tallu Lolona into learning adds a dimension not found in conventional textual learning. Tallu Lolona serves not only as a reading theme, but also as a framework of values that helps pupils understand the relationships between living beings, the importance of balance, and humanity's responsibility towards the environment and its communities. Claudia et al. (2024) emphasise that the philosophy of Tallu Lolona is relevant to the education of the younger generation as it encompasses spiritual, moral, and social values. Rerung (2024) even interprets Tallu Lolona as a contextual tool for fostering ecological awareness. When these values are incorporated into the teaching of explanatory texts, pupils do not merely study the text's structure, but also develop a sensitivity to values whilst reading the text's content.

These findings can also be interpreted within the framework of deep learning. Biggs and Tang (2011) explain that high-quality learning occurs when pupils actively construct meaning, rather than merely receiving information. The same direction is emphasised in the deep learning documents by the Ministry of Education and Culture (2025), Mu'ti (2025), Rahmandani et al. (2025), and Turmuzi (2025), namely the need for a learning process that encourages active engagement, reflection, and the transfer of knowledge to real-world contexts. In the experimental class, success in understanding the text was evident not only in the ability to answer content-related questions, but also in the ability to relate the concept of Tallu Lolona to surrounding phenomena and to express reflective opinions. This

is a sign that learning is moving towards a deeper understanding.

Judging by the results of initial observations, Tallu Lolona-based contextual learning also appears to address real needs in the classroom. In the early stages, some pupils were still unable to explain cause-and-effect relationships coherently and were not yet accustomed to linking texts to their experiences or cultural values. Once learning was developed contextually, achievements in the experimental class improved across almost all key indicators. This change demonstrates that learning strategies closely tied to pupils' experiences act as a bridge to bridge the gap between text and understanding. In other words, the success of learning is not solely due to the Tallu Lolona material itself, but because teachers use it as a living context within the learning process.

Pedagogically, the findings of this study imply that Indonesian language learning in primary schools needs to be designed to be more contextual, reflective, and rooted in local wisdom. Wardhani et al. (2024) emphasise that an ethnopedagogical approach can enhance the quality of primary education by linking school content to pupils' cultural identity and experiences. In the context of SDN 6 Mengkendek, Tallu Lolona proved to be not merely a local content element, but an effective learning resource for strengthening students' understanding of explanatory texts whilst developing their ecological character and cultural identity. Therefore, the utilisation of local wisdom in Indonesian language learning should be regarded as a relevant pedagogical strategy, not merely an additional supplement.

When examined from the perspective of the learning process, the success of the experimental class demonstrates that cultural context helps pupils build a bridge between what they read and what they experience. In the study of explanatory texts, pupils often struggle when the text is treated merely as material to be memorised for its structure. Through the Tallu Lolona context, teachers can guide pupils to observe the relationships between humans, animals and plants as phenomena they actually encounter in daily life. This context makes concepts such as cause and effect, processes, and interconnections between elements more concrete. Consequently, explanatory texts are no longer read as a series of sentences to be memorised, but as a representation of knowledge closely tied to the pupils' environment.

Preliminary observations also indicate that pupil engagement increases when learning allows space for personal experiences and observations of the surrounding environment. Pupils appear to ask questions more actively, follow the lesson with greater focus, and express their opinions more readily when the material discussed is closely linked to their culture and social reality. This is significant because the quality of text comprehension at primary school level is heavily influenced by the level of student engagement in the learning process. Solissa et al. (2024) emphasise that the teaching approach is the primary instrument in the educational process; in other words, the teacher's strategies determine whether students merely receive information or genuinely construct knowledge.

In the context of Indonesian language learning, these findings confirm that comprehension of explanatory texts should be developed through an integrated process: reading, discussing the content, connecting it to the context, and then reflecting on the lessons learnt. These stages align with the principles of deep learning, which encourage connections between knowledge, experience and reflection. If teachers stop merely at introducing text structure, pupils may be able to identify the general statement, the

explanatory section, and the interpretation, but they may not necessarily understand why the text's content is important. Conversely, when structure is linked to meaning and context, understanding becomes more enduring and easier to transfer to new situations.

The reinforcement of local cultural values in learning also contributes to the formation of students' learning identities. Tallu Lolona presents the perspective that learning Indonesian is not merely about acquiring language skills, but also a means of understanding who they are within a specific cultural community. Wardhani et al. (2024) note that ethnopedagogy helps improve the quality of primary education because students feel that learning is not separate from their social and cultural identities. In this study, the implications are evident in students' ability to link reading material to values of environmental care and life balance, which are integral to the Tallu Lolona philosophy.

In practical terms, the learning model used in the experimental class can be seen as an alternative strategy for teachers in designing relevant literacy learning. Teachers can begin lessons by introducing phenomena close to the pupils' lives, then guiding them to read texts, discuss meanings, identify structures, and restate their understanding both orally and in writing. This approach allows teachers to combine cognitive and affective objectives simultaneously. In the context of primary schools, this is important because effective learning is not merely measured by correct or incorrect answers, but also by the development of a love of learning, thinking skills, and an awareness of values.

The findings of this research also demonstrate that local wisdom can serve as a valid and powerful source of learning to enhance the quality of basic literacy. Until now, the use of local culture in learning has often been treated merely as supplementary material. In fact, when designed thoughtfully, local culture can serve as a core context that enriches the meaning of texts, strengthens classroom communication, and helps teachers translate abstract concepts into more concrete learning experiences. In this case, Tallu Lolona helps pupils understand explanatory texts whilst fostering an appreciation for the values alive within their community.

Nevertheless, this article also has its limitations. The data used are the results of initial post-intervention observations and do not yet include a longitudinal data set or more detailed written tests. Consequently, the interpretation provided primarily emphasises the general trends and pedagogical implications of the observational findings. However, it is precisely these limitations that highlight the need for further research capable of tracing the development of pupils' understanding from the initial to the final stages, including a more in-depth examination of how Tallu Lolona-based contextual learning influences critical reading skills and the writing of explanatory texts.

Overall, the results of the research and initial observations, combined with support from up-to-date references, point to the understanding that contextual learning is not merely a variation in method, but a substantive strategy for improving the quality of Indonesian language learning in primary schools. When cultural context, pupils' needs, and literacy objectives are designed within a cohesive framework, pupils not only acquire knowledge about the text but also experience a learning process that is more vibrant, meaningful, and relevant. Therefore, the development of teaching materials and learning strategies based on Tallu Lolona deserves to be further expanded in primary school teaching practice, particularly

in regions with a cultural affinity for these values.

Another implication worth noting is the importance of teachers' readiness in selecting and developing texts that are genuinely close to pupils' experiences. Contextual learning will not function optimally if the context is merely mentioned at the start of the lesson but is not consistently integrated into reading activities, discussions, and reflection. Teachers need to design prompt questions, observation activities, and follow-up tasks that enable pupils to discover for themselves the connection between the text's content and their own lives. In this way, contextual learning moves from being a mere slogan to becoming a tangible and measurable pedagogical practice in the classroom.

At the level of school curriculum development, these findings support the need to integrate local wisdom into the core curriculum, not merely in ceremonial activities or supplementary content. Tallu Lolona can serve as a context for reading, writing, speaking, and even cross-curricular projects related to the environment, religious education, and character education. Such strategies offer a dual benefit: literacy skills develop, whilst pupils' cultural identity and ecological awareness are also strengthened. Thus, schools have the opportunity to deliver learning that is more relevant to local needs without losing sight of national competencies.

When considered in the context of the current generation's development, learning based on local culture can also serve as a counterbalance to the rapid flow of information, which is often detached from the context of pupils' lives. The values of Tallu Lolona provide an ethical foundation that helps pupils interpret the world around them in a more responsible manner. In the study of explanatory texts, this is important because texts are not merely a means of receiving information, but also a means of developing ways of thinking about the relationship between humans and their environment and society. Therefore, the success of learning in the experimental class should be understood as the success of linking school literacy with the cultural ecology of the pupils.

In addition to being beneficial for pupils, the results of this research can also serve as material for reflection for schools and local policymakers. Schools can adopt Tallu Lolona-based learning as a documented best practice, subsequently developing it into teaching materials, learning resources, or a community for sharing practices among teachers. Local education policymakers can also facilitate the development of learning resources based on local wisdom to avoid relying entirely on individual teachers' initiatives. Such institutional support will enhance the prospects for the sustainability of learning innovations in primary schools.

Taking into account the results of initial observations, the achievements of the experimental class, and the relevance of the references used, this revised article demonstrates that contextual learning through Tallu Lolona-based explanatory texts possesses both theoretical and practical strength. This approach demonstrates how basic literacy can be developed more richly when texts are read not merely as language material, but also as a gateway to understanding life experiences, cultural values, and social responsibility. Therefore, the development of similar models warrants further testing, enrichment, and dissemination within the practice of Indonesian language learning in primary schools.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that contextual learning through explanatory texts based

on Tallu Lolona has a positive and significant effect on the understanding of explanatory texts among Year 6 pupils at SDN 6 Mengkendek. The strengths of the experimental class were evident in their understanding of text structure, explanation of cause-and-effect relationships, linking text content to life experiences, understanding of local cultural values, and the ability to reflect.

Thus, a contextual approach based on local wisdom has proven capable of enhancing the quality of Indonesian language learning in primary schools.

The revision of this article's content also reaffirms that both the initial observations and existing supporting references point to one key conclusion: pupils find it easier to understand texts when learning is presented within a context close to their own world. Therefore, Indonesian language teachers are advised to utilise learning resources based on local culture, such as Tallu Lolona, so that learning becomes more meaningful, participatory, and relevant to pupils' lives. This approach simultaneously opens up opportunities for in-depth, reflective learning that is oriented towards the development of literacy and character

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