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The Influence of “Longko’ Toraya” Values on Students’ Attention In English Language Learning for The Tenth Grade Students at SMKS Rindingallo Toraja Utara

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the integration of longko’ toraya values on students’ attention in English language learning for the tenth grade students at SMKS Rindingallo, North Toraja. Longko’ toraya is a local cultural value of the Toraja community that emphasizes a sense of shame, self-respect, and social responsibility, functioning as a behavioral control mechanism.

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. The data were collected through classroom observations, in-depth interviews with the English teacher and students, and documentation, including the analysis of curriculum documents and lesson plans (RPP). The data were analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings revealed that the integration of longko’ toraya values in English language learning was implemented through teacher’s verbal reinforcement, classroom rules, contextual teaching approaches, and teacher modeling, which were also reflected in curriculum documents and lesson plans. In addition, students’ attention improved as indicated by their focus during lessons, active participation, timely task completion, and reduced disruptive behavior. Longko’ toraya values functioned as an internal control that encouraged students to be disciplined, respect the teacher, and maintain concentration during the learning process. Furthermore, the integration of longko’ toraya values has positive impacts on students, including increased self-awareness, improved moral character, stronger sense of responsibility, and higher motivation and engagement in learning. Students also demonstrated more orderly behavior, greater respect for the learning process, and better self-control in the classroom environment.

In conclusion, the integration of longko’ toraya values has a positive impact on both students’ attention and character development in English language learning. This study highlights that local cultural values are relevant in supporting character education within the current curriculum framework.

Keywords: Longko’ Toraya, students’ attention, English language learning, character education, local wisdom

INTRODUCTION

Learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) plays a crucial role in improving students' global competencies. However, in practice, the English learning process in Indonesia still faces various challenges, one of which is low student attention during the learning process. Student attention is a fundamental aspect of successful learning because it is the starting point for engagement and academic achievement (Suryanto & Brawijaya, 2024). Various studies show that students' attention levels in English learning tend to be moderate and are influenced by internal factors such as motivation, interest, and psychological state (Yuliani et al., 2022). Furthermore, external factors such as teaching methods, the learning environment, and teacher-student interactions also influence student attention (Tangkeallo et al., 2024). This suggests that student attention is influenced not only by cognitive factors but also by the social and cultural context in which learning takes place.

In the context of local culture, local wisdom values have significant potential to influence students' learning behaviors and attitudes. One relevant cultural value is Longko' Toraya, a Torajan cultural concept related to shame, self-respect, and social honor. This value is believed to shape individual character, including responsibility, discipline, and attention to activities, including learning. However, most previous research has focused on general factors such as motivation, learning strategies, and the role of teachers in increasing student attention. For example, research by Wijayanti et al. (2024) showed that intrinsic motivation has a dominant influence on successful English language learning. Other research also highlights that teacher expectations can influence student motivation and engagement in learning (Ramadhani & Purnawan, 2023). Furthermore, excessively long learning durations can also decrease student attention levels (Muyassaroh et al., 2024). Nevertheless, there is limited research examining the relationship between local cultural values and student attention in English learning, particularly in the Torajan cultural context. Integrating local cultural values into learning can be an effective contextual approach to increasing student engagement and attention. Therefore, this research is crucial to examine how Longko' Toraya values influence students' attention in English learning. This research is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically, particularly in developing local culture-based learning strategies relevant to the characteristics of students at SMKS Rindingallo.

IDENTIFY, RESEARCH AND COLLECT IDEA

1. Understanding Attention in Learning

Attention is a crucial aspect of the learning process because it serves as the initial gateway for information to enter the student's cognitive system. Without attention, information conveyed by the teacher will not be optimally processed by students. According to Anderson (2015), attention is the selective process of focusing awareness on certain stimuli while ignoring others. In the context of English language learning, student attention significantly influences success in understanding material, remembering vocabulary, and developing language skills. Research shows that students' attention levels are positively correlated with their learning outcomes (Yuliani et al., 2022). This suggests that the higher a student's attention, the better their academic achievement.

Furthermore, attention is also influenced by various factors, both internal and external. Internal factors include students' motivation, interests, and psychological conditions, while external factors include teaching methods, learning media, and the learning environment (Suryanto & Brawijaya, 2024).

2. Local Cultural Values in Education

Local cultural values are part of local wisdom that has been passed down from generation to generation and serves as a guideline for community life. In an educational context, local cultural values can be used as a means to shape student character and increase the relevance of learning. According to Koentjaraningrat (2009), culture encompasses a system of values, norms, and customs that influence individual behavior in society. Integrating cultural values into learning can help students understand material in a more contextual and meaningful way. Research shows that using a local culture-based approach can increase student motivation and attention during learning (Tangkeallo et al., 2024). This is because students feel closer to the material being taught, making it easier to understand and internalize the concepts being learned.

WRITE DOWN YOUR STUDIES AND FINDINGS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological approach. This approach aims to deeply understand students' subjective experiences regarding how Longko' Toraya values influence their attention in learning English. The focus of this research is: Students' understanding of Longko' Toraya values, forms of internalization of Longko' Toraya values in students' lives, students' experiences in demonstrating attention during English learning, the meaningful relationship between Longko' Toraya values and students' attention. The data in this study were collected through three complementary techniques. Classroom observations were conducted to identify visible expressions of Longko' Toraya values such as politeness, discipline, and responsibility as well as key indicators of student attention, including visual focus, active participation, and responsiveness to instructions. Semi-structured interviews with both the teacher and eleventh-grade students further explored their perceptions of how these cultural values contribute to maintaining focus during English learning activities. Additionally, student reflective journals provided personal insights, allowing learners to describe their own experiences in sustaining attention and to express which aspects of Longko' Toraya values they felt most influenced their behavior in the classroom. Together, these methods offered a rich and holistic understanding of the cultural and attentional dynamics present in the learning environment.

There are four themes emerged from interview and reflection data.

Theme 1. The Influence of Longko' on Teacher-Student Interaction and Classroom Dynamics

There are several core patterns emerged regarding the influence of Longko' Toraya values on teacher-student interaction and overall classroom dynamics. The first theme, **"Respect as the Foundation of Interaction,"** captures how values of *sipakatau* (mutual respect) guide the way students communicate with the teacher, listen attentively, and demonstrate courteous behavior, creating a harmonious learning atmosphere. The second theme, **"Responsibility Strengthens Learning Engagement,"** reflects how students' sense and motivates them to follow instructions, complete tasks on time, and remain focused during lessons, thereby

improving the flow of classroom activities. A third theme, **“Discipline Shapes Classroom Order,”** highlights how cultural expectations of self-control and appropriate conduct enable smoother classroom management and reduce disruptive behavior. Finally, the theme **“Collective Harmony Supports Collaborative Learning”**, which encourage students to help one another, participate actively, and maintain positive peer interactions. These themes collectively illustrate how *Longko’ Toraya* values play a significant role in shaping respectful, orderly, and collaborative classroom dynamics.

Theme 2. The Importance of Respecting Teachers: A Study of Student Attitudes and Behaviours

A study on the importance of respecting teachers, several key patterns emerged from the analysis of student attitudes and behaviours. The first theme, “Respect as a Moral Obligation,” reflects students’ belief that showing respect to teachers is a fundamental ethical responsibility rooted in cultural and educational norms. This respect is expressed through polite language, attentive listening, and acknowledgment of the teacher’s authority. The second theme, “Respect Enhances Classroom Engagement,” captures how students’ appreciation of the teacher’s role motivates them to participate more actively, follow instructions carefully, and maintain positive learning behaviors. A third theme, “Respect as a Basis for Trust and Positive Relationships,” highlights how respectful attitudes help build mutual trust, enabling smoother communication and stronger teacher–student rapport. The final theme, “Respect Promotes Self-Discipline and Responsibility,” shows how students’ commitment to honoring their teachers encourages them to manage their behaviors, complete tasks on time, and behave in ways that support a conducive learning environment. Together, these themes illustrate that respect for teachers is not merely a cultural expectation but a driving force that shapes student behaviour, strengthens classroom relationships, and enhances overall learning effectiveness.

Theme 3. Maintaining Personal and Family Honor in Academic Settings: A Study of Student Values and Behaviors

In defining and naming themes for the study on maintaining personal and family honor in academic settings, several interconnected patterns emerged from students’ expressed values and behaviours. The first theme, **“Academic Achievement as a Reflection of Family Honor,”** highlights students’ belief that their performance in school represents not only their personal capabilities but also the reputation and dignity of their families. This perception motivates them to study diligently, avoid academic misconduct, and strive for excellence. The second theme, **“Behavioural Discipline as a Sign of Good Upbringing,”** captures how students view respectful conduct, punctuality, and responsibility as reflections of their family’s moral guidance, prompting them to regulate their actions in the school environment. The third theme, **“Avoiding Shame Through Self-Control,”** emphasizes how students seek to prevent behaviours that could bring embarrassment or dishonor to themselves or their families, leading them to maintain self-discipline and follow school norms. Finally, the theme **“Family Expectations as a Source of Motivation and Pressure,”** reveals that students are influenced by both encouragement and expectations from family members, which shape their academic goals, behaviour, and commitment to their studies. Collectively, these themes illustrate how personal and family honor deeply influences students’ academic conduct,

guiding their decisions, interactions, and overall approach to learning.

Theme 4. Strategies for Improving Attention and Focus in Students with Learning Disabilities

A study on strategies that enhance attention and focus in students with learning disabilities, several central patterns were identified. The first theme, “Structured and Predictable Learning Environments,” reflects the importance of routine, clear expectations, and organized classroom settings in helping students feel secure and maintain focus during learning activities. The second theme, “Multisensory Instructional Approaches,” captures how the use of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic supports such as charts, hands-on materials, and guided verbal cues enhances students’ ability to process information and sustain attention. A third theme, “Individualized Support and Scaffolding,” emphasizes the value of breaking tasks into smaller steps, providing one-on-one assistance, and adjusting instructional pace to meet students’ unique needs. The fourth theme, “Positive Reinforcement and Motivation Strategies,” highlights the effectiveness of praise, reward systems, and goal-setting in encouraging students to persist and stay focused. Finally, the theme “Mindfulness and Self-Regulation Techniques” underscores the role of breathing exercises, movement breaks, and self-monitoring strategies in helping students manage distractions and regain concentration. Together, these themes illustrate a comprehensive set of strategies that create supportive, responsive, and engaging learning environments for students with learning disabilities.

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CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that *Longko' Toraya* values particularly respect for the teacher and a strong sense of responsibility play a significant role in shaping students' attentiveness and responsiveness in the classroom. These cultural principles foster disciplined behaviour, active listening, collaborative participation, and overall positive learning attitudes, all of which contribute to improved engagement and focus during English language learning activities. The results highlight that when students internalize culturally meaningful expectations, they are more likely to regulate their conduct, maintain concentration, and interact constructively with peers and teachers. Furthermore, the study underscores the value of integrating culturally grounded practices into English language teaching, especially in rural Indonesian contexts where local wisdom continues to influence students' identities and behaviours. Incorporating *Longko' Toraya* values into instructional strategies not only enhances attentional outcomes but also contributes to a more supportive, respectful, and culturally responsive learning environment. These insights carry important implications for culturally responsive pedagogy, suggesting that teachers who align their classroom practices with students' cultural backgrounds can strengthen motivation, reinforce positive behaviours, and promote more effective learning experiences.

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