

# Designing English Teaching Materials Containing Popular Culture

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## ABSTRACT

There are two main objectives in conducting this research, namely: 1) describing how popular culture can be designed into English teaching materials; 2) explaining how to implement English teaching material containing popular culture in the classroom. This study uses qualitative methods using interviews and text or document analysis techniques as research instruments. The informants interviewed were postgraduate students of the English Language Education Department, University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia. They took the Material Development course. And the documents analyzed were learning devices such as syllabus and teaching plan that had been designed. The research data is in the form of interviews and texts related to popular culture such as pictures, music, food and drinks, sports and books. The results of the study show that popular culture such as images of food and drinks, music, sports and entertainment can be developed into English teaching materials. Informants implemented English teaching material that contained popular culture in the classroom through peer teaching programs.

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## 1. Introduction

Popular culture such as food and beverage consumption can be developed into interesting and fun English study materials for students. As stated by Park et al. (2019) that learning activities such as cooking not only result in better performance, but also create a positive and pleasant learning environment for students. The benefits of cooking in learning English have been proven by many students who study foreign languages. In learning English as a Foreign Language, one of the main objectives is to develop students' competencies in cross-cultural skills. Therefore, culture must play a major role in the learning process (Raigon-Rodriguez, 2018). In this case subject matter or textbooks are carriers of cultural information so special attention needs to be paid to how to design English language material (Sudiran and Vieira, 2017).



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Popular culture can be interpreted as habits or traditions that have been attached to the daily lives of all people in a society (Sugihartati, 2017). In other words, popular culture is the mindset, habits, attitudes and behavior of people in general. People's behavior related to popular culture takes two forms, formal and informal. Formal behavior such as someone's activities while on duty or at work. Meanwhile, non-formal behavior is the activity of someone when they are utilizing free time or while enjoying a holiday (Lee and Bai, 2016).

Popular culture has components or parts that form a unified whole. Popular culture as a whole has three main components, knowledge, behavior and artifacts or material. Popular cultural knowledge is formed from the process of interaction between individuals and individuals or with other groups in society. Knowledge of popular culture is the basis for someone to express their identity to other groups. This knowledge also determines the shape and characteristics of a person's creations such as merchandise, t-shirts, texts and others. Popular cultural behavior is an expression of someone's attitude and behavior which includes how to dress, how to talk, how to eat and drink. Popular cultural behavior also includes one's habits both at work and in recreation areas while enjoying leisure time. Popular cultural material is the result of someone's creation in fulfilling their wants or needs. The material can be grouped into several groups such as films, television, books, sports, music (Donze, 2017), consumption, novels, clothing, cellphones (Suhodolli, 2019) and online games.

Teaching and learning activities carried out in the classroom always require a teacher to prepare and deliver subject matter (Schreiner, 2019). Whenever going to teach, the teacher is always preoccupied with the affairs of preparing good material or learning material. Prins et al. (2018) stated that one of the challenges of teachers in education is the ability to develop high-quality subject matter. This is so that when in the classroom the teacher can convey the contents of the subject matter effectively and efficiently. The learning process can be said to be effective when delivering teaching materials according to the target that is able to achieve instructional goals that have been set in the learning implementation plan. Learning can be called efficient if the learning process can be carried out by the teacher in accordance with the time specified in the curriculum. This means teaching and learning activities take place in accordance with the allocation of time that has been provided and does not exceed the time limit set in the curriculum.

According to Tomlinson (2013), the main function of subject matter in teaching and learning activities includes giving students something they can take from the lesson and teaching students something that can be used. The subject matter plays an important role in classroom learning activities (Widyaningrum et al., 2018). This is because the subject matter is a guide for teachers who provide instructions on what to say, teach and how to grade it. The subject matter must be designed in such a way that makes it easy for the teacher to deliver the lesson in class. In designing subject matter, teachers need to pay attention to the contents of the curriculum, namely core competencies and basic competencies as the basis for formulating indicators and learning objectives so that the delivery of learning content in class can be running well.

In teaching and learning activities in class, the most decisive activity in achieving learning objectives is implementing the subject matter after being designed or prepared in advance by the teacher. At this stage whether or not a good subject matter is determined by the way and style of the teacher in delivering the contents of the subject matter to students. Experienced and professional teachers have the ability to address lessons systematically and easily understood by students. Such teachers are able to make the subject matter come alive so that students gain a learning experience that is empowering



and enjoyable. So that the process of delivering subject matter in class can run actively and excitement, the teacher is expected to apply a learning approach that encourages students to be more active such as a scientific approach

Research on the use of popular culture in designing English language materials is still limited and has received little attention from researchers. While there are many teachers and educators who pay attention and apply popular culture in teaching and learning activities in English so that the learning process takes place actively and arouse the learning of all students. Therefore, this research is important to do and should get priority as an effort to enrich the subject matter of English so that the activities of teaching and learning English in the classroom can run creatively. The results of this study are expected to strengthen the concept of active, creative, and innovative learning fun

There are two main problems that are solved in this study.

- 1) How can popular culture be designed into English learning material?
- 2) How to implement popular culture-based English learning materials in the classroom?

The implementation of this research is based on two objectives, namely:

- 1) To describe the method or procedure for designing popular culture into English subject matter.
- 2) To explain how to implement popular culture-based English subject matter into the classroom.

## 2. Methods

This study used a qualitative method which applied interviews and texts analysis as research instruments to collect data. The interview was used to collect data about the implementation of English teaching material containing popular culture in the classroom. And the texts analysis was applied to obtain data of popular culture elements used by informants to design English teaching materials.

The study was conducted at Graduate Program of English Education Department of the University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia. It engaged 25 students as informants who took the Material Development course. They were interviewed regarding their implementation of English teaching material containing popular culture components. The texts analyzed were their teaching plan which contained popular culture such as pictures, music, food and drink, sports, books, magazines and television as teaching material.

The data elicited was analyzed using interpretation and categorization technique. Data collected in the form of interview was interpreted based on the informants' responding to the interview guide. And texts in the form of check-lists as document data were categorised according to popular culture components.

## 3. Results and Discussion

In general the teaching material contains relevant facts, concepts, principles, and procedures, and is written in bullet points in accordance with the formulation of competence achievement indicators. Specifically in teaching English, teaching materials for receptive skills (listening and reading) are in the form of text followed by a number of exercises relevant to the formulation of indicators. For language teaching material that is



productive (speaking and writing), teaching material is in the form of the expected texts made by the teacher or taken from a particular source. It is followed by steps taken to produce the text. In addition, teaching materials also contain brief theoretical explanations related to the contents of competency indicators. For reading comprehension, for example, the material also contains an explanation of how to find main ideas in a text or paragraph, to show references in a text, and to explain the meaning of expressions in the text. The teaching material should be taken from various sources of learning that are varied and up to date.

The results of interviews with informants revealed that after developing English language teaching material containing popular culture, they implemented English language teaching materials in the classroom. In the implementation, they carry out three stages of activity. First, the Pre-activity phase which includes three activities: 1) the participant divides the class into several small groups. 2) The participant distributes handouts to each group. 3) The participant invites the group to discuss.

Second, the Whilst Activity stage which includes 5 activities: 1) the participant tells students to observe the lesson material that has been given. 2) The participant asks students to ask questions about the text being observed. 3) The participant tells students to collecting information. 4) The participant instructs students to associate facts in books with other facts. 5) The participant tells students to communicate the results of their learning to other students.

Third, the Post-activity stage which contains four activities: 1) The participant does the reflection by inviting students to say: "In this chapter I learn about ..." 2) The participant tells students to say, "The parts that I enjoyed the most were ..." 3) The participant tells students to say, "The difficulties that I had were ..." 4) The participant tells students to say, "What do I have to do to be better?"

On the basis of findings, it can be said that the study has something new to discuss. This research explores popular culture into English language teaching materials. Popular culture has a lot of interesting material and is loved by many junior high school students. The appeal of popular culture material makes many students enjoy using it. By utilizing popular culture material as English teaching material, it makes the teacher's effort to improve students' English knowledge and skills easier. Therefore, the use of popular culture as an English language teaching material can help teachers improve student achievement. This research can also enhance teachers' knowledge about teaching and learning in the classroom through the use of popular culture as a learning experience in the classroom. This study enables teachers to improve student learning experiences through innovative, creative and enjoyable classroom activities.

#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the results of data analysis, it can be concluded that popular culture can be developed into English language teaching materials. There are two stages that need to be done to develop popular culture into English language teaching material. First, teachers need to analyze and identify components of popular culture that are suitable for instructional goals. Second, they develop popular culture materials into language teaching materials. In developing English language teaching materials that contains popular culture, teachers must observe the curriculum and read standard and basic competencies. Observation of the curriculum is very important to formulate indicators and teaching objectives.



After completing developing the English teaching material, teachers implement it in class by developing several activities. Activities designed by the teachers must stimulate students' interest in learning as an innovative, creative and enjoyable learning experience. Learning activities undertaken by the teachers have three activities: pre-activity, whilst activity and Post-activity. The process of the three activities such as analyzing the components of popular culture, developing teaching materials containing popular culture, and implementing course material in class must be done systematically so that learning activities can achieve the instructional objectives.

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