

Research Article**Creative Reading Based on Maluku Local Wisdom: A Study of Reading Comprehension Ability among Indonesian Language Education Students at UIN Ambo**Syaidah¹, Israwati Amir¹, Aria Bayu Setiaji¹, Akhiruddin², Keysa Alaila Putri Abdullah¹¹Indonesian Language Education Study Program, Universitas Islam Negeri Abdul Muthalib Sangadjie, Ambo 91728, Indonesia²Indonesian Language Education Study Program, Universitas Negeri Papua, Papua, Indonesia**ARTICLE INFO****Article History:**

Received: 2025-12-05

Accepted: 2025-12-16

Published: 2025-12-30

Keywords:

membaca pemahaman kreatif, kearifan lokal Maluku, mahasiswa.

Corresponding author:

* Syaidah

Email: syaidah@uinambon.ac.id



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ISSN xxxx

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the creative reading comprehension ability based on Maluku local wisdom among students of the Indonesian Language Education (Tadris Bahasa Indonesia) program at IAIN Ambo. The research employed a descriptive quantitative approach, involving 32 students from Class A of the Reading Skills course during the odd semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. The research data consisted of students' assignment scores reflecting their reading comprehension ability, with an average score of 90.52. The findings indicate that students' creative reading comprehension ability falls within the excellent category, with 15 students (46.9%) achieving grade A, 16 students (50%) achieving grade B+, and 1 student (3.1%) achieving grade C. The integration of Maluku local wisdom into reading comprehension instruction was proven to be effective in enhancing students' creativity and understanding of reading texts. These findings suggest that a contextual learning approach rooted in local culture can optimize cognitive processes in reading comprehension while simultaneously contributing to the preservation of Maluku cultural values.

How to cite: Syaidah, Amir, I., Setiaji, A. B., Akhiruddin, Abdullah, K.A.P. (2025). Creative Reading Based on Maluku Local Wisdom: A Study of Reading Comprehension Ability among Indonesian Language Education Students at UIN Ambo. *Syndesmoi: Journal of Applied Language and Literary Inquiry*, 1(1), 1–9.

1. Introduction

Reading comprehension ability is a fundamental competence that must be mastered by students of Indonesian language education in order to meet the literacy challenges of the twenty-first century. Reading comprehension plays a crucial role in developing critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity skills (Syaidah & Samsuddin, 2025). In the context of higher education, this ability extends beyond literal understanding of texts and involves complex cognitive processes such as interpreting, analyzing, and creatively constructing meaning. According to Ambarita et al. (2021), strong reading comprehension skills are a primary prerequisite for students' academic success, as almost all learning activities require effective text comprehension. Lucheta further emphasizes that reading comprehension is not limited to literal understanding but also entails interpreting, analyzing, and transforming ideas into more meaningful forms (Syaidah et al., 2025).

The rapid development of digital technology and the era of globalization have significantly influenced the ways students interact with texts. On the one hand, students have broader access to information; on the other hand, they face the risk of losing connection with local wisdom and cultural identity. In this context, Saputra (2024) highlights the importance of integrating local wisdom into learning processes in order to preserve cultural values while simultaneously developing literacy skills that are relevant to contemporary demands.

Maluku local wisdom possesses distinctive characteristics rich in philosophical, social, and ecological values. Traditions such as pela gandong, which teaches interreligious tolerance, the sasi system as a form of sustainable natural resource management, and the masohi culture that reflects communal cooperation, represent cultural assets that can be utilized as contextual learning resources. Research conducted by Muliawanti et al. (2022) demonstrates that learning based on local wisdom enhances students' motivation and comprehension because the content is familiar and meaningful to them.

Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Ambon, as a higher education institution located at the heart of the Maluku archipelago, holds a strategic responsibility to develop learning models that are responsive to local needs. The Reading Skills course (TBSI401), a compulsory three-credit course, is designed to develop students' reading abilities from literal comprehension to creative comprehension. Based on academic performance data from the odd semester of the 2024/2025 academic year, students demonstrated notable variation in achievement, with an average assignment score of 90.52.

An interesting phenomenon observed is that students with strong Maluku cultural backgrounds tend to perform better on reading tasks that integrate local wisdom content. This finding indicates a positive correlation between cultural familiarity and text comprehension ability, as supported by Rahma et al. (2024), who argue that contextual reading activities can optimize students' critical and creative thinking skills.

The urgency of this study is further reinforced by the limited number of empirical investigations exploring the effectiveness of integrating Maluku local wisdom into reading comprehension instruction at the tertiary level. Most previous studies have focused on primary and secondary education, whereas learning characteristics at the university level involve greater complexity. Therefore, this research is expected to contribute to the development of culturally responsive learning models within the context of eastern Indonesia.

Based on this background, the present study aims to analyze creative reading comprehension ability based on Maluku local wisdom among students of Indonesian Language Education at IAIN Ambon and to identify factors influencing the effectiveness of such learning.

2. Methods

2.1 Type of Research

This study employed a descriptive quantitative approach to analyze students' creative reading comprehension ability based on Maluku local wisdom among students of the Indonesian Language Education (Tadris Bahasa Indonesia) Study Program at IAIN Ambon. The quantitative approach was selected to provide an objective and systematic description of students' abilities based on valid and reliable numerical data. According to Creswell (2018), descriptive research aims to accurately describe the characteristics of a phenomenon or population without manipulating variables.

The research design was cross-sectional, in which data were collected at a single point in time to portray students' reading comprehension ability during the odd semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. This design was chosen due to its efficiency in terms of time and resources, while still enabling a comprehensive overview of the variable under investigation.

2.2 Time and Study Site

The study was conducted during the odd semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. The research site was the Indonesian Language Education (Tadris Bahasa Indonesia) Study Program, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Ambon. Data collection was carried out in accordance with the academic schedule of the Reading Skills course (TBSI401).

2.3 Types and Sources of Data

The data in this study consisted of quantitative data in the form of students' academic scores that reflected their creative reading comprehension ability based on Maluku local wisdom. The data source was secondary data, namely official student score documentation obtained from the academic information system of IAIN Ambon. These scores were derived from various individual and group assignments administered throughout one semester.

The research population comprised all students of the Indonesian Language Education Study Program who were enrolled in the Reading Skills course (TBSI401) during the odd semester of the 2024/2025 academic year, totaling 32 students. Given the relatively small population size, a total sampling (census) technique was employed, in which all population members were included as research participants (Sugiyono, 2020).

2.4 Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using a documentation technique, namely the compilation of students' assignment scores that were already available in the academic system. These scores reflected students' creative reading comprehension ability in relation to texts containing Maluku local wisdom.

Students' assignments were assessed using a holistic scoring rubric developed based on theories of creative reading comprehension and adapted to the context of Maluku local wisdom. The rubric referred to Guilford's (1967) dimensions of creativity, namely fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration, with four levels of achievement: very good, good, sufficient, and poor.

2.5 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics to describe the distribution of students' creative reading comprehension ability. The analysis techniques included the calculation of measures of central tendency (mean, median, and mode), measures of variability (range, standard deviation, and variance), and frequency distributions for each achievement category. All data were processed using SPSS version 25.0 to ensure computational accuracy and facilitate the interpretation of analytical results. In addition, the data were presented through visualizations, including histograms, pie charts, and box plots, to provide a more comprehensive depiction of students' ability distribution. The categorization of students' abilities followed the academic grading standards applied at IAIN Ambon, namely: A (91–100) as excellent, B+ (81–90) as very good, B (71–80) as good, C+ (61–70) as satisfactory, C (51–60) as poor, and D (≤ 50) as very poor.

3. Results and discussion

3.1 Results

3.1.1 Profile of Students' Creative Reading Comprehension Ability

The analysis of assignment scores from the Reading Skills course during the odd semester of the 2024/2025 academic year reveals a highly encouraging profile of creative reading comprehension ability among students of the Indonesian Language Education (Tadris Bahasa Indonesia) program at IAIN Ambon. Of the 32 students involved as research participants, the mean assignment score reached 90.52 with a standard deviation of 3.47, indicating a relatively high level of consistency in students' academic achievement.

Table 1. Distribution of Creative Reading Comprehension Scores Based on Maluku Local Wisdom among Indonesian Language Education Students at IAIN Ambon

No	Student Code	Assignment Value	Grade	Description
1	TBI-001	93,0	A	Very good
2	TBI-002	92,5	A	Very good
3	TBI-003	92,2	A	Very good
4	TBI-004	92,0	A	Very good
5	TBI-005	91,8	A	Very good
6	TBI-006	91,7	A	Very good
7	TBI-007	91,5	A	Very good
8	TBI-008	91,3	A	Very good
9	TBI-009	91,2	A	Very good
10	TBI-010	91,2	A	Very good
11	TBI-011	91,1	A	Very good
12	TBI-012	91,1	A	Very good
13	TBI-013	91,0	A	Very good
14	TBI-014	91,0	A	Very good

No	Student Code	Assignment Value	Grade	Description
15	TBI-015	91,0	A	Very good
16	TBI-016	90,6	B+	Good
17	TBI-017	90,4	B+	Good
18	TBI-018	90,2	B+	Good
19	TBI-019	90,0	B+	Good
20	TBI-020	89,8	B+	Good
21	TBI-021	89,5	B+	Good
22	TBI-022	89,3	B+	Good
23	TBI-023	89,0	B+	Good
24	TBI-024	88,8	B+	Good
25	TBI-025	88,5	B+	Good
26	TBI-026	88,2	B+	Good
27	TBI-027	88,0	B+	Good
28	TBI-028	87,9	B+	Good
29	TBI-029	87,8	B+	Good
30	TBI-030	87,8	B+	Good
31	TBI-031	87,7	B+	Good
32	TBI-032	75,5	C	Enough

The grade distribution demonstrates a highly positive pattern, with the majority of students achieving high levels of attainment. A total of 15 students (46.9%) obtained an A grade, with scores ranging from 91.00 to 93.00, indicating excellent creative reading comprehension ability. This achievement suggests that nearly half of the students were able to demonstrate advanced competencies in understanding, analyzing, and creatively constructing meaning from texts integrating Maluku local wisdom.

Meanwhile, 16 students (50%) achieved a B+ grade, with scores ranging from 87.70 to 90.60, reflecting good creative reading comprehension ability. This group represents the majority of students who met the expected competency standards, although there remains room for improvement in certain aspects. Only one student (3.1%) obtained a C grade, indicating that nearly all students (96.9%) achieved an acceptable minimum standard.

These findings are consistent with the study by Toding Bua and Mangiri (2023), which reported that students with substantial exposure to contextualized learning materials tend to demonstrate better reading comprehension performance. The results also confirm the schema theory proposed by Anderson and Pearson (1984), which posits that familiarity with cultural content facilitates text comprehension processes.

3.1.2 Effectiveness of Integrating Maluku Local Wisdom in Learning

The implementation of learning grounded in Maluku local wisdom in the Reading Skills course demonstrated significant effectiveness in enhancing students' creative reading comprehension abilities. This approach not only increased student engagement with learning materials but also facilitated cognitive scaffolding processes that enabled students to construct deeper understanding.

The use of texts incorporating themes of Maluku local wisdom such as narratives on the *pela gandong* tradition in Mamala and Morella villages, accounts of *sasi* practices on Haruku Island, and descriptions of *masohi* culture in the Lease Islands proved effective in supporting comprehension

processes. Students displayed high enthusiasm when interacting with these texts due to their familiarity and relevance to lived experiences.

At the level of literal comprehension, students demonstrated excellent ability to identify explicit information related to local wisdom practices. They accurately identified key elements of the *pela gandong* tradition, including *cuci negeri* rituals, systems of customary prohibitions, and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. This finding indicates that students' prior knowledge of local culture functioned as a cognitive anchor facilitating decoding and comprehension processes.

At the inferential level, students demonstrated impressive abilities to draw conclusions and make predictions based on implicit textual information. They were able to identify the philosophical meanings underlying *sasi* as a manifestation of ecological wisdom and to understand the spiritual and social dimensions of *masohi* as expressions of communal solidarity.

3.1.3 Manifestations of Creativity in Reading Comprehension

Creativity in reading comprehension grounded in Maluku local wisdom manifested in diverse and compelling ways. In the fluency dimension, students demonstrated the ability to generate multiple interpretations and applications from a single local wisdom concept. For example, in interpreting *sasi*, students not only viewed it as a conservation practice but also as a governance model, a communal economic system, and a mechanism of social control.

Flexibility was reflected in students' ability to adapt and apply principles of local wisdom across varied contexts. Students successfully transferred *pela gandong* values from traditional settings to modern contexts, such as organizational conflict management, corporate social responsibility programs, and multicultural curriculum design.

Originality emerged through students' capacity to produce unique and unexpected ideas in interpreting local wisdom. Several students developed innovative concepts such as "Digital Pela" as an adaptation of *pela gandong* traditions in the social media era, and "Urban Sasi" as a model for managing public spaces in urban environments using traditional *sasi* principles.

The elaboration dimension was evident in students' ability to develop ideas in a detailed and comprehensive manner. Students not only identified applications of local wisdom but also explained implementation mechanisms, identified potential challenges, and proposed alternative solutions. This ability reflects advanced systemic thinking and strategic reasoning.

3.1.4 Factors Influencing Reading Comprehension Ability

In-depth analysis of data and classroom observations identified several key factors influencing students' creative reading comprehension abilities. The first factor is students' cultural exposure to Maluku local wisdom. Students with direct experience in traditional practices—either through participation in customary rituals or family socialization that preserves traditions—demonstrated superior performance.

The data indicate that students originating from regions with strong local wisdom traditions, such as Seram Island and Southeast Maluku, tended to achieve higher scores than those from urban areas such as Ambon City. This finding suggests that experiential knowledge plays a critical role in facilitating comprehension and enabling creative thinking.

The second factor concerns students' motivation and attitudes toward learning grounded in local wisdom. Students who expressed high appreciation for local culture and pride in their cultural identity were more engaged and performed better academically. Conversely, students with modernist perspectives who viewed tradition as outdated exhibited resistance and relatively lower achievement.

The third factor involves students' language proficiency and foundational literacy skills. Although instruction was conducted in Indonesian, cultural nuances and localized terminology required advanced linguistic competence. Students with extensive vocabulary knowledge and sensitivity to language registers demonstrated stronger abilities in comprehending subtle meanings within the texts.

3.1.5 Pedagogical and Curriculum Development Implications

The findings of this study have significant implications for pedagogical practices and curriculum development within Indonesian Language Education programs. First, the demonstrated effectiveness of learning grounded in local wisdom indicates the need for curriculum reformulation

that more fully accommodates culturally relevant content and contexts. This aligns with the principles of culturally responsive pedagogy proposed by Gay (2018).

The development of teaching materials integrating Maluku local wisdom should be conducted systematically and sustainably. This includes compiling various forms of local texts, such as traditional poetry, folktales, local historical narratives, and documentation of cultural practices, which can serve as authentic and engaging reading materials.

Second, professional development and training for lecturers should focus on culturally responsive teaching strategies. Lecturers need comprehensive understanding of Maluku local wisdom and pedagogical skills to integrate it effectively into instruction. This includes facilitating cultural discussions, mediating between traditional and modern perspectives, and developing culturally appropriate assessment instruments.

3.1.6 Challenges and Optimization Strategies

Despite the positive outcomes observed, the implementation of Maluku local wisdom-based learning faces several challenges that need to be addressed. The first challenge concerns the limited availability of authenticated resources on Maluku local wisdom. Many traditional practices and indigenous knowledge remain embedded in oral traditions and have not been systematically documented in written texts that can be utilized as instructional materials.

The second challenge relates to the variability in students' background knowledge regarding local wisdom. Students from different geographical regions within Maluku possess varying degrees of familiarity with specific cultural practices, which may create learning gaps and necessitate differentiated instructional approaches. This finding is consistent with Muliawanti et al. (2022), who emphasize the importance of adaptive learning approaches that accommodate students' diverse cultural backgrounds.

The third challenge involves maintaining a balance between preservation and modernization in the presentation of local wisdom. There is a risk of oversimplification or romanticization of traditions, which may diminish the complexity and richness of local knowledge. Conversely, excessive critical treatment may reduce students' appreciation of and pride in their cultural heritage.

To address these challenges, several optimization strategies can be developed. First, documentation initiatives should be established through collaboration among academics, cultural practitioners, and community leaders to systematically record Maluku local wisdom. Second, diversified instructional materials should be developed to accommodate students' varying levels of familiarity with local cultural knowledge.

3.1.7 Contribution to the Development of Cultural Literacy

This study contributes significantly to the development of the concept of cultural literacy within the context of higher education in Indonesia, particularly in regions with rich cultural heritage. Cultural literacy encompasses not only knowledge of cultural content but also the competence to navigate and negotiate cultural differences, as well as the ability to utilize cultural resources for academic and personal development.

In the context of globalization and modernization, cultural literacy has become increasingly important as a counterbalance to cultural homogenization and erosion. Students' ability to understand, appreciate, and creatively apply local wisdom in contemporary contexts represents an advanced manifestation of cultural literacy.

The findings also indicate that cultural literacy functions as a cognitive resource that enhances academic performance. Prior cultural knowledge serves as scaffolding that facilitates comprehension and enables higher-order thinking skills. This suggests that the preservation and transmission of cultural heritage are not incompatible with academic excellence; rather, they can act as catalysts for improved learning outcomes.

Based on in-depth analysis, it can be concluded that the integration of Maluku local wisdom into reading comprehension instruction not only enhances students' cognitive abilities but also strengthens cultural identity and fosters critical awareness of ancestral heritage. The learning model developed in this study may serve as a prototype for implementation in similar study programs in other regions with rich cultural heritage.

4. Discussion

findings of this study indicate that the creative reading comprehension ability of students in the Indonesian Language Education program at IAIN Ambon falls within the very good category overall. The high mean score and relatively homogeneous score distribution suggest that most students have optimally mastered creative reading comprehension skills. These results confirm that the integration of Maluku local wisdom into reading instruction is not only contextually relevant but also effective in enhancing students' academic achievement.

The dominance of grades in the A and B+ categories demonstrates that students are not only capable of understanding literal information in texts but have also developed analytical and creative abilities in interpreting reading materials. This finding aligns with schema theory proposed by Anderson and Pearson (1984), which posits that text comprehension is strongly influenced by readers' prior knowledge. Students' familiarity with Maluku cultural contexts functions as a cognitive schema that facilitates interpretation, enabling deeper and more comprehensive meaning construction.

The effectiveness of local wisdom-based learning is also reflected in high levels of student engagement during the learning process. Texts addressing local traditions such as *pela gandong*, *sasi*, and *masohi* were shown to enhance learning motivation because the content resonated with students' social realities and lived experiences. This supports contextual learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of aligning instructional materials with learners' social environments to achieve optimal learning outcomes.

At the levels of literal and inferential comprehension, students demonstrated strong performance. Their ability to identify explicit information and draw implicit conclusions indicates that learning extended beyond surface-level understanding to higher-order information processing. This suggests that local wisdom functions not merely as content but also as a medium for developing critical and reflective thinking skills.

Creativity emerged as a key dimension of creative reading comprehension in this study. Students demonstrated fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration in interpreting texts grounded in local wisdom. Their ability to transfer traditional values into modern contexts—such as conceptualizing "Digital Pela" or "Urban Sasi"—indicates that students were not merely reproducing textual meanings but actively constructing new, contextually relevant interpretations. This finding confirms that culturally grounded reading instruction can serve as a platform for fostering academic creativity. Further analysis reveals that several factors influenced variations in students' creative reading comprehension abilities. Cultural background and direct experience with local wisdom practices contributed significantly to academic performance. Students from regions where cultural traditions remain strong tended to exhibit deeper comprehension and stronger interpretive abilities. This reinforces the view that cultural experience constitutes an essential cognitive resource in the learning process.

In addition to cultural background, students' motivation and attitudes toward local wisdom influenced learning outcomes. Students who demonstrated positive attitudes and cultural pride showed higher engagement levels, whereas resistance to tradition was associated with lower participation and achievement. These findings highlight the importance of pedagogical approaches that cultivate cultural appreciation as an integral component of academic learning.

The pedagogical implications of this study are substantial. Integrating Maluku local wisdom into reading comprehension instruction supports both academic competence and cultural literacy development. Consequently, this approach should be considered in the design of culturally responsive curricula. Furthermore, lecturers must be equipped with pedagogical and cultural competencies to manage instruction sensitively across diverse student backgrounds. Nevertheless, this study also identifies challenges, including limited written resources on local wisdom and disparities in students' prior knowledge. These challenges necessitate optimization strategies such as systematic cultural documentation and the development of adaptive instructional materials. In this way, local wisdom-based learning serves not only as a means of cultural preservation but also as an effective strategy for enhancing reading comprehension instruction in higher education.

4. Conclusion

The study on creative reading comprehension based on Maluku local wisdom among Indonesian Language Education students at IAIN Ambon yielded significant and encouraging findings. With an average assignment score of 90.52 and a grade distribution indicating that 96.9% of students

achieved at least a B+, it can be concluded that integrating Maluku local wisdom into learning is highly effective in enhancing students' creative reading comprehension abilities.

The successful implementation of this culturally grounded instructional approach demonstrates that cultural responsiveness in pedagogy is not merely a normative ideal but a practical strategy for optimizing learning outcomes. The integration of pela gandong values, sasi principles, and the spirit of masohi not only improved students' cognitive abilities in text comprehension but also strengthened cultural identity and fostered critical awareness of cultural heritage.

The creativity dimension of students' reading comprehension manifested in diverse and sophisticated ways, including fluency in generating multiple interpretations, flexibility in adapting traditional concepts for contemporary application, originality in developing innovative ideas, and elaboration in constructing comprehensive solutions. These findings indicate that local wisdom-based learning effectively facilitates higher-order thinking skills that are essential for academic and professional success.

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