



Indonesia's Local Content Curriculum (LCC) Initiative: Decentralization and Perspectives from High School Classrooms in *Banten*

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Abstract

This study asked how, and in what ways the local content curriculum (LCC) initiative was being implemented in response to decentralization reforms in Banten, Indonesia. A discussion of the background of decentralization and LCC policy and their implementation builds a framework for understanding the development of the LCC. Specific attention is given to school-based teams and curriculum development in relation to Indonesian decentralization policy (macro level) and the LCC as a proxy for the policy at the micro level. The ethnographic case study investigated nine lecturers and 25 students at a university faculty of teacher training and education program, and 16 LCC senior secondary teachers in five high schools. Data were collected through primary interviews, follow-up conversations, and classroom participant-observations. The study was a sustained, ten-month long immersion in the school communities in order to yield data adequate to answer the research questions. The discussion and findings provide extensive and diverse evidence of dynamic responses to LCC policy changes, as lecturers and teachers were well informed about and engaged in the implementation of LCC courses. Implications of findings are discussed.

Keywords

Decentralization of education, local content curriculum, Indonesian education

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Introduction

Since the 1990's, and significantly since 1998 with the end of the Suharto presidency, Indonesia has moved from a highly centralized education system to an increasingly decentralized one, with policy reforms and initiatives intending to improve educational quality and relevance by strengthening regional, district and school autonomy, and capacities. Law No. 22 of 1999 on "Local Government" devolved authority and responsibilities for local governments in numerous sectors beginning January 1st, 2001, with the exception of security and defense, foreign policy, monetary and fiscal matters, justice and religious affairs (Usman, 2005). The reforms encourage greater regional and local control politically and financially, including such areas as teacher recruitment and training (Behrman, Deolalikar, & Soon, 2002; Purwadi & Muljoatmadjo, 2000; Sadiman, 2006), adoption of competency-based curriculum standards (Utomo, 2005) and local-level curriculum development (Bjork, 2005).

Indonesia's educational system is responding to these dramatic societal changes and demands, and to the concurrent influences of globalization and localization, with decentralization reforms including increased curricular and instructional autonomy, higher teacher qualification standards and improved teacher training. Addressing the "harmony between local and global cultures" and "implementation of regional autonomy" in practice, English and local content curriculum (LCC) are required subjects in junior and senior secondary schools, and in some elementary schools, indicative of pragmatic efforts to meet the nation's educational needs at and from the local level. The requirement of English at the secondary level can be viewed as representative of global aspirations for Indonesian education, while the local content curriculum reflects the nation's commitment to an appreciation of local and regional variations. Local content curriculum (LCC); also known as *muatan lokal* or (MULOK) represent major components of decentralization policy (*kebijakan desentralisasi*), and are undergirded by the principles of democracy, autonomy, and self-motivation for learning. Bjork (2003), in a study of junior secondary schools (SLP/SLTP; grades 7-9) in East Java, found that deeply rooted school cultures and sociopolitical contexts exert a powerful influence on teachers' perceptions and behaviors. He concludes there are three major aspects impeding the implementation of the LCC initiative and changes in curriculum and pedagogy: "civil service culture, incentives and rewards, and center-local relations," and of these factors, Bjork's (2005) phenomena of "civil service culture" and center-local relations affecting teacher autonomy and adaptation, and how these impact teacher training, will likely relate to the perceptions of the professors and student-teachers in this study.

The problem with the implementation of the LCC, as a significant and symbolic component of decentralization reform initiated in 1994 (Bjork, 2005; Sadiman, 2006) is that even if provided with support such as training and resources, there are deeper issues concerning past social norms and expectations regarding authority-subordinate relationships. It is not unusual for people to base their understandings, attitudes and actions upon their past experiences and exigent social realities; in actuality we could consider this the norm. Bjork (2005) observes that teachers may need convincing through tangible benefits such as financial incentives and assured job security (in cases of non-permanent, non-civil service



teachers). Utomo (2005) questioned *Bahasa Indonesia* teachers' responses to the CBC. One question left unclear in this regard is "How do secondary teachers of other subjects respond to the challenges of creating, developing and successfully implementing LCC in schools?"

Like many countries in Southeast Asia, the Republic of Indonesia has pursued decentralization reforms like the LCC concurrently with efforts to increase and improve English as a common language in business, government, at higher education levels, and as a medium of instruction in some senior secondary schools. Additionally, all students study *Bahasa Indonesia*, as well as communicating in over 200 local dialects, primarily the regional languages of Javanese, Sundanese, and Balinese. *Bahasa Indonesia* is the national language, and Arabic and diverse local languages are spoken throughout Indonesia. For the province of Banten, the location of this study, the main local languages are Sundanese and Javanese. A question arises from this hypothetical construct: Is local-language instruction—or even English—incorporated into the local content curriculum subject matter? Which preferences tend to take precedence, and if so to what degree? The answers certainly would impact the preparation of teachers of these subjects, and at the time of the study, no previous research on this subject in Indonesia could be found.

The graphic representations of Bjork (2005) illustrate the forces of the state, namely the education policy of the ministry of national education, the parental sector, and student influences, mediated by the teachers' values about education. Note that Bjork (2005) does not consider extra-national or global forces. He contends that in the Indonesian system, the role of the state is much greater than in other countries, due to historical bureaucratic customs. Thus, even with sound and coordinated structural decentralization policies in place, as opposed to unsupported and inconsistent efforts across the 34 provinces, change is slow to occur. Better understanding the scope of this problem requires analysis that moves from critique of decentralization theory and national policy to their affects in a unique institutional context, to schools and the lives of teachers and students. In the pursuit and development of new knowledge about how teachers respond to a new national educational policy, this study critically reviews the most closely related and current research with the rationale of learning how educators respond in this specific context regarding increased levels of teacher autonomy and decision-making as embodied in the local context curriculum initiative. Anen (1992) recommended "improving cooperation and coordination between teacher training institutions and provincial offices of education" (p. xv) and the findings of this study provide specific data on, and knowledge of, this educational need.

Literature Review

Decentralization of education theory

The concept of decentralization involves the delegation of authority and responsibilities from the core of a central government or an organization outward to the more local level (for example, to provinces) or to departments. Benefits and challenges of decentralization will be discussed here. The list of countries pursuing decentralization reforms during the past 20 years is long, and includes a majority of developing nations (Malik, 2007). Decentralization of educational systems has been a global trend for decades,



and is “one of the most important phenomena to have affected educational planning in the last 15 years” (McGinn & Welsh, 1999). The reasons for this are complex; while rationales and assumptions vary from nation to nation, there are commonly recurring themes. They include diverse factors such as international economic pressures, governments ostensibly and genuinely encouraging the promotion of political democratization, global and local groups (often in solidarity) demanding greater voice (Duncan, 2007) and research demonstrating that decentralization can improve government, organizational and institutional efficiency. Degrees of centralization or decentralization of educational systems differ according to these diverse factors unique to each country’s government, economy, history, religions, and culture, however, and the central debate for education systems frequently revolves around distribution of power, loci of control, and decision making (Bray, 1999; McGinn & Welsh, 1999; Weiler, 1990). It is important to remember decentralization is not an end unto itself—it is a means for providing better education more effectively and equitably.

Specific reasons beyond the merely political for decentralizing educational systems include improving the relevance and appropriateness of curriculum, increasing retention and graduation rates of students, addressing disparities in the quality of education for marginalized communities, and improving student achievement. Assumptions and claims are made that decentralization can improve efficiency of systems by encouraging the identification of problems and needs and the most appropriate responses at the local level, related to, for example, teacher distribution and payment, accountability, provision of curriculum, and maintenance of school materials and facilities. Many of these responses are given as reasons and rationales for decentralization in Indonesia, as described in the next section, but are these claims valid?

Definitions and typologies of centralization and decentralization of education systems are generally similar, with diverging interpretations and modifications. Rondinelli (1981) was one of the first to describe three forms of decentralization: deconcentration, delegation, and devolution. He later added privatization as a fourth form (Rondinelli et al., 1984). According to Rondinelli (1981), decentralization is the “transfer or delegation of legal and political authority to plan, make decisions, and manage public functions, from the central government and its agencies to field organizations of those agencies, subordinate units of government, semi-autonomous public corporations, area-wide or regional development authorities; functional authorities, autonomous local governments, or non-governmental organizations.”

Exceptions and modifications to this definition have been advanced. According to McGinn and Welsh (1999), “decentralization is about shifts in the location of those who govern, about transfers of authority from those in one location or level vis-à-vis education organizations, to those in another level,” including four possible locations of authority: 1) the central government; 2) provincial, state or regional governing bodies; 3) municipal, county or district governments; and 4) schools. These levels and locations can be combined and overlaid with each of Rondinelli’s (1981) three forms for the analysis of any given system. Rondinelli’s (1981) three degrees of decentralization are (1) deconcentration is the process through which a central authority establishes field units or branch offices, staffing them with its own officers. Thus, personnel of the ministry of education may all work in the same central building, but more likely some of them would be posted out to provinces and



districts, (2) delegation implies a stronger degree of decision making power at the local level. Nevertheless, powers in a delegated system still basically rest with the central authority, which has chosen to “lend” them to the local one. The powers can be withdrawn without resort to legislation, and (3) devolution is the most extreme of these three forms of territorial decentralization. Powers are formally held at sub-national levels, the officers of which do not need to seek higher-level approval for their actions. The subnational officers may choose to inform the center of their decisions, but the role of the center is chiefly confined to collection and exchange of information.

To interpret and summarize Bray’s (1999) definitions above; deconcentration is the distribution of centralized government offices across geographical, or territorial, areas. Delegation implies the transfer of authority and decision-making to separate governmental units that remain responsible to the central government. Devolution is the strongest form of decentralization, transferring decision-making and authority over fiscal resources to regional and local governing bodies. For the case of Indonesia, the theme of “unique contexts influencing results” and that of “new problems always arising” make logical sense and are likely to apply.

However, for Indonesia, which until recently was highly centralized, the context is quite different, and moving toward the center of a continuum of centralization-decentralization holds great promise. Indonesia’s multiple desired outcomes seem to uniformly conform with many of the potential benefits of decentralization if the pitfalls discussed thus far can be avoided. The local content curriculum can be viewed as a fundamental embodiment of educational decentralization policy (macro-level) moving forward in Indonesian schools at the micro-level.

Decentralization in Indonesia

The current movement which has been encouraged through globalization and democratization, and in the interests of “Unity in Diversity,” has sought to promote the localization of educational methods and curricula for communities and schools. As mentioned in the introduction, legislation from the Indonesian Ministry of National Education (MONE, 1994) specifically prescribes certain proportions of curriculum and instructional method be developed from and at local levels; this is the local content curriculum (Bjork, 2003).

Jalal (2006) describes the general features of decentralization of government management in Indonesia as 1.) a transfer of authority of educational policies from central government, entailing the delegation of discretion over educational policy and money needed to finance these responsibilities, and 2.) shifting various educational decisions from government to people, or stakeholders, directly implementing and benefiting from these educational decisions. That areas such as setting standard competencies, national curriculum, evaluation calendar and evaluation instruments are retained at the central level is corroborated by Sadiman and Pudjiastuti (2006). Jalal (2006) traces the federal origins of education policy to the fourth amendment of the 1945 constitution, article 31:2, which states that every citizen is entitled to an education and that every citizen should enroll in basic education and the government should finance it. After conducting a limited study on the



progress of a school based management pilot program, Jalal concluded, as do Sadiman and Pudjiastuti (2006), that these efforts must be sustained over time and require buy-in from all stakeholders, especially school leaders such as principals, teachers, communities, and parents.

Sadiman and Pudjiastuti (2006) observe that since the 2001 beginnings of decentralized government management of education, progress has been made towards the goals of improving teaching qualifications and performance and creating more conducive learning environments in schools by making schools more autonomous, democratic, diverse and participatory at the community level. However, they echo the sentiments of Yulaelawati (2005), Bjork (2003, 2005), and others from within the educational leadership of Indonesia that the instruction in schools is isolated from social and physical experiences in the lives of students, the learning processes are routine, and school administrators are not monitoring and evaluating classroom activities adequately.

The “National Education Reform in Indonesia: milestones and strategies for the reform process” reported by Yulaelawati (2007) gives an up-to-date summary address of the general goals and direction of the decentralization program and current strategies to promote its advancement for improving the quality of teachers and schools. As follows, Yulaelawati (2007) emphasizes the role that the LCC plays within the framework of the CBC for promoting diversity and unity simultaneously, and the need to maximize the use of existing educational resources by decentralizing aspects of school management at the district and local levels.

Duncan (2007) asserts that the efforts of decentralization have yielded unevenly distributed results for urban and rural regions and people with minority demographic and socio-economic backgrounds, and it cannot be completely successful without mollifying these social inequities. In contrast to this, a much more recent study by the World Bank demonstrated that decentralization is working in Indonesia (Teo, 2007). The study of LCC development in response to decentralization is recommended as an extension of the work of Bjork (2003, 2005) and Utomo (2005).

Local Content Curriculum

As mentioned previously, local content curriculum (LCC) is a major component and “flagship” of Indonesia’s current decentralization reform movement which has sought to promote the localization of educational methods and curricula for communities and schools (Bjork, 2003, 2005). As mentioned in the introduction, local content curriculum legislation from the Indonesian Ministry of National Education (MONE, 1994) specifically prescribes certain proportions of curriculum and instructional methods to be developed from and at local levels (Bjork, 2003).

The LCC actually predated Indonesia Federal Law No. 22 of 1999 on local government, which stated “The authority to implement and manage education shall be transferred from the national government, i.e., the Ministry of National Education (MONE, which had replaced the Ministry of Education and Culture, or MOEC) to local district/municipal governments (Purwadi & Muljoatmodjo, 2000). The purpose is to make national standards and subject matter more relevant to students in their regions and localities. It is hoped this will make the study of CBC standards more engaging and



interesting; thus promoting achievement and promoting the retention and progress of students from grade level to grade level. The LCC is a separate subject area and course in which students learn facts and concepts derived from their communities. Examples of this are cultural, as with the humanities, like art, crafts, architecture, theater and fashion; historical, such as significant events and inhabitants of their area, geographical, as with maps, rivers, mountains, or the ocean; which leads to science—the types of resources and industry of their area; and linguistics, as with local dialects.

The following are some examples conveyed by Bjork (2005). He defined four characteristics of the revised LCC of 1994 including: (1) it consists of different subjects, (2) it has a share of up to 20 percent of the curriculum, (3) it is relevant to the needs of the local community and the world of work, and (4) it is developed at the local level under the responsibility of the Regional Offices of the MOEC/MONE in accordance with the availability of resources, regional and local development criteria, and employment opportunities.

These primary characteristics of the program currently remain intact. Furthermore, Bjork (2005) summarizes the goals of the LCC as to: delegate authority to the localities, reduce the percentage of students exiting the system, provide vocational training, create tighter links between curricula and local conditions, increase community involvement in the schools, and improve the instructional process (Bjork, 2005). In order for teachers to effectively change the use of curriculum and instruction in the classrooms, they would need “to transform themselves from deliverers of a curriculum prepared by experts in the capital to autonomous educators who used their creativity and intelligence to enliven instruction for their students” (Bjork, 2005, p. 37). In order for genuine devolution of authority to take place, the knowledge, methods, and attitudes of teachers would need to change, including greater knowledge of subjects and course objectives, and greater autonomy and responsibility in teaching.

However, in the study of the implementation of LCC in junior secondary schools in East Java, Bjork (2003) found that deeply rooted school cultures and sociopolitical contexts exert a powerful influence on teachers’ perceptions and behaviors, and he concluded there are three major aspects impeding the implementation of the LCC initiative and changes in curriculum and pedagogy; “civil service culture, incentives and rewards, and center-local relations” (p. 202).

The problem with the implementation of the LCC, a significant and symbolic component of decentralization reform initiated in 2001 (Bjork, 2005; Sadiman & Pudjiastuti, 2006), is that even if provided with support such as training and resources, there are deeper issues concerning past social norms and expectations. It is not unusual for people to base their understandings, attitudes and actions upon their past experiences and exigent social realities; in actuality we could consider the norm. Bjork (2005) observes that teachers may need convincing through tangible benefits such as assured job security and financial incentives before adjusting their teaching when these changes radically differ from the status quo of past decades. For Bjork’s (2003) visual representation of these multi-level tensions, and my proposed graphic adaptation of these for this study, see Figures 1 and 2.



Figure 1. *Forces acting upon teachers*

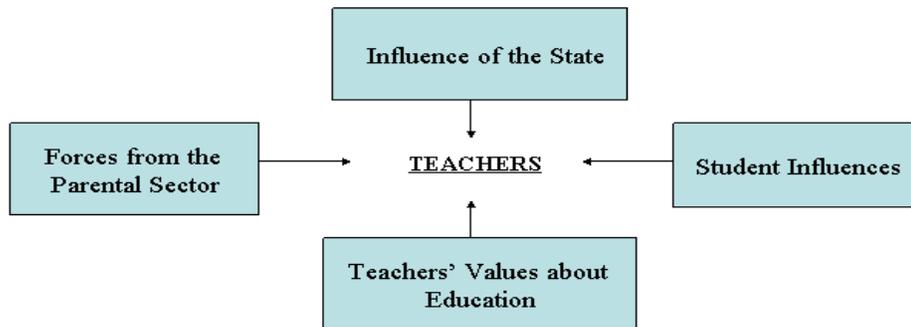
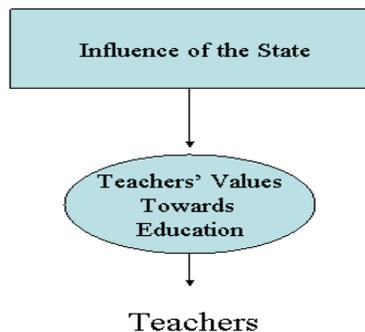


Figure 2. *Forces in the Indonesian public school system*



Movements toward decentralization in various sectors of governments, particularly educational systems, during different periods of national development, have been a popular trend worldwide, with dramatic legislation-led progress made during the 1990's and into the new millennium. The apparent and obfuscated motives, political dynamics, and benefits or drawbacks of decentralization are contextually complex and require direct scrutiny beyond official statistics, document analysis and literature review; however these can provide the foundations for future quantitative and qualitative research. Decentralization in the Indonesian system can potentially have very positive effects. If the process truly involves the delegation of authority for spending, administration, and decision making to the states, a dubious issue in itself, then state-level initiatives can be made to improve the quality education at a local level. While Indonesia has made dramatic legislative-led decentralizing reforms to improve the overall state of education, the effects of these reforms must be questioned and critiqued at the provincial, district, and school levels to better understand if delegation of decision-making and spending are genuine, and to find if efficiency and quality of instruction and outcomes improve or worsen.

The final conclusion to be drawn on educational decentralization, or territorial devolution, in Indonesia, is that while some see local autonomy in education as more



efficient and responsive to local schooling needs, more democratic for school communities, and more encouraging of entrepreneurialism and cooperation between locales, opponents maintain that decentralization and greater local autonomy can foster local elitism and incompetence, lack of accountability, redundancy, financial waste and even corruption; and local diversity can lead to competition, antagonism, and confusion about educational outcomes. To further complicate decentralization theory discussed here, to what extent are global, state and local influences impacting teacher training and the implementation of policy reforms, and are global influences displacing or impinging upon state and local perspectives, ways and actions, or complementing and facilitating the interpretation and implementation of decentralization of education policies such as the local content curriculum? These specific assumptions followed from my inquiry: 1. That UB (University of Banten), and similar universities' programs, address issues of Indonesian educational policy, the CBC, and English and LCC instruction, including a.) pedagogy and methods, b.) curriculum and learning materials, and c.) administrative and professional conduct. 2. The assumption that development of LCC at the school level would be consistent from one school, or district, to the next, or that some system or model for developing LCC exists. 3. That there is a structural model or protocol that the LCC committees follow in developing LCC, regarding what local content curriculum should consist of. Is it comprised of regionally relevant subject areas such as tourism in Bali, agriculture in rural areas, or marine biology on the coast? Are local history, culture, and languages included? If "yes," are other subjects such as computer literacy or English also incorporated?

Specific reasons for decentralizing education systems include improving the relevance and appropriateness of curriculum, increasing retention and graduation rates of students, addressing disparities in the quality of education for marginalized communities, and improving student achievement (Bray, 1999; Hannaway & Carnoy, 1993; McGinn & Welsh, 1999). Assumptions and claims are made that decentralization can improve efficiency of systems by encouraging the identification of problems and needs and the most appropriate responses at the local level, related to, for example, teacher distribution and payment, accountability, provision of curriculum, and maintenance of school materials and facilities. Many of these are given as reasons and rationales for decentralization in Indonesia, thus the explicit goals of the LCC are to 1) Delegate authority to localities, 2) Reduce the percentage of student exiting the system/provide vocational training, 3) Create tighter links between curricula and local conditions, 4) Increase community involvement in the schools and 5) Improve the instructional process (Bjork, 2005).

Bjork's (2003, 2005) and other previous research (Anen, 1992; Utomo, 2005) suggest that teachers' habits impede reform at the local level, and that change and implementation of the CBC-KTSP, PAKEM and LCC reforms has been very slow to occur. In summary, how have decentralization policy reforms impacted teachers' and schools' development of the LCC? The graphic representations of Bjork (2005) illustrate the forces of the state, namely the education policy of the Ministry of National Education, the parental sector, and student influences, mediated by the teachers' values about education. Note that Bjork (2005) does not consider extra-national or global forces. He contends that in the Indonesian system, the role of the state is much greater than in other countries, due to historical bureaucratic customs. Thus, even with sound, coordinated structural decentralization policies in place, as



opposed to unsupported and inconsistent efforts across the 34 provinces, change is slow to occur.

Methodology

This study is inductive, in that there was no hypothesis to be tested, but rather knowledge to be gathered and processes to be explored. This is the rationale and purpose for the choice of a qualitative, ethnographic case study. As the primary research instrument, I used individual and focus group interviews, classroom and campus observation and analysis of written documents and cultural artifacts for data collection and analysis in this study. Nine lecturers and more than 25 students at the university Faculty of Teacher Training and Education program, for a total of more than 35 instructor and student participants were interviewed and observed in classrooms and at campus-wide activities. Additionally, 16 English and LCC senior secondary teachers, and provincial and district English supervisors were interviewed. The lecturers varied in age from the late-twenties to the late-thirties; students ranged from 18 to 22. The population and sample are defined as a case study following Stake (1995) and Yin (1989).

The present Faculty of Teacher Training and Education of the University of Banten in *Serang*, Banten, Indonesia originated in 1982, when a School of Teachers Training and Education (FKIP) was established. This study was conducted with the permission and authorization of the UB Rector and the principals of the five high schools. In all the senior high school classrooms I visited the students wore uniforms, with the boys in khaki or blue colored slacks and short-sleeve shirts, and the girls in long skirts and blouses. Many girls in the high schools wore *jilbabs* (head coverings); however, some did not.

Data were collected through primary interviews, follow-up conversations, classroom participant-observations, and campus activities participant-observations. In order to yield data adequate to answer the research questions, a sustained, ten-month long immersion in the language and culture of the school communities was necessary to inductively seek out factors and patterns occurring in the processes of curriculum development and implementation of the classes. The data collected is descriptive, and concerned with meanings for the participants (Bogden & Biklen, 1998). Interviews conducted in English and partially in *Bahasa Indonesia* (with the help of a translator) which lasted from 40 to 60 minutes each were utilized. The questions were thematic, open-ended, and sequenced with each participant responding in turn and listening to one another's responses in focus groups. To counter critiques that the ethnographic case-study approach is too reliant on subjective data, the researcher sought to establish credibility of collection and interpretation of the data through triangulation and member-checks. Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed corresponding qualitative criteria for approaches paralleling quantitative criteria for evaluating qualitative research. For this study, transferability and credibility of participants bolsters validity, and dependability and confirmability support generalizability. The data collected and analyzed through interviews, field work observations on campus and in classrooms, and artifacts (student work, for example) was triangulated to ensure qualitative validity and reliability. Teachers and administrators from similar high school in a rural part of Banten were involved to strengthen reliability. The researcher's perceptions are



acknowledged as subjective at stages in the selection of data collected, and in the analyses of the data.

During and after data collection, with the individual and focus group interviews with university lecturers and students, and senior high school teachers, the data was analyzed through a process of organizing and coding. Interviews were transcribed, in detail, from the recorders to word documents as soon as possible following the interviews. This maximized accuracy of the literal spoken words and interpretations of meanings. The responses to thematic and open-ended questions, together with data from field notes and observations were then examined to find recurring themes and patterns, and these were matched with themes from the literature review and theoretical framework. This type of “line-by-line” and whole sentence or paragraph analysis is known as “open coding” (Miles & Huberman, 1994). After, and while, following the process of reflective memo-taking, organizing, coding and categorizing, and analyzing and interpreting, the researcher tried to be careful to triangulate the data from multiple perspectives in multiple situations through member checks, and to search for alternative or subtly imperceptible understandings.

The guiding paradigms and methods are consistent with the ethical principles for researching participants or “human subjects,” including: Respect for persons, which includes the requirement of a voluntary informed consent process, beneficence, which entails an obligation to protect persons from harm by minimizing risks and maximizing benefits, and justice, which requires that selection of subjects be fair and equitable and that particular care be taken when working with populations whose status puts them in a vulnerable position.

Findings and Discussion

The local content curriculum (LCC) as a subject in elementary and public schools represents a part of Indonesia’s commitment to decentralization and the localization of educational methods and curricula for communities and schools. As stated, the broad goals of the LCC are to; 1) delegate authority to localities, 2) reduce the percentage of students exiting the system/provide vocational training, 3) create tighter links between curricula and local conditions, 4) increase community involvement in the schools and 5) improve the instructional process (Bjork, 2005). The purpose is to make national *CBC-KTSP* standards and subject matter more relevant to students in their regions and localities, and to promote the retention and progress of students from grade level to grade level. The LCC is a separate subject area and course, and in some cases students learn facts and concepts derived from their communities, like art, crafts, architecture, theater and fashion, history, geography, science and linguistics, as with local dialects. The selection of topics and development of curriculum depends upon the types of resources and industry of the community and occurs at the school level.

One fundamental aspect of my LCC research question was “What is the local content curriculum, and how does it reflect local influences on schooling in the context of decentralization?” More specifically, I also wanted to know if Social Studies, Indonesian or English Language, *Pancasila*¹ and Civics, Religious Education, or other subject area teachers

¹Five inseparable and interrelated principles in the national philosophy of Indonesia.



provided training in university programs to develop and teach local content curriculum (LCC,) or if this was a separate major for student-teachers. The answer to this specific question is “no.” While the English education lecturers at the UB (University of Banten) demonstrated a great deal of knowledge about the local content curriculum subject area in schools, they explained to me that there is no program of study or courses to prepare teachers specifically to teach LCC at the elementary and secondary levels, at UB or any teacher training institutions in Indonesia. This section discusses the lecturers’ knowledge and views of the LCC, and then ventures beyond the case of UB into four large public senior high schools in *Serang* and one public senior school in a rural village near *Pandalayan*, Banten.

I discovered there is no major, and no course, for the local content curriculum at UB, or any other institutions that anyone knew of. This may indicate the government’s intention to concentrate the development of LCC subjects at the K-12 school level. It is discussed, however, in the curriculum course (*Atin*) and courses directly related to second-language teaching (*Rizal & John*). Two purposes became to learn more about lecturers understanding of the development, design, and implementation of LCC, and to learn more about the actual development, design, and implementation of LCC at the secondary school level. *Yudi* described the relationship of the recently gained autonomy of Banten province in relation to English and the local content curriculum:

“Before 2001 Banten was part of West Java and Bandung Sundanese...all is more decentralized now, like for the LCC schools can choose what language can be given...Under Suharto emphasis on Bahasa Indonesian was stronger...not such a need of English, especially in elementary schools. Now times are changing...English has now become part of LCC in some schools. When I ask experts ... they say we lack English teachers. We need to make it an obligation or it will be a problem in elementary schools... and it is optional in some areas a lot...”

Yudi explains that English is included as an LCC subject in response to school resources and the interests of students. The local content curriculum courses do not always reflect the “local” culture, industry and language, but rather, the decisions about the content of the courses are determined at the local level, to be relevant and desirable for the students. Often, though, the LCC course content does reflect local culture and industry, as will soon be discussed. *Yudi* also points out that the role of English as a course in the curriculum, and an LCC subject, seems to have increased during the transitions between four democratically elected presidents since Suharto, presidents B.J. Habibie, Abdurrahman Wahid, Megawati Sukarnoputri, and currently President Yudhoyono.

Additionally, *Rizal* maintained a viewpoint heard frequently in and out of schools in *Serang* and around Banten: That Banten’s heritage and traditions are a source of great pride for citizens here and not simply for deeply personal reasons of identity, but for welcoming visitors for business and tourism as well. Banten has been famous for its location on the Sunda Strait, an important shipping lane, and ports, and industry from *Serang* west to Cilegon and out to the coast. Regarding the inclusion of cultural and language courses in the LCC, he explained: “Banten province really pays attention to national heritage, for example, the *Baduy*—it’s about empowering...their traditions, how they learn, they are prohibited from



going to school, but some can read and write...its fantastic...their symbol is the *golok* (like machete)...” Schools at the elementary level often include Sundanese or Javanese languages as LCC classes, and some classes I visited in the senior high schools were related to local industry, similar to vocational subjects. Schools often include local arts, crafts, and horticulture as LCC subjects. However, I also found global influences in LCC courses I visited, including foreign languages such as English, Arabic, Japanese and German, and in the more industrial/vocational classes.

John described his views on the LCC in elementary and secondary schools: “First for the implementation of the LCC is the viability of time, second, is to consider the four to five subjects of national exam: Language, Math, Science, Social Science. The LCC may be viewed as contributing to these courses for the preparation of students.” The major subjects indicated by John are consistent in the CBC-KTSP standards, and the national *EBTANAS* test, for the entire country, and thus reflect state monitoring of the curriculum. The standards for English are also included with these, but with LCC courses, because they are created at the school level, standards can be adopted from national curriculum or developed originally. John continued:

“English is now compulsory from the fourth grade in elementary school, since 2004, as EFL...and Sundanese, Javanese, and in Lampung, Lampungese are taught as part of the LCC classes... I believe it is different in each school...”

John continued to explain the incorporation of English and local languages as LCC subjects in schools.

“In dealing with local content curriculum especially in Banten and *Serang*, they provide also Sundanese language, and also Javanese with Bantenese accent, as LCC...also, I can show you, let’s say in my province of Lampung, they also have a local content about Lampungese, the students learn about the Lampung language even starting from elementary school and until senior high school, and this is what proves for us as a really local content, because each province will be different local content especially about language, in Banten that would be Sundanese language, and Javanese language with Bantenese accent...They have Lampung language included as local content curriculum...Yes, and preserved and taught as local content...”

Local languages are often included as local content curriculum courses, more commonly at the elementary level, but at the secondary level, foreign languages are included. Again, decisions about the content and development of LCC courses are made at the school level, under the supervision of school principals and teachers working as an LCC team. The primary purpose of the LCC curriculum courses is to provide students with stimulating and interesting subjects that will increase participation and retention of students, and not primarily to emphasize the “local.” Rather, many LCC courses I observed seemed to be what might be considered “elective” subjects, not necessarily focused on preservation of local customs and practices, but in response to global influences (as with languages) and practical economic and vocational subjects.



Enong is also very knowledgeable about the language situation in Indonesia in general, and as a subject in schools. She stated, “As I mentioned English and Mandarin Chinese were offered at my schools... What is important for the issue of language inclusion in the local content curriculum is that local languages and dialects are not necessarily included. Especially at the junior and senior secondary levels, foreign languages may be taught in the LCC courses. The inclusion of foreign languages as LCC subjects reflects the resources of schools and the interests in students according to the LCC’s purposes.

Instructors’ and student-teachers’ enthusiastically expressed their views on the inclusion of diverse languages in schools related to LCC, mainly that it is helpful and beneficial to provide students with courses of all kinds, including local culture, crafts, industry and language that the students themselves want to take and study. These lecturers and students are very interested in learning English, and highly motivated in their studies, but they also shared a love for learning language in general, and unanimously agreed that learning local languages should be encouraged, as well as studying other foreign languages. Local languages are studied as part of the LCC, especially in elementary schools, the study of local languages such as Javanese, Sundanese, or Lampungese seems to give way to the study of foreign languages at the junior and senior high school levels. Because there is no formal training of LCC teachers in higher education teacher preparation programs such as UB, I sought access to five senior high schools in *Serang* and a rural village in Banten to learn more about LCC course design and implementation.

Local content curriculum at five senior high schools in Banten

A woman named *Ibu* Etin, who was an English teacher, offered to assist me with my study, and was extremely helpful in acquainting me with the principals and teachers at two of the largest and oldest public, academic senior high schools, and two large vocational-academic senior high schools in *Serang*. After writing formal letters requesting a visit to the schools, I met with each principal and offered my services as a workshop facilitator, and later lead workshops with teachers on effective English instruction and incorporation of English within other subjects. The principals were very supportive of my study, granting me permission to visit the English and LCC classes. I interviewed English and Local Content Curriculum teachers at these schools and visited and observed in many English and LCC classes.

The campuses and classrooms of all five of the senior high schools visited are very clean, well-maintained, and very beautifully landscaped. The rural high school was exceptionally beautiful, situated near a river and surrounded by rice fields. Classrooms in some of the four city high schools were air-conditioned, which was unusual. Examining the actual development, design, and implementation of LCC at the secondary school level, I interviewed teachers and observed classes at the five senior secondary schools, and found that for all LCC classes choices are made at the school level according to the expressed needs and desires of the students, the resources available (especially the knowledge and abilities of the prospective teacher) and the judgment of the principal, administrators and teachers involved with creating the class.



Selection and development of local content curriculum at the school level

Senior high school number 1 (*SMAN 1*) is in the center of *Serang*, and it is *Serang*'s oldest high school. I interviewed and observed *Ibu Aiyda*, an English teacher at Senior High School 1 and graduate of UB. Her senior English teacher, *Ibu Ann*, and then was introduced to Jon, an LCC teacher on April 28, 2009. Jon was very enthusiastic to meet *Etin* and I, and was passionate about teaching the LCC classes. He spoke some English, and *Etin* translated all he said in Indonesian. Jon is not only Geography and Art teacher by training, but also has backgrounds in "*Tamanan*," or horticulture, and electronics. Jon explained that *SMAN 1* offered LCC courses in gardening/landscaping/horticulture in 10th grade, and "*Elektro*" in 11th grade, and which was about all kinds of machines and appliances. Jon said that he was selected to teach these courses as part of the school LCC committee, with the principal's support, in response to students' interests. I asked Jon if he could explain exactly why these two courses were chosen and developed, and he said,

"This city, *Serang*, and province of Banten, and the whole country of Indonesia, has a rich tradition of gardening. This class first started in 2002, and was included regularly since 2006. The country also has a need for knowledge and improvement of technology... How things work, especially all kinds of practical machines and electricity. So, *Elektro* was started in 2008." *Etin* continued to translate Jon's understanding: "They say 'Lokal' because it is developed locally, like '*Tamanan*' (gardening) at *SMA 1*. And other senior high schools might have different Muaton Lokal, depending on teachers that they have and the needs of their students. Maybe like *Dagum-dagum*, the traditional music."

Jon actually extended the rationale for these classes to the city's, province's and nation's past traditions and their future needs providing practical and enjoyable subjects for the students that appeals to their interests. These are the core purposes of the LCC courses. I asked if Jon could describe how the curriculum for the two classes was created, and he said,

"The curriculum was partly based on *Depdiknas* "Life Skills" courses curriculum, but finally designed by the school team. The LCC committee also was thinking of the enjoyable and active learning lessons, in order to make the students feel free from the hard subjects. They like to study *Mulok*, the students; because it is skills... it's practical and fun... I like teaching these *Mulok* classes, and the students like taking them. Did you see the gardening in the (school) entrance? And in front of this class? Before they make this garden, they must make a plan... like a picture. Yes, they have to plan first, and get materials. For "*Elektro*" class, they also must make plans. We do the wiring for the whole house, drawings and diagrams, and for appliances and electronics... And we use the electronic symbols, like for the electric currents..."

Jon and the LCC committee's consideration of "enjoyable" and "active learning" lessons, overlaps the goals of the LCC with the *PAKEM* initiative for methods and instruction



demonstrating a strong understanding of the intentions and purposes of the decentralization reforms examined in this study. In the classes I visited I witnessed examples of these plans, drawings and diagrams, and they were impressive. The students were not simply relaxing and having fun in the classes; they were enthusiastic and working hard on their projects. Jon proudly offered me lesson plans and sample projects his students had done, and insisted I take some with me as artifacts. He showed us an experiment his students had done using a chemical to check the purity of water, and then invited us to the *elektro* class. On the way, Jon explained to *Etin* and I that other LCC courses were offered in foreign languages such as English, German, Japanese, and Mandarin, depending on the available teachers' abilities to teach them. In this sense, the LCC seems a venue for playing out local responses to global influences. I asked about computer or internet classes for the LCC and he said there is a separate IT course that students can take for this.

The *elektro* class discussion was entirely in Indonesian, but the teacher began by saying "Hello Mr. Mike. Welcome to our class." Pak Jon stood by in the front of the class guiding the questioning. Two male students were giving a Powerpoint presentation before a class full of students on the design and operation of a washing machine. Students asked questions about what to do if certain parts, like the belt, broke down, and what to do if the washer was not balanced and began shaking. A student asked whether hot or cold water should be used, and the students said they did not know, there was no difference. Pak Jon explained that clothes could be soaked first in hot water and that cool water was better if you are worried about colors bleeding. Pak Jon later explained that the students enjoy this class, because it's very practical and different than the other classes, and that's why it is offered. This is consistent with the LCC goals of relevance and interest for the students. Jon said that in this *Elektro* class, students talk about the over-all components of many common household machines, their power supply, purpose, design and function, and move from theory to actually taking apart the machines in class. They progress toward actually coming up with ideas for new products. Jon said, "This does not interfere with the other subjects. There is no homework in the MULOK course, and it's good for entrepreneurs, and innovative students to be able to create... they don't feel bored..." Stimulating interest and relevance for the students in the LCC courses is the second goal of the LCC policy, and the practical and relevant skills learned in this course directly related to the students' everyday lives in *Serang*, goals two and three of the policy.

SMK 1 and 2 are urban, located in downtown *Serang*, and academic-vocational senior high schools. Senior high school 2 (*SMK* 2) *Serang* is attended primarily by boys and in addition to academic courses offers programs in operation of large industrial machines and motors. There were also electronics and computer LCC courses, as with the traditional industrial arts curriculum. The senior high school 1 (*SMK* 1) *Serang* is attended primarily by girls and besides academic courses offers programs in Hotel and Restaurant Hospitality and Information Technology. I observed classes in which students had prepared restaurant menus and were role-playing at serving a couple in a restaurant. These lessons were entirely in Indonesian, and incorporated numerous elements of the *PAKEM* characteristics. The teacher explained to me that she had extensive training and background in this field, and offered to teach the classes as part of the LCC. She also said that many students specifically come to *SMK* 1 because they offer this program, and the school helps to place students in



internships and jobs at restaurants and hotels in *Serang*. During my stay at the Hotel *Taman Sari* there were four female students who served training internships there. These vocational skills are of great interest to the students studying at *SMK 1*, thus are consistent with goals one, two and three of LCC policy. The skills are also valuable to the students in the particular contexts of their city, and similar large cities in Indonesia, where they can be used in work and daily life, “creating tighter links between curricula and local conditions.”

The senior high school 1 (*SMK 1 Pandalayan*) is about 2 hours southeast of *Serang*, and west of Rangkasbitung, in a very rural region of Banten. The school sits to the east of a major river, and is surrounded by expansive fields and padis. I visited and inquired about the LCC classes here. The main LCC class deals with the making of shoes and sandals. The teacher of this course had experience designing and making shoes and sandals, and as with the other schools’ LCC programs, the principal said the students there really enjoyed this class because it is considered “fun” and a break from the standard academic courses. The principal also showed me a large and carefully tended fish pond on the edge of the campus that students cared for as part of the LCC curriculum. The principal and students took a great deal of pride in the pond, and the footwear course as LCC courses, consistent with all five of the broad goals and purposes of the LCC policy.

Senior high school 2 was the second major public senior high school I visited (*SMAN 2*, or *Dua Sekolah Menenga Atas Negeri*) on the south side of *Serang*. *SMAN 2* is on a major highway going south from *Serang* to the city of *Pandeglang*. It sits on a hillside facing wide-open rice fields, and is expansive and beautifully laid out—also in a modified rectangular manner. *Ibu Ica* is an English teacher here and I visited her classes many times. Biotechnology, as an extension of Biology, Arabic, Japanese and English are also offered as LCC subjects, and *Pak Kato* teaches English Conversation as an LCC course. When I asked if we could discuss his LCC course, *Pak Kato* replied, “Oh, *Mulok*, you mean?” LCC is an English acronym, and the LCC teachers I met with all refer to LCC as “*Muaton Lokal*,” or “*Mulok*.” English Conversation is taught as an LCC course at *SMA 2* in both the “Social” and “Science” programs in the eleventh grade, with *Kato* teaching all students in the Social program and another English teacher, *Ibu Li*, teaching students in the Science concentration. *Kato* said English Conversation was developed as an LCC course since the previous school year, and when I asked who created the course, he replied,

“It’s not really ‘who’ created it, but it’s the needs of the school... We, all of the *Mulok* team agreed. We used to have ‘English Day,’ but it was hard to manage all of the students with only two teachers. *Ibu Li* and me proposed English Conversation as a *Mulok* subject because *Mulok* must be different than the original English class. English class is for the sake of evaluation, (as with the national EPTANAS test) and English *Mulok* is more for the skills. That’s the difference. So, I selected the material about something needed for daily life and communication... What we need, that’s the key. Like going to eat, how you have to pay, how to give suggestions, how to invite people, etc...”

I asked about the *Mulok* team’s collaboration in actually deciding which subjects to include as LCC courses, and *Kato* said the present LCC courses were the one’s selected and approved



by the team and the school principal, according to the student's "needs" and teachers' areas of expertise. "It's based on the school conditions," he said. He further explained that pilot courses for tenth grade were "*Sekolah Kategori Mandiri*," relating to schools and national independence, and reflecting both national and international influences on the development of LCC courses at *SMA 2*. I asked if students have a choice of which LCC course they would take in each grade, and he said "No, all students must take all three of the *Mulok* courses (in eleventh grade, for example) in a formal schedule" that rotates during the school year. I asked why *Pak Kato* wanted to teach the LCC (*Mulok*) course and he again said "It's based on the school's need." I asked why *Pak Kato* would want to volunteer to take on the extra work of developing and teaching English Conversation as an LCC course, and he explained that it's not really very much additional work. "I have been a civil servant teacher, so it is compulsory," he said, meaning that he must be teaching a certain number of classes at the school, and the LCC English Conversation classes he teaches take the place of the regular English classes required for the students.

He and *Ibu Li*, "consulted and discussed" together in developing the curriculum and materials for the LCC English Conversation course. "We give the concepts, then have students practice, and then we test, or evaluate, the students speaking and listening skills... The students' skill level really influences the methods... Some students really like it, and it does also help for the national exam (in English). I've also found that female students seem to like it more..." He explained to me that the students are of very different abilities. Some have very limited English proficiency, but like the additional help of English as an LCC course, because they're required to take it as a regular course, and this gives them more practice. Other students who are more proficient in English like to take it as an LCC class because it is not that difficult and they enjoy it.

In *Pak Kato's* English Conversation classes, I observed that the materials were developed independently, with sections from textbooks, and the students were engaged in small group, pairs, and class-wide practice of the basic communicative skills in English. The selection of English as an LCC course is consistent with goals one and two of the LCC, to "delegate authority to localities," empowering teachers and administrators at the school level in choosing a subject that students would have an interest in taking. It is unclear how goal three of the LCC, to "create tighter links between curricula and local conditions," is served by including English as an LCC course. This shows that the five broad goals of the LCC may be potentially inconsistent, and must be negotiated at the local level. English as a foreign language, which I've proposed to represent "global" influences, also (potentially) contributes to the students' performance on the national exam taken in the twelfth grade, showing that LCC courses can be selected and developed by schools in response to global and national influences.

The LCC goals and practice: Comparing this study with Bjork's

Although local content curriculum is neither a major nor a course within the *FKIP* teacher training program, the English program lecturers and students are all familiar with the LCC as a subject, its origin and purpose. They also are aware that the course is developed at the school level, depending on the needs and interests of the students and the resources



available to each particular school, especially in regards to teacher expertise. The LCC classes I visited in the five senior high schools also reflected the understandings of lecturers and students at the *UB FKIP* program, as the courses were designed and developed by school teams lead by the school principal, and utilizing resources available and appealing to the interests of the students. The teachers interviewed and observed also were well aware of the purpose of the LCC classes, to retain and engage students, and to give them subjects that are interesting, enjoyable, and relevant to their lives.

My findings at the *UB FKIP*, and from the senior high schools, substantiate and differ from Bjork's findings about the implementation of LCC in public schools. Compared with Bjork's (2005) junior secondary public school teachers in East Java, the UB lecturers' well-informed knowledge of the CBC's and LCC development and adaptable teaching styles depict a completely different outlook for Indonesian education, and the teachers in the senior high schools were well-informed on the purpose of the LCC and had developed interesting LCC courses. The administrators and teachers coordinating the LCC at the senior high schools had developed and implemented these courses over the past four to five years, and were quite satisfied with these classes and students seemed to enjoy them very much. These differences from Bjork's (2005) findings may be related to the difference in time since the initiation of the LCC, and the difference of the location of these schools between the cities of *Malang* and *Serang*, and their proximity to Jakarta, and also to the difference between junior and senior high schools. Bjork (2005) found that private schools in *Malang* were more proactive and concerned with students' learning, and less affected by ritual practices and authority relationships. The faculty of the senior high schools I visited were appreciative of ritual customs like the morning flag ceremonies, and the formality of relationships, yet were also concerned with high-quality teaching and students' learning.

The goals of the LCC reflected in practice

Recalling the five "broad goals of the LCC" (Bjork, 2005, pp. 30-37) the first, "to delegate authority to localities," is clearly taking place in the schools observed; principals and teachers worked together to design and implement LCC courses. The second, "to reduce the percentage of student exiting the system/provide vocational training" is difficult to measure, but some courses observed reflect both vocational and local attributes. The third, "to create tighter links between curricula and local conditions," is occurring in the sense of local industry, vocations and traditions, such as with the horticulture and fish pond courses. The fourth, "to increase community involvement in the schools" was not directly examined in this study. The fifth goal, "to improve the instructional process," is a broad goal that, in the stimulating of interest in school, integrating active learning methods, and in some cases supporting national curriculum objectives, is supported by these LCC courses. None of the broad goals of the LCC policy explicitly state that a goal is to represent local traditions like art, crafts, architecture, theater, fashion, music, and history in local content curriculum courses, but rather, to pursue the five broad goals. The purpose is to select and develop courses at the school level with subject matter more relevant to students in their regions and localities, promoting the retention and progress of students. The selection of topics and development of curriculum depends upon the types of resources and industry of the



community and occurs at the school level, and in the senior high schools also included courses in foreign languages including English, reflecting global influences upon the development of LCC curriculum.

The many reasons given by university lecturers and students, and high school teachers, showed that English does represent global influences and aspirations, while in many ways the local content curriculum represents localization not only through language and cultural offerings, but horticultural, mechanical, industrial, and business influences in the communities. How can English become a subject in a Local Content Curriculum course? Due to the characteristics and purposes of the LCC explained previously: Student interest and resources available at the school level, as decided upon by principals and school LCC committees. The LCC also represents cooperation and collaborative involvement between teachers, administrators and communities, and for the participants in this study, an awareness and desire for teacher autonomy and participation in the implementation of decentralization policies.

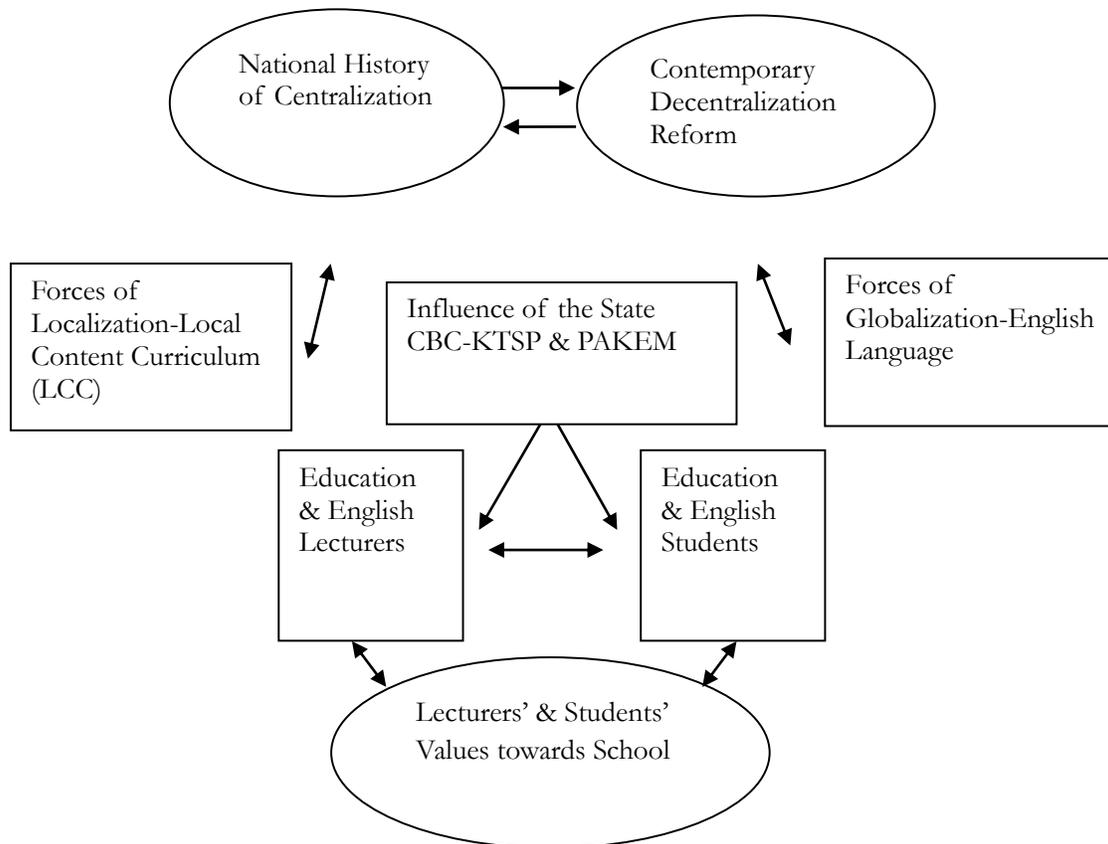
The LCC courses in these senior high schools reflect a mixture of local and global influences; however, in ways local desires are being shaped by global influences. It is not surprising that LCC courses in the *SMK* (academic-vocational) high schools supplement the fields and occupational trainings provided at these schools, and the fish pond and footwear course at the rural *SMA Pandalayan* also reflect local industries. The students in these classes also enjoyed taking them as a diversion from the regular academic classes. Foreign languages as LCC courses reflect global influences, and the interests of students and resources of the schools to include them. In the case of English, the LCC courses are also serving as supplemental to the required English classes, which are measured on the national *EBTANAS* test. In this way the influence of the state is, perhaps inadvertently, still present in the LCC curriculum. The main point is that the LCC courses are being autonomously developed by the school principals and teachers, according to available resources and students' interests. This is a major, positive conclusion of this study.

Local content curriculum and decentralized education in Banten

LCC as a subject is not a specific major or minor area of studies at this *FKIP*; however, lecturers and students are very familiar with its many dimensions. English and LCC teachers in the senior high schools also were knowledgeable and proactively incorporating the national curriculum standards and active learning methods in classes. Global, state and local influences were all evident in the backgrounds and dispositions of the lecturers, teachers and students, but in a complementary as opposed to competing way. Local culture, values, and ways of interrelating socially—the “local identity” of the people of Banten, has developed over centuries in western Java. The authoritarian central government's impact on Indonesian society endured from 1945 to 1998 under Presidents Sukarno and Suharto. Democratization and decentralization of education are ambitious national goals, and the state's reform policies explored in this study have great potential to improve the quality of education in Indonesia. This study explores how educators are responding at the local level as the state devolves more centralized control, and how global, state and local influences are affecting their understandings and approaches toward teaching.



Figure 3. *Proposed theoretical model for teacher training in the context of educational decentralization in Indonesia in response to Bjork*



Knowledge and instruction of the local content curriculum

The local content curriculum (LCC) as a subject in elementary and public schools represents one aspect of Indonesia's commitment to decentralization and the localization of educational methods and curricula for communities and schools. The purpose is to make national *CBC-KTSP* standards and subject matter more relevant to students in their regions and localities, promoting the retention and progress of students from grade level to grade level. The LCC is a separate subject area and course, and in some cases, especially at the elementary level students as reported by lecturers, students and teachers, students learn facts and concepts derived from their communities, like art, crafts, architecture, theater and fashion, history, geography, science and linguistics, as with local dialects. The selection of topics and development of curriculum depends upon the types of resources and industry of the community and occurs at the school level.



Although local content curriculum is neither a major nor a course within the *FKIP* teacher training program, the English program lecturers and students are unanimously familiar with the LCC as a subject, its origin, purpose, development, design, and implementation. They also are aware that the course is developed at the school level, depending on the needs and interests of the students and the resources available to each particular school, especially in regards to teacher expertise. The LCC was discussed in the Curriculum course and courses directly related to second-language teaching. Because the LCC is not significantly represented in the UB *FKIP* teacher training program, I felt it was necessary to visit public high schools in Banten. Examining the actual development, design, and implementation of LCC at the secondary school level, I found that all LCC classes choices are made at the school level according to the expressed needs and desires of the students, the resources available (especially the knowledge and abilities of the prospective teacher) and the judgment of the principal, administrators and teachers involved with creating the class. The many manifestations of LCC classes in the five high schools shows that, for this case, English is more commonly included as a LCC subject than local languages such as Javanese or Sundanese, along with other foreign languages. Local languages are more likely to be included in elementary schools, and local arts, crafts, sports and traditions were reported to be included in LCC courses in elementary schools. However, in the senior high schools I observed local customs were represented only in the form of means of earning a livelihood, such as in the LCC courses at the rural senior high school with horticulture, the fish pond and shoe and sandal-making classes. LCC classes I observed such as horticulture-landscaping and the fish pond are local traditions as well as means of earning of living. LCC courses in the urban senior high schools focused more on foreign languages and vocational/elective subjects, reflecting more global influences. English as a required subject and as a LCC course in some schools is a unifying common language within the nation, as well as internationally.

The LCC goals and practice: Comparing and contrasting and Bjork's study II

My findings at the UB *FKIP*, and from the senior high schools, substantiate and differ from Bjork's findings. Compared with Bjork's (2005) junior secondary public school teachers in East Java during the 1990's, the UB lecturers' well-informed knowledge of the *CBC-KTSP*, *PAKEM* active learning methods, and LCC development and adaptable teaching styles depict a completely different outlook for Indonesian education. Bjork (2005) concluded that

“Indonesia's long history of top-down authority structures, failed experiments with democratic rule, economic uncertainty, and emphasis on the schools' obligation to support national integration are preventing individuals at all levels of the system from altering their behavior. Teachers, in particular, are choosing not to adopt the role of the autonomous educator that government officials have designed for them. These influences, more than technical factors highlighted in macro assessments of the LCC, have impeded a redistribution of authority to the local level” (2005, p. 174).



Beyond the UB FKIP program, I found that the administrators and teachers coordinating the LCC at the senior high schools had developed and implemented these courses over four to five years, and were quite satisfied with these classes and students seemed to enjoy them very much. These differences from Bjork's (2005) findings may be related to the difference in time since the initiation of the LCC, which had just begun in the mid-nineties during Bjork's (2005) study, and to the difference of the location of these schools between the cities of *Malang* and *Serang*, and their proximity to Jakarta, and also to the difference between junior and senior high schools. Although changes in behaviors and practices require changes in training and culture, I believe changes have been occurring over the past decade. Bjork (2005) found that private schools in Malang were more proactive and concerned with students' learning, and less affected by ritual practices and authority relationships. The faculty of the senior high schools I visited were appreciative of customs like the morning flag ceremonies, and the formality of relationships, yet were also concerned with high-quality teaching and students' learning.

Hundreds of local languages and dialects are spoken throughout Indonesia, and in Banten the main local languages are Sundanese and Javanese. Local languages are taught in some schools as part of the LCC curriculum. Both local-language instruction, at the elementary level, and English instruction are incorporated into the LCC, and English is required in the junior and senior secondary schools I visited. All participants exhibited an inherent pride and appreciation for their local languages and traditions, and in some cases students did not fluently speak Indonesian languages other than the national language. It is not surprising that the English lecturers, students and teachers expressed a proclivity for learning English; however I did not interview *Bahasa Indonesia* teachers, or teachers and students of other foreign languages. In some cases, English, Arabic, German, Chinese, Japanese, and other foreign languages are incorporated at Local Content Curriculum classes. This is both a limitation and would be an excellent area for future research. The many reasons given by university lecturers and students, and high school teachers, showed that English does represent global influences and aspirations, while in many ways the local content curriculum represents localization not only through language and cultural offerings, but horticultural, mechanical, industrial, and business influences in the communities. How can English become a subject in a local content curriculum course? Due to the characteristics and purposes of the LCC explained previously: Student interest and resources available at the school level, as decided upon by principals and school LCC committees. The LCC also represents cooperation and collaborative involvement between teachers, administrators and communities, and for the participants in this study, an awareness and desire for teacher autonomy and participation in the implementation of decentralization policies.

Conclusion and Implications

The lecturers, students, and teachers in this study demonstrated attitudes and actions that are positive and enthusiastic about the dialectal interplay between global and local influences, in negotiating local-state-global tensions in implementing the local content curriculum. The data collected and analyzed through interviews, field work observations on



campus and in classrooms, and artifacts (student work, for example) was triangulated to ensure qualitative validity and reliability. The lecturers, students and teachers expressed and showed positive perceptions of and progressive adaptation to the integration of the CBC's for the local content curriculum in the UB *FKIP* teacher training program and senior high schools. The forces of traditional ways of teaching and the forces of globalization are in a constant flux of transformation and simultaneously contribute to the maintenance and transformations of established practices into new practices for implementing decentralization of education policies as manifested in the LCC. If traditional patterns of behavior reflecting deference to authority and social-professional hierarchy are evident, then these participants are channeling those attitudes and behaviors to comply with the expectations accompanying the LCC educational policy examined in this study.

If advocates of decentralization policy assume greater local autonomy promotes increased responsiveness to local needs, how can we predict what those local needs and preferences are? Examination of Local Content Curriculum subjects at the senior high schools revealed locally-determined preferences and globally-determined preferences, and showed both local and global influences on teachers as they respond to decentralization reforms in education, yet it seems that for these lecturers, teachers and students of English global influences are "filling the gaps" left with less government control, and through educational borrowing global pedagogical theory and research has caused a degree of convergence in the implementation of decentralization policies. Local needs are central to the implementation of the through integration of active learning methods and development of LCC courses, and they are determined at the school level, with collaboration of city and provincial education offices and colleges and universities. Lecturers, students' and teachers' values toward learning and teaching are simultaneously adapting between highly-centralized school cultures remaining from the past and contemporary decentralization reforms (Figure 3). I surmise the degrees of progress vary greatly from urban to rural schools, and among the different levels of schooling. The lecturers, teachers, administrators and students I worked with at UB and in Banten's senior high schools have made great progress in the implementation of educational policy reforms. John said,

"The latest improvements are changing the paradigm...the old paradigm of teaching... the new regulations of government are improving salaries and compensation, and ask to improve the competence and qualifications for all teachers...like from a study background of *S1* to *S2*... Since 2001 teachers in Banten...with improved salaries from government, more autonomy, will do more for the welfare and quality of teachers...it is more possible to respond more accurately from a local level...and more responsible to local schools and students..."

The teachers and lecturers all demonstrated and modeled personal and collective efficacy, both important, and essential, in the exercise of human agency (Bandura, 1995). Furthermore, the history of centralized government and adherence to authority make the nurturance of autonomous behavior complicated, but not impossible. Bandura (1995) explains how, depending on established social beliefs and patterns, personal and collective interests must be continuously balanced under strong leadership and a sense of social



solidarity and purpose. In more collectivist societies where norms of cooperation and compliance with authority structures prevail, personal interests can be encouraged and directed toward the attainment of personal and collective goals.

Asian communitarianism is characterized by community-oriented values such as cooperation, maintenance of group harmony, cooperation, and a desire to “save face” in awkward situations (Tan & Ng, 2007; Zialcita, 1999). The LCC teachers demonstrated these attributes and “Asian communitarianism” in their teaching approaches, and the students learn these dispositions for their own study and for teaching younger students that I observed. Students show dispositions in and out of class that are more and less passive and assertive, but all students showed independence and a willingness to work hard. Many lecturers, teacher and students were familiar with the LCC curriculum due to their own educational experiences. Currently at the University of Banten; however, the integration of the components of decentralization examined in this study is extensive, relevant and vibrant. While state influence continues in the overall structure of the school system and the mandating of decentralization policies, global influences are having a significant impact on the lecturers, students and teachers in this study, while local concerns, except insofar as they relate to responding to opportunities created, or perceived to be created, by globalization remain intact and provide a cultural foundation in Bantenese society and schooling.

The major challenge facing Indonesian education is the need for thousands of well-qualified teachers, including upgrading the qualifications and abilities of current teachers. Anen (1992), Bjork (2005), Sadiman (2006), Utomo (2005) and others recommend teacher training and incentives to improve teacher quality and instruction for the implementation of the CBC, like that of the LCC, but recognize there are deeper issues concerning past social norms and expectations. As changing people’s knowledge, attitudes and practices takes time, it is not surprising that evidence of proactive responses to policies beginning mainly in 2001 have taken time to observe. Evidence from this study showed that there was extensive cooperation and collaboration between individuals and institutions at all levels within Banten province’s education system. Cooperation and collaboration often extend beyond provincial boundaries to the national level.

Finally, for recommendations and more on further research an important approach to understanding responses to educational decentralization that stems directly from the literature review would address fiscal control and management issues, such as the allotment of funds from the national and provincial level, to the school level, to better understand if fiscal and territorial devolution has resulted in greater local control of resources for schools and teachers, and how that control is working out. This could also be accompanied by research in the use of incentives such as compensation, job security and status since the era of decentralization reforms has begun, and asking how, if at all, things have changed and if these changes have an effect on teacher behaviors.

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