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Local-Based Content to Improve EFL Students' English Achievement: A Systematic Review

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Abstract
The study carries out a systematic literature review to collect evidence and drew a holistic picture of the effectiveness of local-based content in the EFL materials on learners' reading, listening, writing, and speaking skills. The systematic review covered several databases including EBSCO and Google Scholar as well as leading publishers such as Emerald. The study adopts systematic search, analysis, and synthesis of published studies and research results relevant to the local-based content functioning in EFL materials were extracted. Specifically, the review extracted 49 peer-reviewed articles published between 2012 and 2020. The careful analysis of these articles revealed a medium to large effect of local-based content on reading and listening skills. However, there is unclear evidence of its effect on writing and speaking skills.
Keywords: EFL Materials, Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, Local-based Contents, Systematic Review

Introduction
        Theoretical consideration and global practical experiences establish the English language as an international language that non-native speakers utilized more commonly in multilingual communications than native speakers do (Vodopija-Krstanovic & Marinac, 2019; McKay, 2018). Due to this fact, learning English manifest a substantial need to communicate globally and progress professionally. Accordingly, English is educated in schools and universities and for young adults as a foreign language (EFL) or second language (Mahmud, 2014). Further, it extends to become the medium of educating and instructing in various settings. Despite that, EFL learners, particularly those who are in the earliest stages of language learning, find and face difficulties to understand spoken language and comprehending written texts (Hussein & Albakri, 2019; Namaziandost et al., 2019; Kara et al., 2017). Mentioning the most common challenges and difficulties is categorized as a factor of text as an external factor juxtaposed to learners' background knowledge as an internal factor (Namaziandost et al., 2019).

The vast surge of literature stressed the effect of curriculum contents (topic) on EFL learners' achievements (Jovari, 2020; Namaziandost et al., 2020; Kim & Kang, 2017); since achievement involves interaction between text and prior knowledge of the learner as supported by the constructivism theory. Piaget (as cited in Agustina et al., 2018) developed the constructivism theory, which established that learners comprehend and acquire information from text based on the mental and intellectual reciprocal processing between text and their background knowledge (Namaziandost et al., 2020; Zashchitina & Moysyak, 2017). Furthermore, there is an argument that information can be easily stored and retrieved if the information is related to previous knowledge, such as learners' background (Jovari, 2020; Kim & Kang, 2017). Agreed with Ratminingsih et al. (2020) mentioned that general or sufficient knowledge-related content is associated with EFL mastering skills coinciding with the cognitive norm of language learning. In sum, both social and local factors affect English language learning regularly (Hussein & Albakri, 2019; Kara et al., 2017).

With this in mind, local-based content is assumed to influence EFL learning and achievements since the learners have an enriched prior knowledge of the local content. Consensus with the last running perspectives of 'global thinking, local teaching' in language pedagogy, which sought the effect of familiarity and meaningfulness of foreign language corpus on language acquisition and learners' capacities (Fu, 2018; Kanoksilapatham & Suranakkharin, 2018). Succinctly, adopting local-based content for English foreign language learners can be pivotal for acquiring the English language. Thus, the present study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- To construct a holistic review of operationalization and activating of local-based content to contextualize English language controversies.
- To derive an understanding of local-based content that fosters achievements of EFL learners.
- To unravel the consensus and controversies on teaching English as a foreign language based on local content.

Local-based contents are an interesting recent development of EFL textbooks and an approach to designing interactive content for EFL. In context, this study will reveal a crucial aspect of how EFL contents can be contextualized and induce new ideas for EFL textbooks' contents, which will have significant pedagogical implications for functioning felicitous content-related local contents for EFL learners to promote their English language acquisition.

Background: Local-Based Contents

EFL learning contents are substantial and influential elements and factors of language acquisition. Hence, some authors describe EFL materials as a "crucial feature" of learning or tutoring language effectively (Rizaldy, 2018). The foremost aspect related to EFL learning materials is that society cannot be severed from EFL contents, which imputed to the myth of language and society as a two-sided coin. In supporting the myth, society and language are inseparable and shared a reciprocal association; since language is both a way to utterance society and a transforming tool for society (Erlina et al., 2018). In other words, the only way to express and communicate within society is by language.

Local-based content is about developing authentic language material that involves local topics and subjects accords the material will be contextual and conversant to learners' society in the hope to enhance their comprehension and support their retrieving abilities (Kusuma,

2016). Furthermore, the familiar content term is a synonym of local-based content. It is defined as a text that involves various facets of the unique learners' society, such as the lifestyle including dressing, food, artefacts, and so forth (Sheridan et al., 2016). However, we do not inherit a specific society definition within the study because, across literature and researchers, there are no consensuses to one unified interpretation, but it will be considered across the review.

There is a controversy of perspectives on using local-based content in teaching English as a foreign language and using local-based content in EFL is still doubtful and researchable. The first perception advances the significance of using "target language contents in the EFL context (Risager, 2018; Hidayati & Tarjana, 2017). The second perspective recommends teaching English in a "local-free" context. The third perception advocates teaching "local contents" in the EFL context rather than the "target language content" proposed by the first perception (Yassi, 2017). Meanwhile, the last perception suggests an equilibrium text based on both target and local contents language (Erlina, et al., 2018; Syahri & Susanti, 2016). The study is in line with the third perception of using local-based content in the EFL context because of the recent prevalence of learning English for recruiting purposes rather than living, studying, or recruiting abroad. Further, EFL learners are not interested in the target language contents (i.e. Western society) and differences between vast western societies. These local familiar contexts make students worthlessly struggle with language acquisition and comprehension for nothing.

Meanwhile, local-based contents yield learners to engage effectively with learning, be motivated to learn continuously, comprehend texts sufficiently, and reflect their society proudly. It is worth mentioning that EFL learners are also motivated to communicate their ideas to others, and if they acquire a language, they will smoothly and conveniently procure the target content aspect of the language. Local-based context integration in the EFL materials may provide numerous pedagogical benefits and strengthen learners. Thus, the current study investigated what previous empirical evidence reported the benefit of local-based materials for enhancing learning English as a foreign language.

Method

The study aims to create a holistic review of functioning local-based contents in teaching English as a foreign language and demonstrates considerably evidence-based practices to reveal the benefits and advantages of such design on learner achievements. Thus, the study adopts a systematic review approach, which implies systematic searching, analysis, and synthesizing continuum of published studies and research results relevant to the local-based contents functioning in EFL materials. Both inclusion and exclusion protocols implemented through search and investigation are illustrated next. The process of a systematic review is based on numerous regular procedures, namely securing transparent steps through searching and reviewing process based on consented definitions, search terms, comprises effort to reduce searching bias to minimum standards, and collecting and synthesizing clear gist of evidence examined in a reliability and validity context.

Review Protocol

The researcher targets different electronic databases, including the EBSCO database, ERIC (Education Resources Information Center), Emerald, and Google Scholar (see Table 1).

Table 1
Search Terms Applied to Targeted Electronic Database

Keyword	Local-Based content	EFL students	Content	Achievement
Synonyms	Local contents	English as a foreign language	Textbooks	Speaking
	Familiar contents	EFL Learners	Materials	Oral presentation
	Familiar	Students	storybook	Engagement
		Pupils	Tasks	Writing
		English in Schools	Activities	Reading
		English program	CD	Listening
			Videos	Self-efficacy
			folktale	Anxiety
			Lore	Motivation
			Wisdom	

Inclusion criteria are based on several standards. First, the researcher includes studies that have included one term of each key phrase of research as listed below (see Table 1). Second, the studies published between 2012 and 2021 are counted. Third, peer-reviewed or conference proceeding articles were included. Fourth: the study's methods are either case study, qualitative or quantitative analytical descriptive, longitude studies, or experimental results. Fifth: there is no constraint regarding the gender, age, or education level of participants. Sixth: Only articles published in the English language were included. Seventh: only full text and open access articles were included.

Exclusion criteria are Any studies published before 2012. Any study that has one research term only, two, or three phrases. Any article, which is a systematic review article, meta-analysis, or book chapter was excluded. Any dissertation, master thesis, reports, and unpublished research were discarded. Any studies that did not provide empirical evidence were taken-off. Studies arguing teaching society-based instruction, content-based language teaching, or teaching local content practices were removed, too. Studies-based materials contents analysis or studies-based materials design and development purposes were also taken off. Research on society awareness was also excluded. Studies of English as a second language, English for academic purposes (EAP), and English for specific purposes (ESP) were excluded, too.

It is worth mentioning that all doctoral and master dissertations were excluded from selecting studies since the review only adheres to peer-reviewed studies. However, the findings of an academic dissertation may not demonstrate reliability and validity codes of research, such as in peer-reviewed journals and scholarly journals. Two phases were adopted to refine the selection outcomes. Tire 1: the selection and segregation criteria apply to studies or research titles only. Tier 2: the researcher examines the abstract and keywords of all articles selected in tier 1. Accordingly, the researcher guarantees the reliability of the inclusion approach. Furthermore, to increase results reliabilities, the researcher applies different searching techniques, such as using the thesaurus and advanced research available tools.

The research shared the inclusion and exclusion criteria with the alternative researcher to validate extraction process reliability. Both researchers extracted and inserted evoked studies in different excel sheets. Finally, the agreement degree between the results of the two researchers was 95% that corresponding to a high approved agreement level. Both researchers were settling the difference and discrepancies across studies and research,

yielding 57 articles. However, it is surprisingly found multiple identical articles with different titles for the same authors were published in different journals; since the results and contents are identical either the title is varied, thus, only one identical was considered. Furthermore, the review extracted two articles with different titles and authors, but have identical contents and results, both of them were considered due to variations in authors and publication years. Accordingly, the total number of articles was 49 articles.

Results
Description Data of Reviewed Articles
An overview of the articles over the electronic databases is described as shown in Table 2. The Emerald database is poorly represented relevant articles compared to both google scholar and the EBSCO database. However, even ERIC database is not represented in Table 2, it is more indexing frequent than Emerald since all articles extracted from the ERIC database are also indexed by Google Scholar as explaining the multiple database representation occurrences (6.1%). Further, the researchers' interests are approximately constant over the nine covered publishing years, which indicates the novelty and significance of the subjects, existing research gaps, and evidence lacking that advocates researchers to investigate further in the matter.

General Background and Characteristics of Articles
There is a necessity to describe article characteristics to grasp the effectiveness of using local content fostering English language acquisitions, particularly, studies design, targeted sample, materials used, script types (topics), and measurements adopted. Review results of the targeted articles illustrated by dependent variable scopes (i.e. achievement measurement), as succeeding. The current study considers language learning achievement as an advancement or acquisition of any language learning relevant skills such as reading; writing, speaking, and listing, or as achievement in any combination of several skills. Further, the psychological aspect of learning a language is also considered an achievement such as anxiety, self-efficacy, attitudes, and perceptions.

Table 2
Frequency Distribution of Articles by Databases and Publishing Years (n = 49)

		Frequency .	Per cent .
Database	EBSCO	9	18.4
	Google Scholar	36	73.5
	Emerald	1	2.0
	Multiple	3	6.1
	Total	**49**	**100.0**
Publishing Year .	2012	7	14.3
	2013	4	8.2
	2014	8	16.3
	2015	7	14.3
	2016	2	4.1
	2017	5	10.2
	2018	5	10.2
	2019	4	8.2
	2020	7	14.3
	Total	**49**	**100.0**

Reading Skills

Tables 3 and 4 show articles that assessed reading skills. Table 3 summarizes studies based experimental approach, while Table 4 presents studies with descriptive nature. The majority of articles concern reading skills rather than other language learning skills (n = 26; 35%). That is not surprising since reading is a receptive skill that students can engage in rather than listening, which is progressing without learner engagement, which is not right in reading. Furthermore, the first sense of material or content in the mind is always relevant to something written rather than something heard or seen. As noticed some studies assessed reading skills as well as learners' engagements such as (Nafissi et al., 2020; Sheridan et al., 2019). Local-based materials have a significant enhancing influence on reading skills. A majority of studies evaluated reading comprehension as the mature indicator of reading skills. Descriptive studies (e.g., Bensalah & Gueroudj, 2020; Nafissi et al., 2020; Khataee, 2018; Boadhar et al., 2015; Shirzadi, 2015; Sadeghi, 2014; Vahdany et al., 2014; Yousef et al., 2014; Rokni & Hajilari, 2013; Barati & Youhanaee, 2012; Boadhar, 2012; Li & Lai, 2012) established that the students who were taught using local materials exhibited enhancement in the reading comprehension and differences between the baseline and post comprehension levels.

The effect size of using local-based materials ranged from medium to large effect according to Cohen's d ($0.72 \leq d \leq 3.89$) (Alali et al., 2020; Ratminingsih et al., 2020). Similar to Eta-squared values driven by (Sheridan et al., 2019; 2019a; Mahmoudi & Mahmoudi, 2017) vary from 0.07 to 0.33, noting medium to large effect size (see Table 3). However, some studies further carried out the effect size of using local contents on different reading comprehension levels, such as literal, inference, and elaborative comprehensions. The effect size of local-based material on inference comprehension was medium to large ($\eta2$ = 0.07) (Tavakoli et al., 2012); d = 2.20; (Alali et al., 2020). Chen & Lai (2014) found that inferencing local is easier than inferencing unfamiliar content. Likewise, the effect on literal comprehension was medium effect $\eta2$ = 0.08 (Tavakoli et al., 2012) and large effect d = 1.42 (Alali et al., 2020). Alali et al (2020) further measured the effect size on evaluative comprehension and found a considerable effect of local-based contents on evaluative comprehension d = 2.27. Students discoursed that curiosity to read local contents is higher compared to other counterpart contents.

Table 3

Experimental Based Articles Assessed the Effect of Local-Based Content on Reading Comprehension (n = 24)

Article	Educational level	Regular settings	Materials	Topic	No. Participants	No. Group	Measurements	Results or Effect Size
(Ratminingsih et al., 2020)	6th grade (Elementary stage)	Yes	textbook	Narrative story "fable"	34	2 (Cont.=17; Exp:17)	Post-test Designed by authors	d =0.72 Med.
(Bensalah & Gueroudj, 2020)	1st-year university students	No	textbook	Culture	40	2 (Cont.=20; Exp:20)	Post-test Designed by authors	- Only descriptive statics, no inferential statistics were carried out - Statics Mean of the experimental group outscored the highest mean scores. Effect size: NA
(Nafissi et al., 2020)	university students	No	text	some topics accessible in all societies (e.g. food; ceremony).	160 (40 for each group)	4 (L1 group, L2 group, L1+L2, and L1+L2 with project-based learning	Reading section of the Michigan Test (standardized test)	- There is a considerable increase in reading performance of the L1 culture-oriented group from pre to post-scores. - But the study found that reading proficiency among three groups (L1, L2, L1+L2 culture oriented) is not significant and thus denies the effect of reading materials orientation on students' reading proficiency. Since all orientations have the same power of effectiveness.
(Alali et al., 2020)	Undergraduate university students	yes	textbook	local passages (customs, traditions, celebrations, and local practices)	38	1 group	reading comprehension –test (designed by authors)	Literal: d=1.42 (enormous effect size) inferential, : d= 2.20 (enormous effect size) evaluative d= 2.27 (considerable effect size) reading performance d= 3.89 (huge effect size)
(Sheridan et al., 2019)	2nd and 3rd-year university students	Yes	Newspaper articles	Local contents	72	2 (34; 44)	NGSLT (standardized test) Survey	Comprehension: η^2 =9%, 11%, and 16% *locally familiar articles had higher mean scores Vocabulary recall: η^2 =6% and 16% * local setting accounted for the higher mean vocabulary gains (better retentions)
(Sheridan et al., 2019 a)	University students	Yes	Newspaper	Local contents	102	2 group	Test (designed by author)	- Vocabulary recall: η^2 = 21%, 12%, and 10% for the sake of local contexts -Comprehension: η^2 = 7%,

(Khataee, 2018)	9-11 years (Elementary school students)	No	story	local	129	3 groups (nativized only, original + background; nativized and background)	comprehension test (designed by author)	Students in group three have greater scores due to the mixed nature of the local familiar text and activating background knowledge knowledgeable rath than only activating background neither exposing nativized contents.
(Karim & Nafissi, 2017)	university students	no	textbook	L1+L2 local text	64	2 (cont. + Exp)	Reading section of the Michigan Test (standardized test)	- there is no significant difference in proficiency gain scores due to material design, which indicates that both global and L1+L2 local contents have been successful increasing EFL students' reading proficiency levels. Reading proficiency $\eta^2 =$ 0.015 not sig.
(Mahmoudi & Mahmoudi, 2017)	13 and 18 years (primary and secondary school)	No	text	Festivals	86	2 proficiency groups (high and low)	two reading comprehension tests	Familiarity : $\eta^2 = 0.331$ Proficiency: $\eta^2 = 0.502$ found a larger effect size (Partial Eta Squared) for proficiency in comparison to topic familiarity thus "familiarity cannot override high levels of reading proficiency."
(Shirzadi, 2015)	age range was from 20 to 30 (university level)	yes	text	familiar passages: Norooz and Menar-jonban Unfamiliar: Eiffel tower and Thanksgiving Day.	50	2 (female group and male group)	reading comprehension test Designed by author	- participants' comprehension of local familiar texts was significantly better than their comprehension of cultural unfamiliar texts. - Gender does not induce any differences in reading comprehension in both familiar and unfamiliar content.
(Boadhar, 2012)	university students	yes	story	Social and life days	56	1 group	reading comprehension test and written recall (Designed by author)	- participants scored higher in both the reading comprehension questions and written recall tasks of the local familiar story compared to the unfamiliar story

(Darvand & Ketabi, 2015)	University students	yes	story	Plot society short story	39	1 group	Lexical inferencing test is based on translation guessing test Lexical retention test	- students succeed to infer two third of translated words (TW), which is greater than TWs in the unfamiliar-plot story - Gusseting translation of words and inferencing in familiar plot stories is easier than the counterpart stories. - lexical retention was greater in the familiar plot contexts in both production and recognition than in unfamiliar plot contexts - the familiarity of the story affects significantly both lexical inferencing and retention. Effect size: NA
(Yousef et al., 2014)	the average age of 22 (graduate level)	No	text	3 genres of passages in the following: music, wedding ceremony, way of dressing, behaviour, and Nowruz (new year festival)	45 Iranian EFL language learners	3 (Turkish, Arabic, Kurdish)	reading comprehension test Designed by authors	Students with an Arabic background students have higher mean scores in the comprehension test on reading passages in Arabic compared to Turkish and Kurdish passages. And the difference is significant. And same results were found in students with Turkish and Kurdish backgrounds. Effect size: NA
(Laasaki & Jokar, 2014)	university students	yes	test	local	40	One group	Two tests (first with the local bound passage, second free society)	- the scores of students in local text tests are higher than a test with no local texts. - Familiarity with text affect reading comprehension. Effect size: NA
(Chen & Lai, 2014)	university students	No	text	metaphoric and metonymic expressions	28	One group	Translation Test Designed by authors	- Interpretation fluency varies due to the difficulty of metaphor. - Interpretation was easy for metaphors that shared the same figurative meanings and conceptual metaphors. Effect Size: NA
(Davoudi & Ramezani, 2014)	university students	yes	story	locally	60	2 (cont. =30 and exp=30).	Free recall test (Designed by authors)	The experimental group has a higher mean score on the free recall test since the experimental group was exposed to familiar stories Difference is significant
(Sadeghi, 2014)	Secondary school	Yes	Passage	local concepts	60	2 (Cont. ; Ex.)	Reading comprehension Test (Designed by author)	The experimental group (local text) outperformed the control group in the comprehension test; "society orientation makes a significant difference in intermediate EFL learners' reading comprehension."

(Vahdany et al., 2014)	14 to 20 years (secondary school)	No	story	story	60	3 (Cont.: 20; Exp A: nativized version; Group B: intact with previewing activity)	Reading comprehension Test ((Designed by authors)	- students taught nativized stories outperformed statistically control group Effect size: NA
(Rokni & Hajilari, 2013)	13-18 years Secondary level	yes	text	Local materials	60	3 (Cont., Exp1, Exp2)	Standardized test NELSON test, series 400B	The group that received texts of Persian society is outperformed the group that exposed to the British society texts and the control group that did not receive any treatment Effect Size: NA
(Boadhar et al., 2015)	University students	Yes	story	Iranian social story and corresponding French social story	55	2 (female group and male group)	Recall test and comprehension test Questionnaire	- there is a difference in recall and comprehension tests between familiar and unfamiliar stories. - There is no positive or facilitative role of gender in both recall and comprehension tests Effect size: NA
(Barati & Youhanaee, 2012)	9 grade-level	Yes	text	Iranian scientists as content familiar and texts about foreign scientists as content unfamiliar.	70	One group	Two Tests (designed by authors)	- Students' performance in familiar content tests is higher than their score on the unfamiliar test. - Both test form and question type together affect the students reading comprehension performance significantly.
(Gürkan, 2012)	university students (Junior)	No	Story	society familiar (nativized) story	60	4 (15 for each group)	Post-test Designed by authors	*d= 1.35 (without activities)* *d= 1.46 (with activities)*
(Tavakoli et al., 2012)	18 to 32 years university level	Yes	Story	society familiar (nativized) story	60	2 (cont. 30; Exp: 30)	Post-test Designed by authors	- Literal comprehension: η^2 = 0.08 - Inference comprehension η^2 = 0.07
(Li & Lai, 2012)	university students	Yes	text	society familiar (social, festivals)	53	2 (familiar group, and unfamiliar group)	Post cloze test (designed by authors) Speed time	- Reading comprehension of students varies between familiar and unfamiliar text significantly - Familiarity with text affects students' reading time (speed) significantly Effect size: Not calculated

They further asserted that local contents facilitate reading comprehension. Both self-reports of students and teachers opined there is an association between local-based content and reading comprehension (Liu, 2015; Nachmani, 2015; Khanam et al., 2014).

In the contrast, Karim and Nafissi (2017) found martial orientation design did not have any significant effect on reading comprehension. This is imputed to the lack of comprehension

test design in the study because the comprehension test cannot exhibit differences between students due to the lower number of questions and question type. As shown by Barati and Youhanaee (2012), question type affects the obtained scores in reading comprehension.

Sheridan et al (2019; 2019a) measured the reading skills based on vocabulary retention or recall. The effect size on vocabulary retention η2 ranged from 6% to 21%, which supports the results of Boadhar et al (2015); Darvand and Ketabi (2015); Davoudi and Ramezani (2014) that there is a difference between vocabulary retention scores between local (familiar) and target or global contents. Darvand and Ketabi (2015) found that lexical retention and inferencing are easier in familiar (local) contexts rather than in counterpart contexts.

The majority of studies ensured equivalent language proficiency among participants at the baseline phase. Meanwhile, the level of language proficiency interprets reading comprehension outcomes since the effect size of proficiency is large ($η2 = 0.502$; Mahmoudi & Mahmoudi, 2017). Further, Nafissi et al., (2020) found the material orientation design cannot override the high proficiency level of reading.

Gurkan (2012) found the effect of local-based material can be enlarged if it is combined with pre-reading activities of activating prior knowledge. Li and Lai (2012) found that local-based materials affect reading speed similar to comprehension. The experimental study was replicated or extended at the educational levels, supporting that the local-based contents' effect is independent of the educational level.

Listening Skills

Only 12% of the articles concerned listening skills. This percentage is not adequate with respect to the percentage of those addressed reading skills. However, Namaziandost et al. (2018) estimated the effect size of using local-based contents was large (local content: $η^2$ =0.915). Similar to Samian and Dastjerdi's (2012) results, carried a large effect size of local contents compared to British and American and free locally contents (d = 1.33; 3.24, respectively), and a medium effect compared to international content. Carson (2019) explained the effectiveness based on students' reports, since they did not report perceived difficulty in local-based materials and registered higher vocabulary gains compared to counterpart contents.

All studies asserted the effectiveness of using local-based materials to enhance listening skills (for example, Mahmoudi, 2018, Tous & Haghighi, 2013). Contradictory to results in reading comprehension studies, gender has an affecting role on listening comprehension in favour of male learners (Namaziandost, Sabzevari, & Hashemifardnia, 2018). The material orientation design cannot override the higher level of listening comprehension and reading comprehension (Pashayi & Mahmoudi, 2017).

Writing Skills

As noticed, speaking has not been of interest or attention to any concerns of authors seeking the benefits and advantages of developing EFL materials based on local-based content.

Table 4

Descriptive-Based Articles Assessed the Effect of Local-Based Content on Reading Comprehension (n = 3)

Article	Teacher	Students	Edu. Level	Topic	Country	Measurements	Results
(Khanam, Zahid, & Mondol, 2014)	Yes (10)	Yes (12)	*tertiary level*	Bangladeshi and foreign society	*Bangladesh.*	Two Questionnaire, Students form and teacher forms	Both teacher and students opined that "familiarity with the local contents schematic area of the text facilitates reading comprehension." 58% of Students further added: "use materials from their selections increases comprehension, inferential, and prediction skills"
(Nachmani, 2015)	Yes (45)	No	School level	local, economic, and social	Palestine	Questionnaire observations, and interview	- effect of students' social, economic, and local background on EFL reading acquisition was found to be medium-high - parental intervention and attitude" on EFL the reading acquisition was found to be high
(Liu, 2015)	No	Yes	Junior college (university level)	society	Taiwan.	Questionnaire	There is a correlation between familiarity with text and reading comprehension. Further, students reported that they do not recognize and exhibit curiosity toward Australian, Israeli, and British societies.

Table 5
Articles Assessed the Effect of Local-Based Content on Listening Skills (N = 6)

Article	Educational level	Regular settings	Topic	No. of Participants	No. Group	Measurements	Results or Effect Size
(Carson, 2019)	University level	yes	The passage in Japanese or foreign context	138	Two group	Test of recall of vocabulary, grammar, and context comprehension	local familiar students did not report perceived difficulty and registered higher vocabulary gains - "local familiar Japanese listening had higher mean scores on the comprehension tests"
(Namaziandost et al., 2018)	University level	yes	Festivals	96	4 groups(A (Target contents = TC), group B (International Target contents = ITC), group C (Source contents = SC) and group D (society-Free = CF).	listening comprehension test	- local oriented language materials enhance the Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension - the male learners did better than female ones on the posttest - local contents have higher differences between pre and posttests local content: η^2 =0.915 Gender: η^2 =0.232 Gender* Content: η^2 =0.128
(Mahmoudi, 2018)	13 and 16 years (school level)	yes	Religious	37	2groups (high and low proficiency)	Comprehension test answer sheets constituted (designed by author)	- similar local familiar content is helpful to the student's listening comprehension. - presentation of a conceptually similar but society different text to the students before the familiar one did not make any difference in their listening comprehension - The local familiar contents did not affect or compensate for the difference in proficiency level among students.
(Pashayi & Mahmoudi, 2017)	13 and 16 years old (school level)	yes	Religious	37	2groups (high and low proficiency)	Comprehension test answer sheets constituted (designed by author)	similar contents and familiar contents are helpful to the student's listening comprehension. - presentation of a conceptually similar but society different text to the students before the familiar one did not make any difference in their listening comprehension - The local familiar contents did not affect or compensate for the difference in proficiency level among students.
(Tous & Haghighi, 2013)	15 to 17 years old (school level)	NO	Local	70	2 groups (exp; Cont.)	Test (designed by authors)	topic familiarity with locally oriented language materials generally raised the Iranian EFL learners' listening proficiency

| (Samian & Dastjerdi, 2012) | 16-32 years old | yes | locally oriented language | 40 | 4 groups (A: American and British texts. B: international C source society, D: a society free) | listening comprehension test (designed by authors) | An improved their listening comprehension during the classes through greater exposure to target society texts as society-oriented language listening materials
Local contents: d = 1.33 (A); 3.24 (D); 0.31 (B) |

Oral Representation Skills

Only three articles considered the sealing skills of language learning. Accordingly, speaking has been given less care and interest in the context of local-based materials in EFL learning, research, teaching, and assessment. Nevertheless, the local-based materials have a significant positive effect on oral and verbal skills (Qiu & Lo, 2016; Kazemi & Zarei, 2015; Shabani, 2013). These three studies used distinguished assessment indicators, for example, word count, time, production, and relevant clauses. Only Kazemi and Zarei (2015) used a standardized checklist of oral presentation assessments. Furthermore, the three studies targeted different age levels. Hence, the comparison between levels is not plausible. All studies used a one-group experimental design.

Learns Psychological Background

Psychological characteristics may affect the role of local-based content on learners' acquisition of language. Thus, there is considerable interest in this issue while studying the effectiveness of the local content on EFL learning. Approximately, a third of studies (n=19; 38.7%) considered a psychological aspect of learners (see Table 7).

Most studies share a consensus that local-based content increased the learner's motivation (Lasekan & Godoy, 2020; Zhang et al., 2018; Karim & Nafissi, 2017; Segni & Davidson, 2016). Thus, learner engagement increased correspondingly to using local content (Sheridan, Tanaka, & Hogg, 2019; Segni & Davidson, 2016; Qiu & Lo, 2016; Ebe, 2015). Which is in line with results obtained by Zhang et al., 2018 and Aubrey (2017), who found that learning local content is associated with higher attention, confidence, and relevant feelings. Keep this in mind, several studies reported a positive and strong attitude toward using local content since they reported easier and faster learning in the local-based context (Lasekan & Godoy, 2020; Selvarasu, et al., 2020; Mahardika, 2018; Li & Lai, 2012). Even the positive attitudes toward using local-based content, there is a negative attitude and strongly rejecting nativization process of international content to local content and there is a preference to read the text in their original version rather than anticipated. Also, teachers were against the nativization process, they claimed that the nativization process leads to language elements exclusion from society (Forman, 2014).

Teachers exhibit a positive attitude toward local content integration because they can know more about their emergent bilingual students. The activities of finding and reading relevant text reveal various information about students' preferences, skills, attitudes, orientation, and so forth (Ebe, 2015). Accommodating teachers' feelings of being unsettled and excluded when teaching international or spoken source language texts. Not mentioning, the resistance and less engagement from learners against what they may feel with local-based content (Forman, 2014).

In terms of anxiety, Nafissi et al (2020); Karim and Nafissi (2017); Segni and Davidson (2016) agreed that familiar, quite familiar, and partially familiar contents provoke lower

reading anxiety levels compared with anxiety levels that were stimulated by unfamiliar contents for most students.

In terms of self-efficacy, only Nafissi et al (2020); Karim and Nafissi (2017) determined the differences in reading comprehension self-efficacy among different material-oriented designs and pinpointed that there is an alleviation gain of self-efficacy among students in the different oriented design of material without any real differences among them. Accordingly, the study repudiated the effect associated with material design on self-efficacy levels.

It is noticed that Nafissi et al (2020); Zhang, et al (2018); Karim and Nafissi (2017); Sadeghi (2014) used standardized scales for measuring the psychological aspect of learners.

Table 6
Articles assess the effect of local-based content on psychological aspects (N=19)

Article	Teacher	Students	Edu. Level	Topic	Country	Measurements	Results
(Nafissi et al., 2020)	No	Yes	University level	local texts	Iran	Self-efficacy: The Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) for College Students (standardized scale) Anxiety: The Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) (standardized scale)	- the unfamiliar contents were reading anxiety provoking compared to familiar or quite familiar and or partially familiar based materials - there is no effect associated with material designs on self-efficacy levels.
(Lasekan & Godoy, 2020)	No	Yes (176)	University level	Local contents (Chilean)	China	questionnaire (motivation, attitude, and social awareness)	"the majority of students agree that the local contents developed video enhanced their motivation in the classroom'. "a strong positive attitude toward its integration into classroom activities and recommendations to teachers, a considerable number of students assume the video is relevant to the course content"

(Sheridan & Condon, 2020)	No	Yes (43)	university students	Local: environmental issues, pop society, tourism, sports, crime, and food.	Japan	Articles selection task	"local familiar texts to a statistically significant degree and selected "lighter" topics more frequently than "heavier" topics. L2 proficiency had a significant effect on the local context that learners selected, and gender had a significant effect on the topics they chose"
(Selvarasu, et al., 2020)	No	Yes	University level	Local content	Oman	Questionnaire	"The majority of the students preferred the locally relevant text since they found the text more appealing and easy-to-comprehend due to proximity principle and simpler vocabulary"

(Sheridan et al., 2019)	No	Yes	Tertiary level	society	Japan	Self-reported Survey of interests Homework contents analysis	1) The higher interests of students were reported in a familiar context since there are differences of 13% in interest count for society familiar contexts. 2) there is interconnectedness between interest and comprehension. 3) student engagement differs with the material significantly due to context familiarity in favour of the familiar local context of the assignment.
(Sheridan et al., 2019 a)	No	Yes (102)	University Students	society	Japan	Interests	Students exhibited a higher interest in familiar content compared with global contents
(Nafissi et al., 2019)	No	Yes (93)	university students	society	Iran	two-question structured interview	More familiarity with, more interest in and more positive feelings towards Iran, the Persian language and Iranian society, more positive feelings toward both countries, both languages and both societies. Most of the responses preferred L1 or L1+l2 content

(Mahardika, 2018)	No	Yes (100)	Undergraduate Students	society	Indonesia	Attitude	Students found local material more interesting, easier to understand, funnier, and helpful compared to previous global content. -Students preferred the new material over the previous global material due to the familiar materials
(Zhang et al., 2018)	No	Yes (27)	5-grade primary level	Drama		ARCS (Attention, Relevance, Confidence and Satisfaction) scale for motivation	- students discoursed a high rate for the items of attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction toward using local drama in classes. Thus, "drama learning stimulated their attention and interest in learning materials."
(Karim & Nafissi, 2017)	no	yes	University level	L1+L2 society texts	Iran	Self-efficacy: Reading Comprehension Self-Efficacy Scale (RCSS) Anxiety: The Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) (standardized scale)	- L1+L2 society materials have a significant role in reducing reading anxiety compared to global materials. (η^2 = 0.07) - materials design has no effective role in changing self-efficacy among EFL learners

| (Aubrey, 2017) | No | Yes (| University level | Local: travel, nature, history, careers, celebration | Japan | Diaries content analysis | The result found that students performed five tasks intra-society with high attention, enjoyment, and accomplished in the international group while feeling more control and interest in the intra-society group. The flow increased in the inter-society group and inhibition decreased in the intra-society group. |
| (Segni & Davidson, 2016) | Yes (4) | No | Grade 9 and 10 | Local contents | India | Observation and Interview | Teachers opine that "local-based contexts needed to engage learners in the language learning process, enabled them to be more interested and motivated, and practised the language with less anxiety in language teaching and learning |

| (Qiu & Lo, 2016) | NO | Yes(60) | University level | Local story | China | engagements | "The participants were behaviorally and cognitively more engaged in tasks with familiar topics and felt more relaxed and confident" $d=$ 0.47* familiarity on self-repairers The majority of students found local society emotionally engaging, and interesting. |
| (Ebe, 2015) | Yes (24) | No | K-12 | society relevance | New York | engagements | - Teachers found that their students made connections and were more engaged when reading society-relevant books. - teachers learned more about their emergent bilingual students through the process of finding and reading locally relevant stories |

(Vahdany et al., 2014)	Yes (15)	No	Secondary school	Nativized story	Iran	interview	- teacher justifies the significance of learning a language using society, that local content facilitates learning language. - Most teachers were against the nativization process of the story because it leads to language elements exclusion from society
(Forman, 2014)	Yes (3)	No	University level	L1 Vs L2 content	Thai	observation and interview	Teachers opined that they feel unsettled and excluded when teaching L2 texts, further they found resistance from students and less engagement through class, opposite to what they felt with local contents
(Sadeghi, 2014)	No	Yes(60)	Secondary school	text	Iran	Achievement motivation (AMS) questionnaire	- Students taught through society oriented have significantly higher achievement motivation than their peers in the control group.

(Li & Lai, 2012)	no	yes	University level	Social text	Chinese	Attitude toward reading comprehension and speed	Students pinpointed that reading familiar text is faster than reading unfamiliar texts, as well as, the comprehension of familiar is better than unfamiliar Students reported a significant difference in both comprehension and speed between familiar and unfamiliar
(Tavakoli et al., 2012)	No	Yes	Tertiary level	society Story	Iran	attitude questionnaire interview	the negative attitude of Persian EFL learners toward nativized stories - most of the response was against nativized version - nativization would not lead to a more interesting story. - not satisfied with changing English idioms into Persian ones - most favoured the originality of the stories

Table 7. Experimental Based Articles Assessed the Effect of Local-Based Content on Achievement (*n* = 3)

Article	Education al level	Regular settings	Materials	Topic	No. of Participants	No. Group	Measurements	Results or Effect Size
(Lasekan & Godoy, 2020)	University level	Yes	Video	Local contents	176	1	Achievement language skills	- local content videos boost their overall language skills and the majority of students claim that the video fosters their listening skills. students expressed how the video enhanced their language skills in reading speaking, listening, and writing.
(Zhang et al., 2018)	5-grade alimentary	No	CD-Drama film	Drama	78	3 group (collaborative drama, individual drama, without cd drama)	Achievement test, Questionnaires, and interview)	- Reading aloud of experimental groups' is higher than control *d* =.201 -Describing Story collaborative drama outperformed individual drama *d* =.135 -Writing: A. complexity of written sentence) *d* =.176 collaborative is higher B. Pattern complexity: *d*= 0.723.

(Sheridan et al., 2016)	University level	Yes	text	Social, story, economic	41	2 group	posttest	-Vocabulary recall: No differences - contents familiar contexts affect the way of reading assignments (contexts) demonstrate that familiar contexts in EFL study might have a positive impact on language learning for students

Learner Achievement

Only three articles used the Achievement phrase to measure learners' acquisition of language (see table 8). Achievement may include more than two skills of language learning. For example, (Lasekan & Godoy, 2020) measured multiple language skills of reading, speaking, listening, and writing. Meanwhile, Zhang et al (2018) assessed only writing, reading, and speaking skills. Sheridan et al. (2016) did not precisely define achievement meaning and only assessed vocabulary recall and the students' way of reading materials.

Both studies by Lasekan and Godoy (2020); Zhang et al (2018) showed the positive effect of local-based content on language learning skills. In contrast to Sheridan et al (2016), who drove the insignificant impact of local-based contents on vocabulary recall. The designed assessment test of Sheridan et al (2016) has a few questions, which cannot reveal the difference among students due to the lower discriminatory power of assessment.

Summary of Findings

To sum up; there is a dearth of studies and evidence that emphasized the effectiveness of using local content in teaching the English language as a foreign language (EFL). Nevertheless, not all studies designed and assessed adequately scientifically reading skills. The majority of studies paid attention to comprehension rather than the way of reading, speed of reading, and so forth. The effectiveness of local content assessed at medium to large effect on reading skills. Hence, the language literature is enriched with various descriptive and inferential empirical evidence of local cultural effectiveness. The systematic review reveals a lack of studies on both oral presentation and listening skills. While there is a need to seek writing skills individually in the context of local content.

At all primary, secondary, and higher educational levels, there is a focus on comparing the effect of material orientation on various learning skills in the language. There is a lack of consensus in the research field on which attribute contents label is referred to. The majority of studies referred materials to texts books. Material is the Umbrella term encompassing different genres of content such as audio, text, tasks, and so on.

The preponderance of research is based on the experimental design with specific educational levels and particular proficiency levels. Thus, there is scarce evidence of the effect

of the local content on English proficiency. There is a lack of evidence in a local geographical area (i.e.; Arabian and Gulf areas). Observed that east Asian countries are the only geographical area that has interested the researcher and authors.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this review sought the effectiveness of local content in EFL teaching as a holistic – integrative multi-dimension review, which involves various learning domains, i.e., learner skills and learners' psychological aspects. Therefore, culturally related differences among EFL learners should be considered by designers and developers of EFL materials, as well as, teachers in assessing students' acquisition of language.

As such, local cultural contents drew more inference, literal, and elaborative comprehension in both readings and listening. In light of obtained data, the local contents have a medium to large effect on reading and listening skills. As hypnotized, the students who learned through local content exhibited lower anxiety levels, a higher level of attention, confidence, interests, and motivation and scored higher than their counterparts in comprehension, because they engage with familiar names and culturally distant contextual clues, turns to higher acquisition gains and benefits.

The present study revealed a gap in the research field of local cultural materials and a weakness in previous evidence. Future research should include several proficiency levels, gender, educational level, and comprehensive local cultural materials. Materials should not be excluded from textbooks and passages, it is supposed to comprise audio, visual, and written texts combined with communication task and projects. Also, the effectiveness of cultural materials must be further investigated in speaking and writing domains.

Future assessment tests have to comprise more difficult questions and high discriminatory factors to cast a vast outcome and avoid the ceiling effect. Furthermore, studies must detect the mediation and moderating effect of gender, psychological aspects, test type, and topic in investigating differences in learners' acquisition.

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