

The Use of Ambonesse Songs to Integrate English Learning and Culture Appreciation: a Classroom Action Research

Johana Hursepuny¹ and Helena M. Rijoly^{2,3*}



²PSB-UNPATTI

¹SMA Negeri 5 Ambon

Email: hursepuny@smanliambon.sch.id

²Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Pattimura

Jalan Ir. M. Putuhena, Kampus Unpatti, Poka, Ambon, Indonesia

³Pattimura university language center (PSB-UNPATTI),

Jalan Ir. M. Putuhena, Kampus Unpatti,

Poka, Ambon, Indonesia 97233

Received : 3rd August 2021
Revised : 3rd September 2021
Published : 3rd December 2021

Corresponding author: *Email: rijolyhelenadell@gmail.com

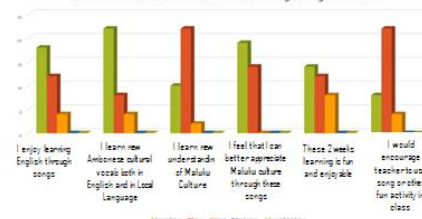
Abstract

Foreign language class most often utilized learning materials with American or European background or from West Indonesian content. The English textbook used in schools rarely provides content material from where the students live (source/native Culture) such as Ambon, Maluku. Therefore, teachers must strive to provide an additional activity or materials that incorporate the local values and wisdom to the foreign language class. Ambonese songs are utilized as learning materials and classroom activities in an English Class. This classroom action research aimed to develop students' vocabulary and engaging them with the local wisdom and values by rewriting and performing the Maluku songs in English. This paper will describe how the Ambonese songs are used in the learning, the development of student's vocabulary, students' feedback, and some lesson learned from the process. The result shows that the teacher was satisfied with the process. Vocabulary was improved and retained and in overall students welcomed a different approach in learning English and learning about their culture as well.

Keywords: Songs in English Class, Local Content, Archipelago Education, Classroom Action Research, Culture and Education

The significant finding: The use of Ambonese songs as a different approach in order has significantly improved and retained vocabulary in the process of learning, the development of student's vocabulary, students' feedback, and some other lessons.

Students' Feedback on the use of Ambonese Songs in English Classroom



1st place winner of the Song Project



ARTICLES

1. INTRODUCTION

First language is acquired. Meanwhile second language may be both acquired and learned (Brown, 2014; Saville-Troike, 2012; Chomsky, 2006; Krashen, 1982). English Language to non-English speaking countries is taught as second language or foreign language in the school curriculum. In the case of Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language. Most students in Indonesia learn English at school. School became an important institution for language learning. English as a foreign language is a compulsory subject starting from Junior High school. One of the media used in foreign language learning at

school is textbook. School textbook is approved by the Indonesian Ministry of Education before it is being used in schools all over Indonesia. Therefore, textbook is one of the most important teaching and learning media to learn English.

However, a quick scan through textbook used at school in Indonesia will provide a clear proof that the content and context of learning do not equally represent the diversity of Indonesia. The textbook uses context and content from foreign countries and western culture due to the target language learning (Awayed-Bishara, 2015 in Lekawael, Emzir, & Rafli, 2018). Indonesia's content and context almost always do not include Maluku

or Ambon content. Students spend almost half of their day every day for 9 years to study at school and at home. They are in constant interaction with the learning process and one of the interactions is with the teaching and learning media such as textbook. The sense of identity is also built through interaction with textbook. When students cannot find themselves in the reading section, examples or pictures in textbook, students are losing precious time to learn and appreciate their culture.

This research was conducted to answer the need of an English teacher who was concerned that the students are learning foreign language and western culture and meanwhile lose touch with their own culture. There are also the concerns that textbook provided rarely show the cultural aspects of Maluku. Thus, there is a need to supplement the teaching and learning process of learning English with the aspect of cultural appreciation. One of the means of passing down cultural values and wisdom is through songs. On the other hand, the teacher was looking for an alternative fun and interactive way for students to engage in the production stage of the language learning. In this phase of research, the class was in need to build vocabulary, practice building correct sentence structure, and practice using English in a contextual and meaningful setting. Therefore, the research used Ambonese songs to incorporate English learning and cultural appreciation. This research aimed to 1) explain the use of Ambonese songs in English Classroom, 2) measure how well students retain vocabulary related with Ambon/Maluku Culture, 3) measure how well students absorb the local values, wisdoms and practices, 4) students' feedback and teacher's lesson learned

from the use of Ambonese songs to incorporate English Learning and Cultural Appreciation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Language and culture are interconnected to one another. Culture encompasses many different aspects such as knowledge, belief, arts, morals, law and customs in society (Taylor, 1920). These aspects of culture are reflected (Alshenqeeti, 2019) and imbedded (Rivers, 1983 in Liu, 2016) in the language. Language is acquired and learned and culture plays unique influence of how the language evolve and transmitted. The customs, beliefs and practices are passed down by means of communication (language). These transmission of culture and language shaped how one think and act. These strong connection between language, culture and the way human think and act means that culture and language co-evolve and interact with each other (Imai, Kanero, & Masuda, 2016). Language is the carrier of culture, and culture is the foundation and circumstances of language (Liu, 2016).

The use of English textbook at school to aide the learning process of English as foreign language does not incorporate Ambon/Maluku culture. Therefore, the textbook could not equally fulfil the needs of the students because the content are not familiar with them and are beyond their reach of socio-cultural environment (Tamaela, 2016, p. 145). Classroom practices show that some proactive teachers saw this as an opportunity and provide additional or supplemental materials with local content and context in order to get students to be in touch with the language learning and local context understanding (Lekawael, Emzir, & Rafli, 2018). This urge to imbued the

cultural value in the standardized textbook and curriculum is indeed important as not to have the next generation as a lost generation culturally. A study conducted in 2021 to parents in Maluku suggested that parents encourage and support the maintenance and preservation of Maluku heritage through local language or cultures (**Lekatompessy, 2021**). Therefore, education institutes and agency need to act upon the standardized curriculum and textbook by providing additional materials or activity to bridge the two.

Cultural representation in textbook is divided into three types: *Source Culture* - the native or local culture of the learner, *Target Culture* - the culture of the English speaking countries such as USA, UK, Australia etc, and *International Culture* - the more general foreign countries outside of Indonesia where English may be used as International Language (**Cortazzi and Jin, 1991 in Alshenqeeti, 2019**). The English textbooks used at schools in Indonesia are heavy laden with Target Culture and International Cultures. Meanwhile, a fraction of the content is occupied by source culture. Within this source culture, content and context of Indonesia do not represent the diverse and vast geography of the country. Ambon/Maluku culture is rarely found in the literature, examples, or pictures in the textbooks.

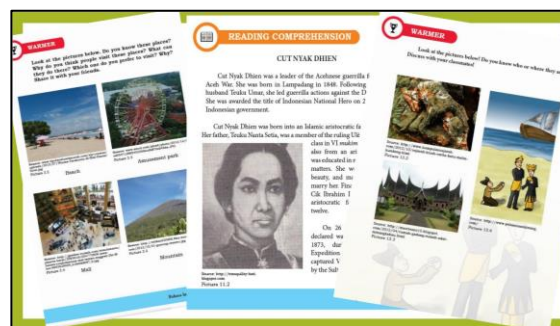


Figure 1. Examples of textbook pages where Ambon/Maluku culture cannot be found

Liu (2016, p. 128) argues that the uneven representation of culture in English textbook stemmed from the lack of “common standard of how culture should be represented and introduce in the EFL classroom.” This is affirmed by **Bin Tahir, et.al (2019)** that teachers and school struggle to incorporate local culture and language to teaching and learning process because there isn’t an existing guidelines from the education department in city level or provincial level on model and approach of implementation. The struggle is an accumulation of different layer of challenges such as: teachers’ knowledge and skill of teaching approach of method, teachers’ workload and circumstantial challenges such as facilities and infra-structure in general and those pertaining to covid-19 situation. Teachers are burdened with administrative work as well as the teaching workload with uneven ratio of teacher and students (**Oktavia & Ningsih, 2021**). These workload robbed teachers of opportunity to be creative in elaborating the lesson and teaching media. During the time where this research was conducted in 2021, the biggest problem for the teachers around the world is the unprecedented circumstances of Covid-19 which drives classes to be conducted online. Teachers found themselves stuck in

situation that are not familiar to them. In a normal situation, teachers have struggled to find the suitable approach, method and technique of learning to keep the students engaged. The pandemic setting made the class become monotonous and lack of ‘human touch’.

Around the world, song and music have been recognized as a versatile vehicle of entertainment and also education. Tamaela (2016) suggested that song create positive group dynamics, allow for a stressfree learning, and is a great media to learn vocabulary, pronunciation and sentence structure in a contextual and fun way. The works of **Legg (2009), Thornbury (2002), and Cameron (2001)** suggested several reasons why song is beneficial in EFL classroom.

1. Song is almost always contain authentic natural language
2. A Variety of new vocabulary can be introduced to students through songs
3. Songs can be selected to suit the needs and interests of the students
4. Grammar and cultural aspects can be introduced through songs
5. Song lyrics can be used in relation to situation of the world around us.

Therefore, the research used Ambonese songs as the media and fun approach to learn English (Vocab, Speaking, pronunciation and sentence structure) and at the same time build - intercultural awareness and cultural appreciation of Ambon/Maluku Culture

3. METHODOLOGY

This is classroom action research which was conducted at SMA Negeri 5 Ambon, a state senior high school in the suburb of

Ambon City. The research is a collaboration between the English teacher of the school and a lecturer from English Education Study program of Pattimura University. The research was conducted to 4 classes taught by the teacher; XI-IPA1, XI-IPA2, XII-IPS2, and XII-IPS3. Total registered students for these 4 classes should have been 120 students. However, due to pandemic all classes were conducted online. The online circumstances made many students unable to attend the class due to internet access and access to gadgets for online learning. The extremely low attendance prompted the teacher to join the 4 classes together. Thus, the attendance recorded 34 students attending the joined classes throughout the research period.

The instrument used in the research were Observation Notes, Tests and Questionnaire (google form). Classes were conducted online through GoogleMeet and Google Classroom. The research followed the typical classroom action research of Planning, Action/Implementation, Observing, and Reflection (Koshy, 2005). There were 2 cycles in this research.

4. FINDINGS

Description of CAR process

The classroom action research was conducted as follows

Planning:

During the planning step, the teacher and lecturer collaborated to identify areas for improvement, determining the competence and learning goals deciding Maluku Culture that will be highlighted in the learning designing lesson plan and peer practice on how to use it in the classroom. Lecturer co-collaborator conducted a pilot/trial class prior to one of the

classes to see the step-by-step teaching and get feedback from students and teacher.

- Action/Implementation

In Cycle 1, there were 2 meetings for each of the 4 classes (total 8 meetings). Meanwhile in cycle 2, there was 2 meeting for 1 joined class. (Total 2 meetings). The learning objectives of these meetings were: Vocabulary building, culture appreciation and sentence structure. 2 songs were used in this stage. “*Huhate*” for Cycle 1 and “Cloves Tree from Lease” by Leonora S. Tamaela in Cycle 2.



Figure 2. Screenshot of the Online Class Meeting.

The Class in cycle 1 and 2 follows the following steps:

- o Brainstorm
- o Vocabulary introduction
- o Listening to the Song “*Huhate*”/Clove Trees in Lease
- o Discussing the meaning and nuances of the song
- o Transferring the songs into English and producing simple sentences with correct structures.

In cycle 2, students are guided to rewrite the song into English on their own.

- Observation

Observation was conducted during the process of implementation. Observation is done by both

research collaborators. At the end of each class meeting collaborators discuss the challenge and successes of the meeting and plan a better techniques or steps for the next meeting.

Reflection

In cycle 1, the reflection was conducted by the research collaborator through comparing observation and discussion with students. In cycle 2 the reflection is performed through test and questionnaire to questionnaire.

Highlight results from Observation Notes

Observation Notes were taken by both research collaborators for every meeting in cycle 1 and cycle 2. The followings are the highlight from the observation notes:

In cycle one, the song used was *Huhate* – students recognized the word but were not able to explain the meaning of *Huhate*. The morale or message of the song about being wise in choosing your circle of friends are also lost to them. All of the students agree that they have listened to the song and even sang the song but do not have clear grasp of the values it entails.



Figure 3. Screenshot from Cycle 1 Lesson.

The cultural vocabularies and contextual understanding were also new to the students with most students agree that this is the first

time for them to learn the vocabulary in Bahasa - Indonesia, Local Ambon Language and in English

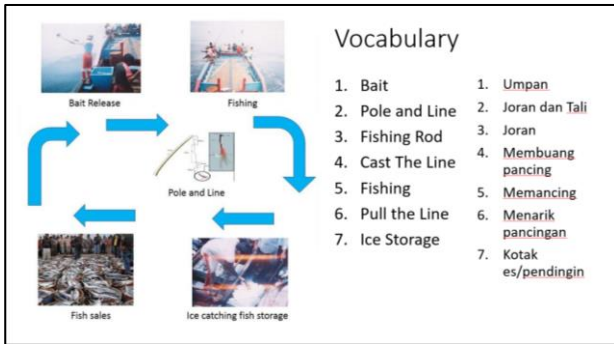


Figure 4. Screenshot from Cycle 1 Lesson.

In cycle 2, the song used was “Clove Trees from Lease Island”. It is a song using the tune of *Huhate* with the lyrics rewritten in English to describe the Clove Harvest Season in Maluku. Students learned new English words and understood local practices described in the song.



Figure 5. Screenshot from Cycle 2 lesson.

Students expressed excitement in learning and understanding new words in English and in Ambonese language. Students loved the sing-along session and exploded into a big chorus when asked to sing together.

Their last project was to decide on an Ambonese/Maluku song and rewrite the lyrics to tell a story about something that happen in Maluku.

Results from Test – Vocabulary and Cultural Reference test

At the end of Cycle 2, students were given a Vocabulary and Cultural Reference test to see if they retain the grasp of the breadth and depth of the Vocabulary in English and the understanding of the cultural reference of the meaning and values. The test consisted of 10 multiple choice questions where students were asked to choose the correct English for the cultural reference words/phrases. The result shows that majority of students were able to answer correctly.

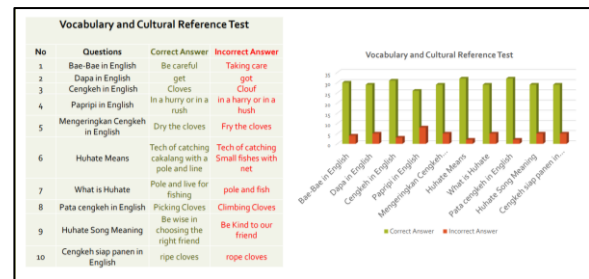


Figure 6. Result of Vocabulary and Cultural Reference Test.

Results from Questionnaire

Students’ feedback was obtained through 6 items questionnaire on the use of Songs in English Classroom. The result shows that students strongly agree that they like learning English Through songs, they enjoy learning new vocabulary of Ambon/Maluku words, they feel that they appreciate Maluku culture more through the use of these songs and

they believe these kinds of learning is fun. Students also agree that they learn new things about Maluku culture and they wish teacher will use song or other fun activities in the classroom.

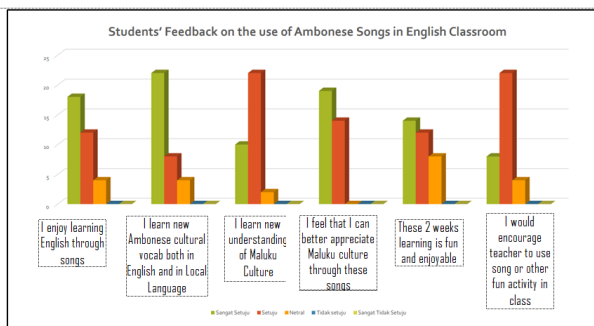


Figure 2 Result of the Questionnaire

Figure 7. Result of the Questionnaire.

5. DISCUSSION

Lesson Learned on How to Use Ambonese/Maluku Song in English Classroom

The process of using Ambonese Song in English classroom has shown that song is not just for fun activity such as time filler or sing along session. Song is a meaningful and flexible learning media/activity to be used to achieve the targeted learning objectives. This research used song, specifically Ambonese/Maluku Song to target 3 main goals, building and improving students' vocabulary, engaging students to appreciate Maluku culture and to provide fun and culturally suitable content and context of learning to supplement the standardized curriculum and textbook.

The following are lesson learned highlighted by teacher and lecturer on how to best use Song in the classroom. One, the chosen song must tap into the previous lesson

that students already learned. Therefore, the song becomes a way of practice, review and revision to check learning retention. Harmer (2007) suggested that determining what activity or learning media to be used in the classroom must be done by assessing the efficiency and appropriacy. Efficiency means whether the activity can be done within the learning time period and would yield the expected result within that time frame or not. Meanwhile, appropriacy looks at whether the activity or learning media is a tool; as a bridge, a reinforcement or a review; on the learning sequence. The use of song in this research is appropriate because on previous semester, students have learned the basic sentence structures with the focus on adjective and describing people, things and place. The curriculum also prescribe learning English through songs. Therefore, instead of using songs from other parts of Indonesia or from pop music, the research chose to apply Ambonese songs. Therefore, there is a continuation on the elarning sequence.

Two, song can be used to model and correct pronunciation, to practice listening, to practice reading comprehension. Song is a fun and enjoyable media of learning. Song is enjoyed by listening to it, singing it and understanding the lyrics. Teacher can use this media as "integrated teaching strategy of opportunistic teaching strategy" (Harmer, 2007, p.252). Teacher can weave song in the classroom to facilitate listening practice as part of the lesson plan (integrated). Teacher can have students to sing-along or read aloud the lyrics and take the moment to provide correction on pronunciation (opportunistic). In regards to correction of pronunciation, it may boost awareness and learning to some students

but may also embarrassed and discourage other students (**Cook, 2008. p.80**). However, when it is done in a relaxed and ‘non-threatening’ atmosphere as during sing-a-long session, students will feel less discouraged and may be willing to accept and practice the feedback. Meanwhile, teacher may encourage students to use critical thinking to understand the lyrics beyond what the words say and by connecting it to the contextual or cultural meaning and application.

Three, song especially Ambonesse/Maluku song can also be used as a way to educate the cultural values of Maluku. **Tamaela (2016)** who has been re-writing and adapting traditional Ambonesse/Maluku Songs into English emphasized that the lyrics of the song provide an opportunity for students to become aware and learn about the environment and the culture around them and through it, they may be encourage to preserve it. This research shows that the word such as “*Huhate*” or “*paparipi*” felt like familiar words to students but they are unable to pinpoint exactly what it means and how to use it contextually. Likewise, the concept and practice of harvesting cloves are somewhat unknown to students. The two songs used in this research brought students to better understanding of the cultural vocabulary and references and found a greater appreciation for the ancestral practice passed down from generation to generation.

Four, students retain more information and learning because song is catchy and fun and familiar. Simply because the song honed on several words that was used on repeat, students were able to remember and later use/explain the word correctly. Teacher reported that students have started to use the local vocabulary in their everyday conversation, either as jokes such as

“*bae-bae ana... jang dapa kuli duriang*” (beware as not to get the “durian skin” – bad result/impact/person) or correctly explain the process and practice of Clove and Nutmeg planting and harvesting etc.

How Well Students Learn New Vocabulary and Absorb the Local Culture

The Vocabulary and cultural reference test shows that students learn and retain new words well after the learn it from the song. They were able to use the words in a sentence they created themselves. They were able to not just give definition but most importantly they can explain the meaning and nuances of the song. These results happen because of the metacognitive strategies applied by both teacher and students. Teacher facilitate the learning by helping students to conciously collect words from authentic context (song and song lyrics). When students learn the and develop their vocabulary, they do not only acquire new meaning, they also gather new understanding od meaning based on context and develop extensive and complex meaning association (**Hedge, 2000**). The students in this research were able to explain the meaning of cultural concept and make connection using examples from their daily life in their sentence structure because they have applied the metacognitive strategy. It also means that they have develop a *network building process* - process of actively linking labels, categories and packages of old and newly learned lexis in vocabulary learning (**Thornbury, 2002**).

Students feedback on the use of Ambonese/Maluku Song in English Classroom

Overall, students enjoy the experience of learning English and at the same time learning about Ambonese/Maluku culture through Ambonese/Maluku songs in English Class. They showed enthusiasm during the learning process and were eager to participate and complete the project of re-writing lyrics to the tune of Ambonese Song. They even create group performance video singing their song creation.



Figure 8. Students performing the song they wrote as a group using ukulele

6. CONCLUSION

The use of Ambonese/Maluku song was proven to be a great addition to the teaching techniques, approach and strategy in English classroom. Using song especially Ambonese/Maluku traditional song facilitated the integration of English language learning and culture appreciation. The versatility of song can be used by teachers to target specific language skills and knowledge such as listening, reading, writing and speaking as well as grammar and sentence structure. The added

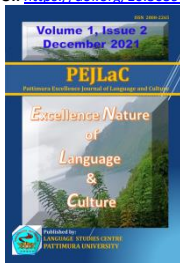

bonus is that song is inherently well received by everyone at any age. Song and singing are identified as fun activity and with fun learning atmosphere, students and teacher will be better engaged in learning. Moreover, with the lack of Ambon/Maluku culture being represented in standardized National Curriculum and textbook, teachers need to take the initiatives to supplement their learning with additional material or activity with local culture content. Song is only one of the learning media that can be chosen as a way to integrate local culture into the content and context. Teacher can choose from many different media such as folklores, pictures, sculpture, *Kapata* or traditional chant and many other. Therefore, from the language learning point of view, the additional local culture material or activity will be adjusted to target language skills and knowledge. From the cultural appreciation point of view, the additional local culture material or activity will allow students to learn, appreciate and later preserving the local culture to the next generation. Thus, Language and Culture will not only build students' knowledge but also their character and identity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research is inspired by Ibu Leonora S. Tamaela, MA and her tireless effort to integrate and incorporate Maluku Culture in English Learning. The research would like to thank her for the permission to use her copyrighted Songs in the process. The research also like to thank 2021 Students of XI-IPA1, XI-IPA2, XII-IPS2, and XII-IPS3 for their participation and enthusiasm, as well as SMA Negeri 5 Ambon for the permission and support for the research process.

REFERENCES

1. Alshenqeeti, H. (2019, December). Representation of Culture in EFL Textbooks and Learners' Preference. *Pedagogy Journal of English Language Teaching*, 7(2), 127-135. doi:10.32332/pedagogy.v7i2.1647
2. Bin Tahir, S. Z., Hanapi, H., Mufidah, N., Rahman, A., & Tuharea, V. U. (2019, October). Revitalizing The Maluku Local Language in Multilingual Learning Model. *International Journal of Scientific and technology Research*, 8(10), 2204-2208. Retrieved from <https://ijstr.org/final-print/oct2019/Revitalizing-The-Maluku-Local-Language-In-Multilingual-Learning-Model.pdf>
3. Brown, H. D. (2014). *principles of Language Learning and Teaching (6th Edition)*. New York: Pearson Education.
4. Cameron, L. (2001). *Teaching Languages to Young Learners*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
5. Chomsky, N. (2006). *Language and Mind*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
6. Cook, V. (2008). *Second Language Learning and Language Teaching*. London: Hodder Education.
7. Harmer, J. (2007). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. Edinburg: Pearson Education Ltd.
8. Hedge, T. (2000). *Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
9. Imai, M., Kanero, J., & Masuda, T. (2016, April). The Relation between Language, Culture, and Thought. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 70-77. doi:10.1016/j.copsyc.2015.10.011
10. Koshy, V. (2005). *Action Research for improving Practice*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing (SAGE Pub. Company).
11. Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*. New York: Pergamon Press Inc.
12. Legg, R. (2009, November). Using Music to Accelerate Language Learning: An Experimental Study. *Research in Education (SAGE Journal)*, 82(1), 1-12. doi:<https://doi.org/10.7227%20FRIE.82.1>
13. Lekatompessy, F. M. (2021, June). Paarental Perspectives and Practices in Maintaining the Heritage Language. *Pattimura Excellence journal of Language and Culture*, 1(1), 34-41. doi:<https://doi.org/10.30598/PEJLac.v1.i1.pp34-41>
14. Lekawael, R. F., Emzir, & Raffi, Z. (2018, April 28). The Cultural Values in Textx of English Coursebook for Junior High School in Ambon, Mollucas-Indonesia. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 9(2), 24-30. doi:10.7575/aiac.all.v.9n.2p.24
15. Liu, C. (2016, January). Cultivation of Intercultural Awareness in EFL Teaching. *Journal of Language teaching and research*, 7(1), 226-232. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1750/jltr.0701.26>
16. Oktavia, R. N., & Ningsih, K. (2021). Pengaruh Lingkungan Kerja dan Beban Kerja Terhadap Kinerja Guru Sekolah Menengah Pertama Negeri 1 Kota Baru Kabupaten Karawang. *Jurnal Administrasi dan Manajemen*, 11(2), 192-200. doi:<https://doi.org/10.52643/jam.v11i2.1223>
17. Saville-Troike, M. (2012). *Introducing Second Language Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
18. Tamaela, L. S. (2016). The Development of Environmental Song-Based Materials using a Scientific Approach for Teaching English. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(10), 145-151. Retrieved from <https://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JEP/search/authors/view?firstName=Leonora%20Saantje&middleName=&lastName=Tamaela&affiliation=&country=>
19. Taylor, E. B. (1920). *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art and Custom*. London: John Murray.
20. Thornbury, S. (2002). *How to Teach Vocabulary*. Edinburg: Pearson Education Ltd.

Pattimura Excellence Journal of Language and Culture	
ISSN: 2808-2265	
DOI: https://doi.org/10.30598/PEJLac.v1.i2.pp60-70 	<p>The Use of Ambonese Songs to Integrate English Learning and Culture Appreciation: a Classroom Action Research</p> <p>Johana Hursepuny and Helena M. Rijoly</p>
	<p>© 2021, by authors. Licensee Pattimura university publishing, Indonesia. This article is an open access article distributed under terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)</p>