

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MOVIE “MEN OF HONOR” TO TEACH RACIAL DISCRIMINATION FOR 11TH GRADE OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to develop a film-based learning material using *Men of Honor* to teach racial discrimination to 11th-grade students at SMK Ma'arif NU Kajen. The research employs the 4D development model (Define, Design, Develop, Disseminate) by Thiagarajan, Semmel, and Semmel (1974), using a mixed-method approach combining qualitative and quantitative data. Data were collected through teacher interviews, student questionnaires, expert validation, and both small- and large-scale trials. The findings reveal a significant need for contextual and meaningful instructional materials. The developed product consists of a recount text learning module integrated with selected scenes from *Men of Honor*, accompanied by worksheets, discussion guides, and assessment rubrics. Expert validation indicated the material aligned with the Merdeka Curriculum and effectively enhanced students' English language skills and social awareness. Trial results showed high student engagement, increased understanding of racism, and improved learning enjoyment. The study concludes that film-based learning can foster students' empathy, critical thinking, and understanding of social justice.

Key Words: Instructional Material Development, Men of Honor, Racial Discrimination, Recount Text, ELT.

INTRODUCTION

Racial discrimination remains a pervasive social issue that shapes individual experiences and institutional structures worldwide (Feagin, 2014; Davis, 1991). From transatlantic slavery to apartheid and modern systemic racism, societies have long struggled with racial injustices across historical and cultural contexts (Alexander, 2010; Coates, 2015). Although overt segregation may no longer be legalized in many countries, discrimination continues in subtle, systemic forms such as unequal access to education, employment, healthcare, and justice systems (Pew Research Center, 2023).

In Indonesia, cases of racial and ethnic discrimination have been documented by Komnas HAM, which recorded at least 101 violations between 2011 and 2018 (Komnas HAM, 2018). Discriminatory acts against indigenous Papuans, such as the 2019 incident involving Papuan students that sparked national protests, further highlight the urgent need to address racial awareness in education (BBC Indonesia, 2019).

Education, therefore, plays a crucial role in fostering empathy and critical awareness among young people (Banks, 2019). However, social issues like racism are often underrepresented in English Language Teaching (ELT) in Indonesia. English lessons typically prioritize linguistic competence, while real-world themes that promote values like equity and justice are rarely integrated into classroom instruction (Marcellino, 2008).

One effective way to introduce these social values is through the use of films in ELT. Films provide authentic language exposure while also presenting complex social realities in a narrative format that enhances student engagement (King, 2002; Ismaili, 2013). According to Sherman (2003), film-based instruction can develop listening skills, critical thinking, and cultural understanding.

The film *Men of Honor* (2000), which portrays the life of Carl Brashear—the first African American U.S. Navy diver—illustrates a powerful journey of resilience and resistance against systemic racism (Ebert, 2000). Previous studies, such as Nursani (2013), have analyzed the sociological elements of this film, particularly its depiction of institutional racism and personal struggle. Yet, despite its educational potential, the film has rarely been used as classroom material.

Building upon this cinematic perspective, a recent study by Newman et al. (2025) reviews a wide range of empirical research concerning racial microaggressions in the workplace. Published in the *Journal of Business Ethics*, the study consolidates evidence from multiple sources to show how subtle, often unconscious discriminatory acts—such as being passed over for promotions, having one's skills doubted, or experiencing social exclusion—persistently affect racial and ethnic minorities. These forms of discrimination, though indirect, have been found to negatively influence individuals' mental health, job satisfaction, and professional growth. The research emphasizes the widespread nature of microaggressions and highlights the need for systemic organizational strategies to reduce their impact.

This study seeks to fill that gap by developing *Men of Honor* as a recount text-based instructional material aligned with the Indonesian senior high school curriculum. Using the 4D development model (Thiagarajan et al., 1974), this research integrates visual storytelling with interactive learning strategies such as group discussions, role-play, and reflective writing. The goal is to foster student empathy, social awareness, and English proficiency simultaneously.

By engaging with real-life narratives through film, students can not only enhance their language skills but also reflect on broader societal issues such as racism and discrimination. This approach supports Giroux's (2002) perspective on film as a medium for promoting critical pedagogy and transformative learning. Ultimately, the study contributes to the broader discourse on media integration in ELT and encourages educators to use culturally relevant content to promote inclusive and socially conscious classrooms.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research adopted a development research approach using the 4D model developed by Thiagarajan, Semmel, and Semmel (1974), which consists of four key stages: Define, Design, Develop, and Disseminate. The purpose of this study was to design and evaluate English teaching materials that use the film *Men of Honor* to help 11th-grade students understand recount texts while also learning about the theme of racial discrimination. This study combined both qualitative and quantitative methods, allowing for a comprehensive development and evaluation process, involving classroom instruments, expert input, and learner feedback.

In the Define phase, preliminary research activities were conducted to identify teaching challenges and needs. These *activities* included curriculum analysis, semi-structured interviews with English teachers, and the distribution of student surveys. The aim was to gather insights into how teachers approach sensitive social issues in English lessons, and to assess students' learning preferences and prior exposure to topics such as racism. This phase also involved identifying learning objectives that align with the Indonesian high school English curriculum, especially those related to recount text and character

education. The data collected in this phase served as a foundation for the development of relevant, contextualized materials.

In the Design phase, the lesson content was structured using scenes from *Men of Honor*, which were adapted into recount-text learning activities. This phase involved designing a complete teaching package, including lesson plans, student worksheets, discussion guides, and performance rubrics. The instructional design integrated elements of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and genre-based instruction, allowing students to practice their speaking and critical thinking skills through collaborative discussion of film scenes. The materials were also designed to include reflective questions, vocabulary support, and grammar exercises relevant to recount text features.

The Develop phase focused on validation and small-scale testing. The initial draft of the product was reviewed by experts in English language teaching and curriculum design. Their feedback was used to refine the content, structure, language, and visual aspects of the materials. After the revision, a small-scale classroom trial was conducted with a limited group of students to assess the usability, clarity, and appeal of the product. Data were collected through questionnaires and observations during the trial.

In the Disseminate phase, the improved product was implemented in a full classroom setting. The students participated in discussion activities based on the film content and completed language tasks aligned with recount text objectives. Observations, rubric-based performance assessments, and student feedback were collected to evaluate the practicality, engagement level, and instructional effectiveness of the material.

FINDING(S) AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted to develop film-based learning materials using *Men of Honor* to teach racial discrimination through recount text to 11th-grade students at SMK Ma'arif NU Kajen. The study followed the 4D model—Define, Design, Develop, and Disseminate proposed by Thiagarajan, Semmel, and Semmel (1974). The findings from each phase are presented in this section and followed by a discussion that connects them to relevant theories and previous studies.

1. Define Phase: Identifying Student Needs

In the Define phase, data were gathered through teacher interviews and student questionnaires. The results revealed that both teachers and students expressed a strong interest in incorporating social issues into English language learning. Teachers stated that existing teaching materials often fail to include topics such as racism, social justice, or real-world values. Although the Merdeka Curriculum allows for contextual content, many teachers still rely heavily on textbooks and grammar-based instruction.

On the student side, the majority reported that they were more motivated to learn English through media like films, especially those dealing with real-life issues.

Most students found conventional learning approaches unengaging and disconnected from their lives. Around 89% agreed that films could help them understand complex issues like racial discrimination, and 83% expressed a preference for English lessons with more visual and contextual input. These responses suggest a clear need for materials that are both linguistically and socially engaging.

This finding supports Banks' (2019) view that multicultural education is essential for shaping empathetic, socially aware students. It also echoes Marcellino's (2008) argument that English teaching in Indonesia is too focused on form rather than meaning. The Define phase thus justified the development of materials that combine language learning with moral education, especially using a powerful film like *Men of Honor*.

2. Design Phase: Developing the Teaching Product

In the Design phase, the researcher created a film-based instructional product aimed at teaching recount text and introducing racial discrimination as a social issue. The product included selected scenes from *Men of Honor*, each focusing on acts of racial injustice and moments of perseverance. These scenes were supported with worksheets, discussion prompts, and performance rubric.

The lessons were structured around the recount text genre-orientation, events, and re-orientation based on the framework by Anderson and Anderson (1997). Students were guided to analyze the story of Carl Brashear, identifying key life events and retelling them using appropriate grammar and vocabulary. The materials also included group discussion activities that encouraged students to respond emotionally and critically to the content.

From a pedagogical standpoint, the design aligned with the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, which emphasizes interaction and real-world communication (Cahyono & Widiati, 2011). It also followed the genre-based approach promoted by Emilia (2011), which helps students learn through contextualized, meaningful texts. The product was not only designed to build students' language skills but also to foster values such as empathy, resilience, and critical awareness.

3. Develop Phase: Validation and Small-Scale Trial

In the Develop phase, the product underwent expert validation by an English education lecturer. The validator evaluated the material's content quality, design, alignment with curriculum standards, and its potential to engage students in both language learning and social awareness. Feedback from the expert was positive overall, particularly regarding the contextual relevance of the film scenes, the variety of activities, and the clarity of instruction. Suggestions included refining the visual layout and incorporating specific values such as *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) in the speaking and discussion rubrics. Based on these inputs, revisions were made to the module to better emphasize character values and ensure smoother lesson flow.

Following the revision, a small-scale trial was conducted with four students to evaluate the practicality and clarity of the developed material. The students participated in a full lesson session, which included film viewing, group discussion, and completion of worksheet tasks related to recount text and the film *Men of Honor*.

After the session, students were asked to complete a product response questionnaire designed to assess their perceptions of the material in terms of clarity, usefulness, engagement, and overall effectiveness. The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). To interpret the quantitative responses, the following scale categories were used: scores between 4.26

and 5.00 were categorized as “Strongly Agree,” scores from 3.51 to 4.25 as “Agree,” scores from 2.76 to 3.50 as “Disagree,” and scores between 1.00 and 2.75 as “Strongly Disagree.”

Table 1. Small-Scale Product Trial – Student Questionnaire Results

No.	Statement	Average Score	Category
1	The product is straightforward and simple to use.	4,25	Agree
2	It enhances my understanding of the learning material.	4,25	Agree
3	The design is visually appealing and captures my interest.	4,25	Agree
4	It supports my comprehension of the topic of racism.	4,5	Strongly Agree
5	Navigating and using the product is intuitive and user-friendly.	4,25	Agree
6	It makes the learning experience more enjoyable.	4,5	Strongly Agree
7	The content and layout align well with what I need to learn.	4,5	Strongly Agree
8	It motivates me to participate more actively during lessons.	4,25	Agree
9	I would suggest using this product in classroom settings.	4,25	Agree

The scores ranged from 4.25 to 4.50, indicating that students found the product easy to use, engaging, and helpful in understanding both the recount text and the issue of racial discrimination. Students also appreciated the film scenes and the active learning strategies used during the lesson.

4. Disseminate Phase: Large-Scale Implementation

In the Disseminate phase, the revised product was implemented in a large-scale classroom setting involving 30 eleventh-grade students at SMK Ma'arif NU Kajen. This implementation aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the product in real teaching and learning conditions, particularly in terms of student engagement, discussion performance, and overall perceptions of the material.

The learning activities focused on group-based discussions guided by selected scenes from *Men of Honor*. Students were divided into small groups and given guiding questions related to specific events in the film, especially those that portrayed racial discrimination and personal resilience. The goal was to help students practice recounting real-life events in English while also fostering social awareness and empathy.

Observation during the discussion sessions revealed that students were actively engaged. They collaborated effectively, exchanged ideas, and reflected critically on the issues presented in the film. Many

students related the film to real-world situations, including social inequality and racism experienced by marginalized groups in Indonesia. This showed not only their linguistic development but also their capacity to respond emotionally and intellectually to the material.

To measure student discussion performance, a rubric was used that assessed five key aspects: identification of the main character, recognition of key events, analysis of the character's behavior, reflection on moral values or lessons, and coherence in the delivery of ideas. These criteria were selected to evaluate both the students' comprehension of the film *Men of Honor* and their ability to express their thoughts clearly and meaningfully. The scores from the rubric were then compiled to identify overall patterns in student performance during the discussion activities.

Table 2. Student Performance in Group Discussion Activities

Score	Number of Students	Percentage
90	4	13,3%
85	20	66,7%
80	6	20%

The majority of students (66.7%) achieved a score of 85, reflecting solid performance in expressing ideas clearly, interacting actively with peers, and providing thoughtful insights. A smaller portion of the class demonstrated slightly higher or lower performance, but overall, the results indicate that the product effectively supported students' communicative and critical thinking skills during the discussion.

In addition to performance, students completed a feedback questionnaire to evaluate the product's clarity, design, relevance, and overall impact on their learning experience. The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). To interpret the quantitative responses, the following scale categories were used: scores between 4.26 and 5.00 were categorized as "Strongly Agree," scores from 3.51 to 4.25 as "Agree," scores from 2.76 to 3.50 as "Disagree," and scores between 1.00 and 2.75 as "Strongly Disagree."

Table 3. Student Feedback on the Developed Product (Large-Scale Trial)

No.	Statement	Average Score	Category
1	The product is straightforward and simple to use.	4,10	Agree
2	It enhances my understanding of the learning material.	4,13	Agree
3	The design is visually appealing and captures my interest.	4,17	Agree
4	It supports my comprehension of the topic of racism.	4,20	Agree

5	Navigating and using the product is intuitive and user-friendly.	4.10	Agree
6	It makes the learning experience more enjoyable.	4,43	Strongly Agree
7	The content and layout align well with what I need to learn.	4,17	Agree
8	It motivates me to participate more actively during lessons.	4,37	Strongly Agree
9	I would suggest using this product in classroom settings.	4,10	Agree

The results show a consistently positive response. The highest score was recorded in the statement, “The product makes learning more enjoyable” (4.43), followed by “The product encourages me to be active in learning” and “The film scenes help me understand the topic” (both 4.37). These outcomes reinforce the observation that students were not only engaged but also motivated and empowered through the lesson.

In conclusion, the dissemination phase confirmed that the developed product was both pedagogically effective and emotionally impactful. It supported students’ language use in authentic discussions, helped them explore meaningful themes, and promoted higher-order thinking. The integration of film, guided activities, and relevant social content created a comprehensive and engaging learning experience for students.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the strong potential of using film, particularly *Men of Honor*, as a learning medium to teach recount text while simultaneously raising awareness of racial discrimination among 11th-grade students. In the Define phase, the study revealed that although the Indonesian high school English curriculum provides opportunities to explore values through language learning, it does not explicitly include materials addressing racism or other sensitive social issues. English teachers reported that such topics are rarely present in textbooks, and when they do occur, they often need to be introduced independently. On the other hand, students showed a high level of interest in learning about real-world problems, especially when these are delivered through visual and narrative formats. More than 80% of students agreed that films helped them better understand complex topics such as racial discrimination, indicating that film is a promising medium for linking classroom content with relevant life experiences.

These findings are supported by Banks (2019), who argues that effective education must prepare students to become empathetic, critical thinkers who are aware of different cultures and social realities. Films are rich in language and emotion, allowing students to explore diverse identities and moral dilemmas through storytelling. In the case of *Men of Honor*, the story of Carl Brashear—a Black Navy diver who overcomes systemic racism—offers a compelling context for students to examine themes of injustice, determination, and dignity. The film provides both a linguistic model and a moral narrative, making it an ideal tool for recount text instruction that is both academically relevant and socially engaging.

In contrast to Nursani (2013), who focused primarily on analyzing the film's sociological themes, this study extends the use of *Men of Honor* into a pedagogical context by transforming the film into structured

learning material. While Nursani examined the representation of racism and struggle, the present study demonstrates how those representations can actively support students' language development and critical thinking in the classroom. Moreover, while Newman et al. (2025) provided a broad overview of racial microaggressions in professional settings and emphasized the need for systemic interventions, this study adapts those insights into an educational intervention at the high school level. Rather than simply describing the effects of racial microaggressions, the current research engages students in recognizing and discussing these issues through film, thus fostering early awareness and empathy.

The effectiveness of the developed learning product was confirmed through both expert validation and classroom trials. During the small-scale trial, the item "This product helps me understand racism" received an average rating of 4.5, which falls into the "strongly agree" category. In the large-scale trial, students rated "This product makes learning more enjoyable" the highest, at 4.43, followed by 4.37 for "This product encourages me to be more active in learning." These results indicate that students not only accepted the product positively but also felt more engaged and motivated through the use of film-based instruction. The product successfully encouraged students to follow recount structures, analyze key events, and reflect on moral lessons while developing their English speaking and comprehension skills.

In addition, the learning process supported the development of social values and critical awareness. Classroom discussions that followed film scenes encouraged students to respond emotionally and analytically. Students engaged in identifying the main character, tracing significant life events, analyzing character attitudes, and reflecting on moral lessons. This format allowed learners to practice their language skills within a meaningful, real-life context. According to Giroux (2002), film can serve as a form of critical pedagogy, helping learners become more aware of issues of power, inequality, and justice. The students in this study were able to express concern about racial injustice and connect it to broader social realities, including experiences within their own communities.

Overall, this study reinforces the idea that film can serve not only as an instructional tool for improving language proficiency but also as a medium for character education. By integrating film into recount text learning, students were more engaged, better able to connect form and meaning, and more prepared to participate in thoughtful conversations about fairness, perseverance, and equality. The success of this product indicates that when visual media is used with structured guidance such as targeted worksheets, clear rubrics, and reflective prompts it can significantly enrich language education and promote holistic student development.

CONCLUSION(S)

This study aimed to develop a film-based English learning material using *Men of Honor* to teach recount text while simultaneously raising awareness of racial discrimination among 11th-grade students. The product was developed using the 4D model Define, Design, Develop, and Disseminate which allowed for systematic analysis, creation, validation, and implementation. The findings from each phase strongly indicate that the product was both pedagogically effective and socially meaningful.

The Define phase revealed a clear need for more engaging and value-oriented instructional materials. Teachers expressed a lack of resources that addressed real-world issues, while students showed

enthusiasm for visual and discussion-based learning. The Design phase responded to this need by creating a module that integrated recount text features with selected scenes from *Men of Honor*, supplemented by worksheets, discussion prompts, and rubrics designed to foster both language skills and social reflection.

Through the Develop and Disseminate phases, the product was validated by an expert and implemented in real classroom settings. The results showed that students responded positively to the material, participated actively in discussion activities, and demonstrated improved understanding of recount texts and social issues. Students were able to critically engage with themes of racism and injustice, connect them to real-life situations, and express their thoughts using appropriate language structures. The discussions promoted not only English language development but also the cultivation of empathy, cooperation, and moral reasoning.

This study confirms that film can serve as an effective medium for English language learning when thoughtfully integrated into a values-based instructional design. It also demonstrates that social issues like racial discrimination can be addressed meaningfully within the language classroom, supporting both academic goals and character education.

Therefore, English teachers are strongly encouraged to explore the use of film as a tool for contextualized, critical, and inclusive learning experiences in the English language classroom. When thoughtfully integrated, films can offer more than just linguistic exposure—they provide authentic, real-world contexts that allow students to reflect on relevant social issues while developing their reading, listening, speaking, and critical thinking skills. In particular, films like *Men of Honor*, which is based on a true story and addresses themes such as racial discrimination, perseverance, and justice, can be highly effective in making recount text learning more engaging and meaningful. By watching and analyzing scenes from the film, students are not only exposed to natural language use but are also encouraged to think deeply about the moral messages embedded in the narrative. This promotes the development of both academic and character competencies.

Schools and education stakeholders are advised to support this approach by providing teachers with access to audiovisual tools, proper facilities, and pedagogical training to maximize the potential of film-based instruction. With the right support, film can become a powerful medium to bridge the gap between curriculum goals and real-world relevance, particularly when addressing topics that may otherwise be overlooked in traditional language textbooks. In addition, teachers should be encouraged to use supporting materials such as structured worksheets, discussion guides, and performance rubrics that align with genre-based and communicative language teaching principles to optimize student participation and comprehension.

Future research is recommended to explore this instructional model further by applying similar development procedures using different films, text genres, or target skills. Studies could be expanded to different educational levels, cultural settings, or thematic focuses such as gender equality, environmental awareness, or mental health to assess how well film can support a wider range of learning goals. Comparative studies between film-based and conventional methods would also be valuable in evaluating long-term impacts on student engagement, empathy, and language mastery. Ultimately, integrating film

into English language teaching offers a promising pathway toward more humanistic, reflective, and transformative education.

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