

**EXPLORING MOTIVATION AND CULTURAL IDENTITY IN
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING: A FOCUS ON STUDENT
PERSPECTIVES**

THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement
for Gaining the Degree of Education
Bachelor in English Language Education



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ABSTRACT

Title : Exploring Motivation and Cultural Identity in
English Language Learning: A Focus On
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The global dominance of English has made it a vital skill for academic, professional, and intercultural success. However, in Indonesia's EFL context, English instruction often prioritizes technical skills over students' cultural identity and emotional engagement. This study explores how cultural identity influences students' motivation in learning English as a foreign language. Grounded in Gardner's Socio-Educational Model and Deci & Ryan's Self-Determination Theory, the research adopts a qualitative phenomenological approach. Initially, a questionnaire was distributed to 26 eighth-semester students in the English Education Program at UIN Walisongo Semarang to identify culturally diverse culture. Six participants were purposively selected for interviews. Thematic analysis revealed four key findings: (1) cultural identity serves as both a source of pride and conflict in learning English; (2) learning English shapes students' sense of self and identity; (3) motivation is driven by aspirations and the need to belong; and (4) students face challenges in balancing their cultural values with English learning demands. The study highlights the importance of culturally responsive pedagogy to foster integrative and intrinsic motivation among learners and calls for greater alignment between language teaching and students' socio-cultural realities.

Keywords: *Cultural Identity, Language Learning Motivation, English as a Foreign Language, Student Perspectives*

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This thesis entitled " EXPLORING MOTIVATION AND CULTURAL IDENTITY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING: A FOCUS ON STUDENT PERSPECTIVES" is submitted as one of the requirements to obtain a Bachelor of English Education Degree at UIN Walisongo Semarang.

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MOTTO

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

“You who believe, make patience and pray your helpers, surely Allah is with those who are patient.” (Q.S. Al-Baqarah: 153)

“Late does not mean failure, fast does not mean great, this is a process for destiny, if it were not for Allah who enables me, I might have given up long ago”

(Siti Nur Hanifah)

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers several aspects related to the introduction of this research, including the background of studies, research question, research objectives, and the significance of the research.

A. Background of the Research

In today's globalized world, English has become the dominant language of international communication, science, business, and education (Karim et al., 2023). Its increasing use worldwide has not only opened doors to academic and professional opportunities but also introduced complex cultural dynamics into the language learning process. For many learners, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts like Indonesia, acquiring English involves more than mastering grammar and vocabulary; it often means navigating shifts in identity, values, and personal motivation (Xiao et al., n.d.). The role of English is further reinforced in international communication, especially within corporate and large-scale organizational contexts across the world. However, for students with a strong attachment to their cultural identity, learning English can become a source of internal conflict. These students may view English as a foreign language that threatens the preservation of their native culture, leading to reduced integrative motivation and the willingness to engage

deeply with the culture associated with the English language (Peng & Patterson, 2022).

In the reality of English language learning in Indonesia, instrumental motivation is more dominant. Many students learn English to achieve good test scores, obtain scholarships, or improve future job prospects (Karim et al., 2023). However, integrative motivation is often low as students feel no emotional or cultural affinity with English. In fact, for some students who have a strong cultural identity, English is seen as a threat to their local cultural values (Peng & Patterson, 2022). This results in a low drive to understand the culture inherent in the English language itself.

Cultural identity refers to the sense of belonging to a particular cultural group, encompassing language, traditions, values, and beliefs, while motivation in EFL learning describes the internal and external factors that drive students to engage with English. These two aspects are crucial yet deeply personal. As learners encounter English often perceived as representing Western or globalized norms they may face tensions between maintaining their cultural roots and adapting to the target language culture. This interplay significantly shapes learners' experiences, engagement, and outcomes in the classroom.

This study is supported by the relevant theoretical framework of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which classifies

motivation into two primary types: intrinsic motivation, which stems from personal interest or satisfaction, and extrinsic motivation, which is shaped by external influences such as social norms, family expectations or institutional demands (Deci, E. L., & Ryan, 1985). Despite growing awareness of the affective and cultural dimensions of language learning, there is still limited understanding of how students' cultural identities interact with their motivation to learn English, especially from the students' own perspectives. Most existing research tends to treat motivation and cultural identity as separate constructs or focuses predominantly on institutional or teacher centered views (Riyanti, 2019). This emphasises the importance of culturally relevant pedagogy in fostering deeper engagement and motivation among students.

In the context of English language learning in Indonesia, there is still a tendency to emphasize the technical aspects of teaching, such as grammar and vocabulary, without considering students' personal motivation and cultural context (Tin, 2013). In fact, motivation is one of the key elements in successful second language learning. (Noels et al., 1999) state that the mismatch between overly cognitive teaching approaches and students' motivational needs is one of the main causes of low student engagement in the language learning process. In Indonesia, mechanistic approaches to English language learning often focus on mastering language rules and academic achievement, but have

not touched on students' affective aspects, such as interest, motivation, and the connection with their values and cultural identity. For example, Tin's research findings show that students' interest in English can be fostered through reflective and creative approaches, such as reconstructing past experiences and linking them to the deeper meaning of learning (Tin, 2013). This shows the importance of developing learning methods that are not only oriented towards cognitive outcomes, but also able to connect students' personal experiences with the learning process in a meaningful way.

The importance of motivation in language learning in reality still focuses on the technical aspects of English language teaching curriculum and methods, such as grammar and vocabulary, without considering students' more personal and contextual motivations. (Noels et al., 1999) in English language learning found that the mismatch between overly cognitive language teaching approaches and students' motivational needs is one of the main causes of low student engagement in language learning. In Indonesia, English language teaching is mechanistic and focuses on mastering language rules without paying enough attention to students' motivation and interest. For example, research (Tin, 2013) shows that Students' interest in learning English is triggered by reimagining the past and experiencing its value in a way that creates surprise and unexpectedness,

encouraging post-hoc understanding of its importance and past interactions.

Students' cultural identity plays an important role in shaping the way they understand and interact with a foreign language. According to (Kramsch, 1993), foreign language learning is a process of negotiation between an individual's cultural identity and the cultural identity inherent in the target language. In the Indonesian context, English is often associated with globalization, modernity and Western culture, which can create tension for students who have a strong attachment to local cultural values. This tension can lead to identity conflict, where students feel that mastering English has the potential to erode their identity as part of the local community.

Several studies have shown that learning approaches that integrate local culture can actually strengthen students' motivation and improve their language skills. Local culture-based programs such as Your Language My Culture (YLMC), for example, have been shown to increase students' confidence in using English because they feel the learning is relevant to their daily lives (Nambiar et al., 2020). This indicates that the integration between students' cultural identity and English learning materials is not only possible, but also contributes positively to learning success. Therefore, it is important to dig deeper into how cultural identity

interacts with students' motivation in learning English as a foreign language, especially from their own perspective.

Students with a strong cultural identity may face social pressure to maintain their native language and culture, which can either hinder or enhance their motivation in learning English (Peng & Patterson, 2022). In English language learning context, English is often perceived as something separate from local culture, which contributes to students' low motivation. In addition, there is a lack of research exploring students' perceptions and lived experiences regarding the role of cultural identity in shaping their English learning journey. Research by (Munandar & Newton, 2021) only emphasizes institutional and pedagogical perspectives, and ignores the different ways in which students navigate their cultural identity when learning a foreign language. Therefore, this research will explore how approaches that accommodate cultural identity can increase students' motivation in learning English, making language learning more relevant and effective.

Although a number of studies have addressed the relationship between motivation and cultural identity in English language learning, most of the previous research still focuses on institutional or teacher perspectives, and tends to use quantitative approaches that are not fully able to capture the depth of students' experiences (Munandar & Newton, 2021). In fact, students as the main subjects in the learning process have very personalized

experiences, perceptions, and challenges, especially when they have to balance between maintaining their cultural identity and learning a foreign language that is considered “foreign” from their social environment. In addition, in the Indonesian context, the relationship between learning motivation and students' cultural identity has not been studied in depth from their own perspective.

This study addresses the gap by exploring how students' cultural identity influences their motivation in learning English. By centering students' voices, the research aims to reveal how cultural background shapes learning behavior, emotional engagement, and perceived challenges. It seeks to uncover how learners negotiate their identities within the EFL context and how these identities, in turn, inform their reasons for learning. Moreover, existing research often relies on quantitative methods and tends to emphasize institutional or teacher perspectives, rather than centering the voices of the students as active meaning makers.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the broader discourse on identity-based motivation and culturally responsive pedagogy in English language education. The findings are expected to inform more inclusive, student centered teaching strategies that recognize cultural diversity as a valuable resource, rather than a barrier. Through a qualitative phenomenological approach, this study not only expands theoretical understandings of the identity-motivation link but also offers practical insights for

EFL teachers, curriculum developers, and policymakers striving to create more equitable and meaningful learning experiences.

B. Research Questions

1. How do students describe their cultural identity in English language learning?
2. How do motivation and cultural identity influence each other in the ELL process?
3. How do students perceive the role of cultural identity in shaping their English language learning journey?

C. Research Objective

- a. To investigate how students describe their cultural identity in the context of English language learning.
- b. To examine the reciprocal relationship between motivation and cultural identity throughout the English language learning process.
- c. To understand students' perceptions and experiences regarding the role of cultural identity in shaping their English language learning journey.

D. Significance of the Study

This study aims to provide valuable contributions to various stakeholders theoretically, pedagogically, and practically:

1. Theoretically

This research can enrich language learning theories, particularly in terms of how motivation and cultural identity play a role in the English language learning process. It will provide a new perspective on the importance of student-centred approaches that take into account psychological and cultural aspects.

2. Pedagogically

The study's findings can help English language teachers build more effective teaching techniques that align with students' requirements, motivation, and local culture. Thus, English language instruction may become more relevant, entertaining, and effective.

3. Practically

The results of this study are expected to be useful for:

1. For students

This research aims to improve the quality of English language learning in Indonesia by discovering approaches to motivate students and address problems they meet.

2. For Teachers

The study's findings can help English language teachers build more effective teaching techniques that align with students' requirements, motivation, and local culture.

3. For Future Researchers

This research can help build a flexible English curriculum that addresses students' motivational and cultural demands, in addition to technical competence.

4. For Readers

Readers can gain insights into the challenges and strategies involved in maintaining cultural identity while learning a foreign language.

E. Scope and Limitation of The Research

This research focuses on the influence of cultural identity on the motivation of eighth-semester students in the English Education Program at UIN Walisongo Semarang in learning English as a foreign language. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, the study explores students' personal experiences regarding the relationship between cultural values, self-identity, and both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in language learning. The scope of the research is limited to one study program at a university, the findings cannot be widely generalized. Furthermore, the data were collected through interviews, so potential subjective bias arising from participants' memory and personal perceptions must be considered in interpreting the results.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter highlights three main points such as previous research, literature review, which are ideally discussed.

A. Previous Research

Several similar studies, both national and international, have been conducted related to this research. The author will select five previous studies that are relevant to this research.

The first study was conducted by Anqi Peng and Meagan M. Patterson (Peng & Patterson, 2022), titled "The relationship between cultural identity, language learning motivation, and perceived English proficiency for international students in the United States" by Anqi Peng and Meagan M. Patterson. published in the journal *Language, Culture, and Curriculum*. This study explores the relationship between cultural identity, language learning motivation, and English language proficiency in international students in the United States. This study produces a number of key findings regarding the relationship between cultural identity, language learning motivation, and English language proficiency in international students in the United States. The results of this study found that strong ethnic identity can cause social pressure or preferences to maintain the language and culture of origin, which can reduce opportunities to spread English. In this

study the existence of motivation as a mediator plays a very important role. High learning motivation can improve English language skills, both for individuals with strong ethnic identities and high American identities. But this study has not separated Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation. This study combines both types of motivation, although each can have different impacts on learning outcomes. This research is very relevant as it shows how cultural identity can be both a barrier and an impetus in English language learning. However, I see the importance of separating intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, because in the Indonesian context, they have very different impacts on students' engagement in foreign language learning. My research will try to fill this gap by exploring how these forms of motivation emerge in the learning experiences of students who have strong cultural identities.

The second study, conducted by Wang Xiaohui (Wang, 2024)., titled "English language motivation, cultural identity and sensitivity among Chinese EFL undergraduates." This study was published in the International Journal of Research Studies in Education in 2024. This study examines English learning motivation, cultural identity, and intercultural sensitivity among Chinese EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students. This study aims to explore the relationship between these three variables and provide insights to improve the English learning experience for EFL students in China. From this study, the findings show that

students have strong motivation to learn English, with the biggest motivational factor being the desire to "go abroad". The conclusion of this study states that although Chinese EFL students show strong motivation and cultural identity, they also face unique challenges such as low motivation for individual development, weak language identity, and limited intercultural sensitivity, especially in terms of open mindedness. Therefore, the researcher proposes an English language improvement program to help students improve their motivation to learn English and develop and strengthen their cultural identity and intercultural sensitivity. This research highlights the importance of instrumental motivations such as the desire to "go abroad" as the main driver for learning English. This resonates with the Indonesian context, where instrumental motivations are also very dominant, such as for scholarships or jobs (Karim et al., 2023). However, this study also revealed low intercultural sensitivity and motivation for self-development. In the Indonesian context, this points to the need for English language learning that does not only focus on technical aspects or practical goals, but also needs to integrate approaches that strengthen students' intrinsic motivation and their connectedness to the local culture. Thus, this research inspires the need for contextualized learning strategies that can build linkages between students' cultural identities and the English language learning process.

The third study was conducted (Nufus, 2022)., "Cultural Identity and its Impact on Students' English Proficiency: A Case Study'. This study used a qualitative approach through observation, questionnaires and interviews with participants consisting of four students from Bangka and Jambi. The data were analyzed descriptively based on the results of observations, questionnaires, and interviews to explain how cultural identity affects students' English proficiency at Al-Mansyuriyah High School, Tangerang. The results of this study revealed a significant influence between cultural identity and English proficiency. This study shows that local language as part of cultural identity can affect students' confidence and English language ability, especially in pronunciation. In the Indonesian context, where linguistic and cultural diversity is huge, this result reinforces the importance of understanding how students interpret their cultural identity in the process of learning a foreign language. However, this study is still limited to four participants and has not touched on the motivational aspects in depth. Therefore, my research will extend this approach by exploring how students' cultural identity influences their motivation to learn English, both integrative and instrumentally, while also paying attention to their personal experiences and perceptions of perceived learning. According to this study, there are several factors that affect English proficiency. Dialect factors that affect students' confidence in speaking English. Regional

dialects cause certain differences in intonation and pronunciation. The biggest influence according to this study is the heritage language or local language, which is the first language of the students and greatly affects the process of learning English. This study only involved four students, the results can be generalized to a larger population.

The fourth study according to research by (Ardasheva et al., 2012)., entitled “Validating the English Language Learner Motivation Scale (ELLMS): Pre-College to Measure Language Learning Motivational Orientations among Young ELLs” aims to modify and validate the English language learner motivation scale in pre-college students (aged 9-17 years). The measure is based on Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which classifies motivation into three main dimensions: Intrinsic Motivation (internal motivation such as enjoyment or desire to learn), Introjected Regulation (motivation based on internal pressure such as guilt or recognition), and External Regulation (motivation due to external incentives such as grades or jobs). This study used Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) approaches on two samples of approximately 500 students each in an urban US school. The results showed high validity and reliability of the measure, making it suitable for evaluating the motivation of students from elementary to high school. The findings showed that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation had a

significant relationship, particularly among immigrant students learning English as a second language. However, this study has limitations in terms of generalizability as the sample was only from an urban area and the measurement tool was in English, which may be less relevant for students with limited language skills. Future research should explore the relationship between motivation and language achievement, validate the scale in different cultural contexts, and conduct longitudinal studies to examine the dynamics of motivation over time. This research is important because it shows the relevance of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in language learning, based on Self-Determination Theory. However, the context of this research is still limited to immigrant students in urban areas of the US and has not accommodated different cultural contexts such as in Indonesia. In the Indonesian reality, intrinsic motivation is often low due to the lack of connection between teaching materials and local cultural values (Riyanti, 2019). Therefore, my research tries to fill this gap by qualitatively exploring how students in Indonesia build their motivation in learning English through the lens of their cultural identity.

The fifth study was conducted by (Munandar & Newton, 2021),. entitled “Indonesian EFL Teachers' Pedagogic Beliefs and Classroom Practices Regarding Culture and Interculturality” explores the pedagogical beliefs and teaching practices of English

as a foreign language teachers in Indonesia, specifically in the context of teaching culture and intercultural relations in senior high schools. The study uses a multi-case method with data from classroom observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis to evaluate how teachers navigate the challenges of teaching culture under the influence of hegemonic national education policies. The research findings show that state policies strongly influence the way teachers integrate cultural values, morals, religion and patriotism in English language learning. Despite recognizing the importance of the relationship between language and culture, explicit teaching of culture is often hampered by curriculum pressures, limited time and a focus on exam preparation. Teachers tend to use materials that are locally relevant and reflect students' cultural values to make learning more meaningful. However, there is a gap between pedagogical beliefs and classroom practices, especially regarding more in-depth and explicit exploration of culture. This study suggests more explicit and thorough intercultural teaching strategies to promote students' cultural awareness. Therefore, this study aims to explore how cultural identity opens an important space for discussion on how local culture is accommodated in the English language classroom. However, their approach focuses on the teacher's perspective. My research will fill this gap by focusing on how they make meaning

of their cultural identity in language learning, as well as how it affects their motivation and cultural identity.

B. Literature Review

1. The Role of Motivation in English Language Learning

Motivation is a very important psychological element in the second language (L2) learning process. According to (Solak, 2012), motivation is defined as an internal driving force that directs a person to achieve certain goals. Motivation drives individuals to strive, persevere, and overcome challenges in achieving learning success. In the context of English language learning, (Muhammad, 2017) adds that motivation reflects energy changes within a person, characterized by a strong drive to achieve high learning outcomes. Thus, motivation provides the foundation for students' perseverance, concentration, and engagement in the learning process (Anggraeni et al., 2024).

Students who perceive that they have genuine control over their own learning process exercising autonomy over what, when, and how they study demonstrate markedly higher levels of intrinsic motivation (Noels et al., 2000). These learners often go beyond the requirements of their courses, choosing of their own accord to immerse themselves in the language through activities such as delving into English novels, following English language films and television series, and actively seeking conversation partners among native speakers. This self directed engagement not

only reinforces their linguistic skills but also fosters a lasting personal interest in English.

By contrast, learners whose motivation is primarily extrinsic tend to engage with the language in a more perfunctory manner. Their involvement usually centers on meeting external expectations such as achieving grades, passing exams, or satisfying teacher directives rather than on any genuine curiosity or enjoyment of the language itself (Ushioda, 2020). As a result, their study habits often remain limited to classroom assignments and rote practice, yielding only short-lived bursts of effort without cultivating the deep emotional connection that characterizes sustained language learning.

In the study of motivation theory, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) developed by Deci and Ryan (1985) divides motivation into two main types, namely intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation arises from within the individual, such as curiosity, interest in language, or personal enjoyment in mastering a new skill. Meanwhile, extrinsic motivation is influenced by external factors such as academic demands, parental encouragement, or career needs (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In English language learning, intrinsic motivation is often associated with long-term success as students are motivated by personal satisfaction in language (Ushioda, 2020).

Research by (Lou & A. Noels, 2021) shows that students who feel they have control over their learning process (autonomy) tend to be more intrinsically motivated compared to students who feel forced to learn due to external pressure. In practice, intrinsically motivated students tend to undertake additional activities such as reading English literature, watching English movies, or seeking opportunities to interact with native speakers. In contrast, extrinsic motivation generally encourages transient engagement, aiming more to fulfill academic obligations without building a deep emotional connection with the language (Ushioda, 2009).

Apart from being classified based on the origin of motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic), motivation in English language learning can also be distinguished based on its orientation, namely integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. (R.C Gardner, 1985) explains that integrative motivation refers to students' drive to understand and integrate with the culture of the native speakers of the target language. Students with integrative motivation usually show interest in blending in socially, understanding cultural norms, and actively participating in the life of the language community. For example, a student who plans to study in an English speaking country may have strong integrative motivation.

On the other hand, instrumental motivation refers more to practical goals such as getting a better job, getting a scholarship, or improving social status. In many developing countries, including Indonesia, instrumental motivation tends to be more dominant as English language acquisition is seen as an important tool for social and economic mobility (Fontanilla, 2016). Although instrumental motivation can be a strong driver, (Ushioda, 2009) warns that if learning is only oriented towards external goals, students' emotional engagement in the learning process can be weak.

Furthermore, (Gardner & Lambert, 1959) through the Socio-Educational Model asserts that integrative motivation is more related to success in learning a second language than instrumental motivation, especially if students show a deep interest in the target language culture. This model places attitude towards language and culture as a key factor in shaping motivation and learning success.

2. Cultural Identity in the Context of English as Foreign Language

Cultural identity refers to an individual's awareness of membership in a particular cultural group that includes shared language, values, traditions and symbols. According to (Nufus, 2022), cultural identity is not a fixed entity, but an evolving process, a form of “becoming” rather than “being” (Norton &

Toohy, 2011). In the context of language learning, cultural identity plays a central role in mediating the way learners understand, internalize and produce the target language. Cultural identity is a multidimensional concept that includes the language, customs, values, and beliefs that shape a person's view of themselves and the world around them (Sook, 2002). According to (Servaes, 1989), cultural identity is dynamic, changes over time, and is formed through social interaction and communication.

In the context of language learning, learners often experience a dilemma between maintaining their home cultural identity and adapting to the target language culture, which can lead to psychological conflict and identity crisis (Kim, 2003). The concept of *Third Space* as described by Bhabha provides a symbolic space where learners can negotiate a new identity without losing their cultural roots, which is relevant in a multicultural classroom environment (Norton & De Costa, 2018). Individual perceptions of cultural identity also have a significant influence on learning motivation and perceptions of foreign language ability (Peng & Patterson, 2022). Learners' diverse identities from an early age should be accommodated through social approaches in language teaching, as language is inseparable from cultural context (Vickov, 2007).

Therefore, the curriculum should be developed to support students' personal connections with the material being taught

(Clayton et al., 2013). Monocultural teaching approaches can create assimilation pressures that threaten the existence of minority learners' cultural identity (Altugan, 2015). Therefore, language learning experiences should be positioned as personal narratives that reflect learners' cultural dynamics (Coffey & Street, 2008). Teachers have an important role in creating a safe and inclusive space for this identity development (Nunan & Choi, 2010).

Language is not only a means of communication, but also a marker of social and cultural identity. Bourdieu (1991) states that language use indicates one's position in the social structure. Norton and De Costa (2018) point out that language learners shape their identities through discursive practices in learning spaces. Therefore, understanding the relationship between language and cultural identity is very important in second language education.

In the context of language learning, (Kramsch, 1993) stated that language is not only a communication system, but also a carrier of cultural meaning. Therefore, learning a foreign language means entering into a world of values and meanings that may be different or even contrary to the student's native culture. For example, students from highly collectivist cultural backgrounds may have difficulty understanding the individualistic values that often appear in English-language materials. Cultural identities can be made up of a variety of things such as religion,

ancestry, skin colour, language, discourse, class, education, profession, skills, community, family, activities, region, friends, food, dress, political attitudes, many of which can cross national boundaries (Holliday, 2010).

(Rummens, 1993) adding that cultural identity is also closely related to students' personal experiences, including religious backgrounds, communities, and daily customs. When these aspects are not accommodated in the learning process, students can feel alienated and experience identity conflicts that impact their motivation to learn.

This phenomenon is also reflected in Indonesia, where English is often associated with modernity and globalization, while local culture is identified with community traditions and values. Research by (Morganna et al., 2018) shows that although Indonesians recognize the importance of English, there are concerns about the potential loss of local cultural values due to the dominance of foreign languages and cultures.

In English language learning, students' cultural identities play a role in shaping motivation, learning strategies, and perceptions of success and failure. Students who feel their cultural identity is recognized and valued in a learning environment tend to show higher engagement. In contrast, students who feel their identity is threatened by the target language culture may

experience resistance or low learning motivation (Peng & Patterson, 2022).

3. The Relationship between Motivation and Cultural Identity in the Context of English Language Learning

Motivation in English language learning refers to the internal and external drives that influence an individual's willingness and effort to acquire language skills (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Meanwhile, cultural identity reflects the way individuals define themselves in a particular social and cultural context. Both are instrumental in foreign language learning as they can either reinforce or inhibit student engagement in the learning process (Gao et al., 2011). In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), the relationship between motivation and cultural identity becomes even more complex as students have to navigate between home culture and target language culture (Block, 2007).

Integrative motivation reflects the desire to integrate socially and culturally with the English-speaking community, while instrumental motivation is more related to practical benefits such as career and academics (R.C Gardner, 1985). Integrative motivated students tend to value the target culture, while instrumentally motivated ones focus on the outcomes that can be obtained from language acquisition (Noels et al., 2000). Studies by Dornyei, show that these two types of motivation can support each

other, depending on how students' cultural identity develops during the learning process (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005).

Cultural identity is not a static entity, but rather dynamic and constantly evolving, especially in the context of globalization and second language learning (Norton, 2013). Students learning English not only learn language structures, but also participate in a process of identity negotiation between the home culture and the target language culture (Kramsch, 2009). This process can strengthen or weaken motivation to learn depending on how much they feel accepted in both cultures (Duff, 2007).

EFL students often experience identity tension when their cultural values clash with the English culture. For example, students from collectivist cultures may feel uncomfortable with the direct communication style in English which is considered too individualistic (Yashima, 2002). This tension can have a negative impact on motivation, especially if students feel they have to sacrifice part of their cultural identity in order to succeed in the target language (Kanno & Norton, 2003).

A learning environment that supports students' cultural identity can increase motivation. Conversely, an environment that is homogeneous and prioritizes only the target culture can make students feel marginalized (Toohey, 2000). A study by (Lamb, 2004) in Indonesia showed that students who felt their local cultural representations were valued in English language teaching

showed higher levels of motivation. Therefore, the integration of local cultural values in the curriculum can strengthen the relationship between motivation and cultural identity (Lamb, 2004).

Learning materials that represent various cultures can strengthen the connection between motivation and identity. When students see their culture reflected in texts or learning activities, they feel valued and more engaged (Matsuda, 2006). Conversely, the dominance of Western culture in EFL materials can cause emotional distance between students and the target language (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011).

In the era of globalization, many students form hybrid identities, that is a combination of local and global cultures (Block, 2008). This hybrid identity allows students to build a more flexible relationship with English and increases motivation to learn because no longer see the language as belonging to others, but as part of the global reality they occupy (Canagarajah, 2005).

The relationship between motivation and cultural identity in English language learning is complex and mutually influential (Kubota & Lin, 2009). By understanding how students make meaning of their identity in the learning process, educators can develop teaching strategies that are more inclusive, culturally relevant and encourage long-term motivation. Therefore, recognizing students' cultural identity is not only a form of respect,

but also a pedagogical strategy to improve language learning outcomes (Ushioda, 2009).

4. Students' Cultural Perspectives and Their Motivation in English Language Learning

Learning English is not merely a cognitive process focused on linguistic aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure. English language learning is also influenced by affective and social factors, particularly students' motivation and their cultural identity. In this context, each student enters the classroom with a unique cultural background, set of values, beliefs, and personal goals all of which shape the way they interpret and respond to the language learning process.

Students' perspectives in learning English reflect their views, attitudes, beliefs, and personal experiences throughout the learning journey. These perspectives are not static; rather, they are dynamic and continuously shaped by interactions with the learning environment, teachers, instructional materials, and broader social and cultural influences. These factors directly or indirectly influence students' level of motivation, the learning strategies they adopt, and ultimately their language learning outcomes. Social and cultural factors play a significant role in shaping students' confidence and motivation in learning English. When students feel that their cultural identity is respected and valued, they are more likely to develop a sense of ownership over the learning process,

which in turn increases their classroom engagement and enhances their learning outcomes (Vergara-Burgos, 2024).

Student motivation in learning English is one of the most critical factors determining their success in acquiring strong language skills. In this context, English is often seen as a tool for achieving success in both professional and educational domains. A study conducted by (Wappa & Gilanlioglu, 2024) among engineering students found that instrumental motivation was highly dominant among them. The students viewed learning English as a means to gain pragmatic benefits in the future, particularly in professional environments that demand international communication skills. Interestingly, this pragmatic motivation fostered a positive attitude toward English learning, especially in multicultural contexts that require flexibility and openness to linguistic and cultural diversity. The correlation between cultural distance and language achievement is that students with smaller cultural gaps exhibited higher levels of integrative motivation and greater language proficiency (Svanes, 1987).

5. Conceptual Framework

This study rests on the assumption that students' cultural identity plays an important role in shaping their motivation to learn English as a foreign language. This conceptual framework is built by integrating two main theories, namely the Socio-Educational

Model by Gardner (1985) and Self-Determination Theory by Deci & Ryan (1985). Gardner divides motivation in second language learning into two main orientations: integrative motivation, which is the students' desire to understand and interact with the target language culture, and instrumental motivation, which is the drive to achieve practical goals such as work or study. On the other hand, Deci and Ryan differentiate motivation into intrinsic (drive from within due to personal interest and satisfaction) and extrinsic (drive from outside such as social pressure or academic need). In the Indonesian context, students often experience tension between maintaining local cultural identity and the need to master English which is associated with global or Western culture. This tension can lead to identity conflict which results in a decrease in students' integrative and intrinsic motivation. Therefore, this study positions motivation as a mediating variable that bridges the relationship between cultural identity and students' English learning experience. Using a phenomenological approach, this framework allows the researcher to understand how students construct personal meanings to their learning process, as well as how these cultural and psychological dynamics influence their engagement in English language learning. This study shows that cultural identity has a significant influence on students' motivation in learning English, both intrinsically and extrinsically. Therefore, English learning needs to be designed contextually and relevant to

students' cultural background to make it more meaningful and encourage their engagement. The implications of these findings encourage teachers to integrate local cultural elements into teaching materials, as well as encourage educational institutions to build curricula that are responsive to cultural diversity.

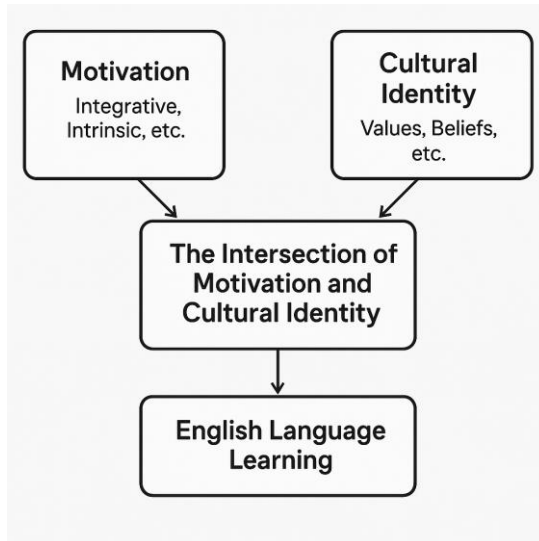


Figure 1: *Conceptual Framework*

CHAPTER III

METHOD OF RESEARCH

This chapter discussed the research method. It played important roles in research since it affected the findings and discussion. Before conducting the data, the researcher represented a clear description of research design, research setting, research participant, research focus, techniques of collecting data and instruments.

A. Research Design

This study uses a qualitative approach by (John W. Creswell, 2016) to understand how the motivation and identity of culture affect the learning of English from the perspective of students. A phenomenological study was used to explore students' experiences and perceptions regarding the role of motivation and their cultural identity in the process of learning English. This qualitative approach is chosen because the focus is on the deep understanding of student subjective experience, and how they interpret the motivation and cultural identity in the context of language learning.

The brief framework design of this research is stated below:

Research Question	Method	of	Instrument
Collecting Data			
How do students describe their cultural identity in English language learning?	Questionnaire & Interview		Closed ended Questionnaire & Semi-structured Interview Guide
How do motivation and cultural identity influence each other in the English Language learning process?	Questionnaire & Interview		Closed ended Questionnaire & Semi-structured Interview Guide
How do students perceive the role of cultural identity in shaping their English language learning journey?	Questionnaire & Interview		Closed ended Questionnaire & Semi-structured Interview Guide

Table 1. *Framework design*

1. Research Setting

This research was conducted within the academic environment of UIN Walisongo Semarang, where English language instruction is integrated into the curriculum. UIN

Walisongo emphasis on bilingual and multicultural education provides a suitable context for examining the interplay between students' cultural identity and their motivation to learn English. The cultural diversity of the student body contributes valuable perspectives that enrich the findings. The research was conducted between April and Mei 2025.

2. Participant of the Research

The participants in this study are eighth-semester students from the English Language Education Program at UIN Walisongo Semarang. They were selected using purposive sampling, ensuring that individuals with diverse cultural backgrounds. Initial participant recruitment was done through the distribution of a willingness questionnaire via WhatsApp academic groups. The data was collected through semi structured interviews with six participants from diverse cultural backgrounds, including Batak, Javanese, Ngapak, and Depok, who are currently studying English in the university's English education program.

3. Research Focus

The focus of this study is to explore the motivation and cultural identity of Indonesian undergraduate students in English language learning, with a focus on their perspectives and experiences.

4. Data Collection

Data were collected primarily through semi-structured interviews, each lasting approximately 30–45 minutes. This format allowed for both guided and flexible exploration of students' experiences. An interview guide was developed based on the research questions and relevant theoretical frameworks (Gardner's Socio-Educational Model and Self-Determination Theory).

To enrich the data, students were also invited to share personal stories or examples relating to how their cultural identity influenced their language learning. Some responses included reflective narratives, which functioned similarly to informal journals.

5. Ethical Considerations

Participants were provided with informed consent forms, which explained the purpose of the study, their voluntary participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. The study also respected the participants' cultural backgrounds and emotional well-being throughout the research process.

B. Techniques of Collecting Data and Instrument

The data collection, which pertains to the literature research or literature as well as data gathered from the field, are

obtained using the data collecting method. The author employed the following techniques for gathering data:

1. Questionnaire

Before conducting semi structured interviews, the researcher first distributed an initial questionnaire to 8th semester students of the English Language Education Study Program at UIN Walisongo Semarang as an initial stage of participant selection. This questionnaire is personal and exploratory in nature and aims to:

- Step 1: Identify students' willingness to participate in research.
- Step 2: Find out the students' cultural background.
- Step 3: Explore their initial experiences related to the relationship between
- Step 4: cultural identity and motivation in learning English.
- Step 5: Determine the suitability of potential participants to the criteria of phenomenological research.

This questionnaire is structured in the form of open and closed questions, and distributed through online media such as student WhatsApp groups. The results of this questionnaire are used as the basis for selecting participants for further interviews.

2. Interview

An interview is a structured or semi-structured conversation between a researcher and a student to gain in-depth information about their experiences, motivations, and cultural identity. According to (Fontana & Frey, 2005) interviews as one of the data collection methods used in social research. Interviews can take the form of many different types of interactions, ranging from individual face to face verbal exchanges to group interviews, telephone surveys, or mailed questionnaires. Interviews serve as both a measurement tool and a means of understanding individual or group perspectives. With a qualitative approach, interviews are used as an active interaction that shapes research results based on the context and social dynamics between the interviewer and respondent. (Bevan, 2014) States that interviews in qualitative research aim to understand the meaning that individuals give to their experiences. This research is concerned with cultural identity and student motivation, interviews allow students to express their personal views without the limitation of closed answers.

The researcher used the following process to gain data from the interview:

Step 1: The researcher prepared a semi-structured interview guide and brought along a recorder to

ensure all participant responses were accurately captured.

Step 2: The researcher conducted the interviews in a friendly and respectful manner, based on the question structure outlined in the interview guide.

Step 3: Participant responses were recorded and supported by brief handwritten notes during the session.

Step 4: The recorded audio data was transcribed into written form, and the transcript was shared with each participant for validation (member checking).

Step 5: All transcriptions and audio data were securely stored and organized for analysis.

3. Documentation

Documentation plays a crucial role in structuring the sequence of research activities. In interview-based research, documentation studies serve as a valuable complement to the interview method. It is presented alongside data collected through various research tools, including interview transcripts, questionnaires, observations, and other relevant elements. For this study, the researcher collected data from student documents and prepared essential research tools such as writing materials and recording devices. In this

investigation, documentation was utilized in the form of photographs and audio recordings.

C. The Techniques of Analyzing Data

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, based on the framework developed by (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This method is used to identify, analyze, and interpret patterns or themes within qualitative data. The steps include:

Phase 1 Familiarization

The researcher read and reread all interview transcripts thoroughly to understand the content and context of the data as a whole. The researcher also recorded initial impressions and looked at key words, emotional tones, and things that often appeared.

Phase 2 Generating Initial Codes

The researcher began to label or code parts of the data that were considered important or meaningful in accordance with the research focus. Each relevant quote or statement was given a short code to facilitate classification.

Phase 3 Searching for Themes

Codes that were similar or interrelated were collected and grouped into initial broader themes. These themes began to indicate important patterns in the data.

Phase 4 Reviewing Themes

The researcher evaluated whether the coded data actually supported each theme. If a theme was too broad, inconsistent or irrelevant, it was revised or split/merged.

Phase 5 Defining and Naming Themes

Each theme was specifically defined, explaining its scope and focus. Theme names were concise but reflected the content and meaning.

Phase 6 Producing the Report

The researcher organized the results of the analysis in narrative form, linking them to the research questions and the theoretical framework used. Direct quotes from participants were used to strengthen the interpretation.

After conducting the thematic analysis, the researcher reduced and organized the data to make it more manageable and interpretable. As stated by Miles and Huberman (2013), data reduction involves selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the raw data into meaningful insights. This step is crucial to highlight the most relevant information related to the influence of cultural identity and motivation in English learning, which is then presented in a narrative thematic format to align with the research questions. Students describe their cultural identity in the context of English language learning

1. Familiarization the Data

Theme	Sub-theme	Code	Interview Question
How do students describe their cultural identity in English learning?	Cultural Identity as a Learning Lens	CL-Q1	1: Do you feel your cultural identity influences the way you learn English? If yes, how? Cultural Conflict in Language
	Cultural Conflict in Language Use	CCL-Q2	2: Have you faced situations where your cultural identity clashed with English learning? Can you describe them?
How do motivation and cultural identity	Identity-Based Motivation	IBM-Q3	3: Does your cultural identity affect your

influence each
other in the
ELL process?

Value-Driven VDL-Q4
Learning

motivation to
learn English?
How?

4: Can you
share an
example where
your cultural
values either
helped or
hindered your
English
learning?

Cultural CRL-Q5
Relevance in
Learning
Content

5: Do you feel
that integrating
cultural
elements into
English lessons
would make
learning more
engaging for
you? Why or
why not?

How do Cultural students Barriers in perceive the Communication role of cultural identity in shaping their English language learning journey?	CBC-Q6	6: What challenges have you faced while learning English due to cultural differences? How do you overcome these challenges?
	Cultural Memories in Learning	CML-Q7
		7: Can you share a memorable moment when your cultural background influenced your English learning?

Table 2. *Familiarization the Data*

As a result of this study, the researcher highlights the influence of cultural identity on students' motivation to learn English as a foreign language in term of Cultural Identity as a Learning Lens (CL), Cultural Conflict in Language Use (CCL),

Identity-Based Motivation (IBM), Value-Driven Learning (VDL), Cultural Relevance in Learning Content (CRL), Cultural Barriers in Communication (CBC), Cultural Memories in Learning (CML).

2. Thematising and Coding

The researcher has divided the variations of the respondents' answers into several categories. Each answer has a theme that has been categorized based on the results of the researcher's analysis of the answers given by participants based on their experiences in learning using infographics. Furthermore, the researcher sorted these categories based on the ranking of how often these themes appeared or were frequently mentioned by respondents during the interviews, from the most to the least. This study has four main themes and one sub-theme that will be discussed in the discussion section.

Theme	Sub-theme	Code	Total Trend
How do students describe their cultural identity in English learning?	Cultural Identity as a Learning Lens	CL-Q1	6

How do motivation and cultural identity influence each other in the ELL process?	Cultural Conflict in Language Use	CCL-Q2	6
	Identity-Based Motivation	IBM-Q3	5
	Value-Driven Learning	VDL-Q4	6
How do students perceive the role of cultural identity in shaping their English language	Cultural Relevance in Learning Content	CRL-Q5	6
	Cultural Barriers in Communication	CBC-Q6	6

learning
journey?

Cultural	CML-Q7	6
Memories in		
Learning		

Table 3. *Initial Code Generation*

D. Trustworthiness

To ensure the quality and validity of this qualitative research, the researcher applied the concept of trustworthiness as proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), which consists of four key criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility was achieved through prolonged engagement with the participants during in-depth interviews, as well as by conducting member checking. After the interview transcripts were completed and thematically analyzed, the researcher returned the transcripts and interpreted summaries to each participant for validation. This process ensured that the participants' meanings and lived experiences were accurately represented.

Transferability was addressed by providing thick descriptions of the participants' cultural backgrounds, personal experiences, and learning contexts. This allows readers to

determine the extent to which the findings may be relevant or applicable to similar educational environments or cultural settings.

Dependability was established by maintaining a detailed audit trail throughout the research process. All raw data, interview recordings, transcriptions, coding schemes, and analytical memos were systematically documented. This ensures that the research process is transparent and could be followed or replicated by other researchers.

Confirmability was strengthened by using direct quotations from participants to support each theme and interpretation. In addition, the researcher maintained a reflective journal throughout the study to monitor personal biases and ensure that the findings emerged from the participants' voices rather than the researcher's assumptions.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter comprehensively examines the influence of cultural identity on students' motivation to learn English as a foreign language. It focuses on the dynamic relationship between cultural background and motivational factors within the language learning process, and explores students' perceptions, experiences, and challenges related to maintaining their cultural identity while pursuing English language proficiency. The findings highlight how cultural identity shapes learners' engagement, persistence, and emotional investment in English language learning within the Indonesian educational context.

A. Research Findings

The findings of the study regarding the influence of cultural identity on students' motivation and their experiences in learning English as a foreign language at UIN Walisongo Semarang. Addressing the research questions, the researcher explored how students perceive the role of their cultural identity in shaping their motivation, engagement, and confidence in English language learning. The data were collected through in-depth interviews with six participants from diverse cultural backgrounds, including Batak, Javanese, Ngapak, and urban Depok, who are

currently studying English in the university's English education program.

1. EFL Students describe their cultural identity in the context of English language learning

This section addresses the second research theme: "Students describe their cultural identity in the context of English language learning." The analysis explores how students perceive, define, and articulate their cultural identity as it relates to their experiences in learning English. Drawing from participants' narratives, this section reveals how cultural identity is understood not only as a set of inherited values and traditions but also as a lived reality that influences their behavior, interaction, and self-expression in the classroom.

Students' descriptions of their identity reflect a strong awareness of cultural norms, communication styles, and regional characteristics that they bring into the language learning space. For instance, students from assertive-speaking cultures viewed their directness as a natural part of communication, while others from more reserved cultural backgrounds felt challenged by the expressive nature of English. These identity-based perspectives inform how students respond to speaking tasks, classroom participation, and peer interaction.

1.1 Cultural identity Influence on English learning

Participants reported that their cultural background significantly influenced their English learning styles. For instance, those from Batak and Ngapak speaking communities described a tendency toward direct and expressive communication, which occasionally conflicted with the expected norms of politeness in English. Students from Javanese backgrounds, on the other hand, shared their habitual use of indirect language, which made it difficult to adapt to the more straightforward and assertive tone required in English conversations. These cultural habits shaped how students interpreted tasks, expressed ideas, and responded in classroom settings.

Code	Category	Quote
CL-Q1/SO1	Cultural Identity as a Learning Lens	"Yes, I feel that my cultural identity as a Batak person has greatly influenced the way I learn English. We are used to a firm and direct way of communication."

CL-Q1/SO2	Cultural Identity as a Learning Lens	"My Javanese and Ngapak cultural background influences how I learn English because I'm used to certain pronunciation patterns and local expressions..."
CL-Q1/SO3	Cultural Identity as a Learning Lens	"Yes, my cultural identity does. Because I am from Depok and used to mix English with Indonesian, I am more flexible in English pronunciation and conversation."
CL-Q1/SO4	Cultural Identity as a Learning Lens	"Yes, if cultural identity here includes habits, then I would say it has some influence. For

		example, I have a habit of watching foreign films..."
CL-Q1/SO5	Cultural Identity as a Learning Lens	"Yes, I feel my cultural identity influences the way I learn English. For example, in my culture, politeness and respect are very important..."
CL-Q1/SO6	Cultural Identity as a Learning Lens	"Yes, my cultural identity definitely influences the way I learn English. For example, coming from a culture that values indirect communication..."

Table 1. 1 *Participant's perceptions of cultural identity Influence on English learning.*

Table 1.1 shows that all participants acknowledge their cultural identity as a decisive learning lens. Direct-communication cultures (Batak, Ngapak) tended to

transfer firmness into English, occasionally sounding abrupt, whereas indirect communication cultures (Javanese) found it challenging to match English bluntness. Mixed-culture students (Depok urban) perceived code-switching as an advantage for pronunciation flexibility.

Participant S01 illustrated the impact of direct cultural norms: “We are used to a firm and direct way of communication.” Meanwhile, S05 highlighted how cultural expectations of deference shaped her learning style: “Politeness and respect are very important, so I tend to prefer learning English in a more formal and respectful way.”

The results showed that all participants realized that their cultural identity plays an important role in influencing their English learning style. Students from Batak and ngapak backgrounds tend to have direct and assertive communication patterns, which sometimes clash with the norms of politeness in English. In contrast, students from Javanese backgrounds who are accustomed to using subtle language face difficulties in adapting to the more straightforward style of English speech. In addition, students from urban areas such as Depok feel more flexible because they are used to code-switching between

Indonesian and English. These findings corroborate that communication patterns shaped by local culture serve as a learning lens that shapes perceptions, expressions, and ways of responding in English language learning.

1.2 Cultural Identity Clash English learning

Many participants encountered moments of cultural dissonance when engaging with English. One student described feeling “fake” when roleplaying cheerful greetings like “Hi, how are you?”, which felt unnatural within their cultural context. Another felt discomfort using Western-style expressions that clashed with their cultural values of modesty and restraint. These experiences sometimes created barriers to participation, particularly in speaking activities, where students felt they were stepping outside their authentic selves.

Code	Category	Quote
CCL-Q2/SO1	Cultural Conflict in Language Use	"In Batak culture, we rarely greet like 'Hi, how are you?' especially with strangers. I felt a bit 'fake' when doing it in English class, like

		I was playing a character."
CCL-Q2/SO2	Cultural Conflict in Language Use	"I once read a dialog during a drama rehearsal, and my friend laughed because my pronunciation sounded 'funny'. I realized it was because of my local accent."
CCL-Q2SO3	Cultural Conflict in Language Use	"In class, many of my friends from Java have a medok accent. Sometimes I feel different because my pronunciation is more neutral, and I need to adjust myself during group work."
CCL-Q2/SO4	Cultural Conflict in Language Use	"In my culture, we tend to be indirect or polite. But in

		English, people are more direct. Sometimes I hesitate because I'm unsure if my expressions are appropriate."
CCL-Q2/SO5	Cultural Conflict in Language Use	"In my culture, we don't usually speak directly or openly about opinions. In English class, we're encouraged to do that, and it made me feel uncomfortable."
CCL-Q2/SO6	Cultural Conflict in Language Use	"In group discussions, I found it hard to speak up or interrupt because in my culture, it's respectful to wait. But in English class, waiting

meant losing the
chance to speak."

Table 1.2 *Participant's perceptions of cultural identity
clashes in English learning*

Table 1.2 reveals that all participants experienced a sense of dissonance between their cultural norms and the expectations of English language communication. These moments of "clash" often resulted in hesitation, reduced participation, and discomfort, particularly in interactive classroom settings.

Participant S01 expressed discomfort with adopting unfamiliar greeting styles, sharing: "In Batak culture, we rarely greet like 'Hi, how are you?' especially with strangers. I felt a bit 'fake' when doing it in English class, like I was playing a character" (CCL-Q2/S01). Similarly, S04 emphasized the difficulty of shifting from an indirect communication style to a more assertive one, stating: "In my culture, we tend to be indirect or polite. But in English, people are more direct. Sometimes I hesitate because I'm unsure if my expressions are appropriate" (CCL-Q2/S04).

Most participants admitted to experiencing cultural dissonance when learning English. The clash appeared in the form of discomfort using English because

it was not familiar to be used for everyday language. Some participants also felt insecure because their local accent was considered strange by their friends. This difficulty arose because the environment around them did not support their use of English to speak directly or argue openly in English classes. This finding confirms that language learning is also a process of identity negotiation, where students have to balance local cultural expectations with the demands of communication in the target language.

2. Motivation and cultural identity influence each other during the English learning process

This section explores the theme: “Motivation and cultural identity influence each other during the English learning process.” The analysis highlights the dynamic and reciprocal relationship between students’ cultural identity and their motivation to learn English. Rather than acting as separate factors, culture and motivation are interwoven and mutually reinforcing throughout the language learning journey.

Based on students’ lived experiences, cultural identity shapes how they define the purpose of learning English whether for career advancement, academic achievement, or personal expression. Students from cultures that emphasize education and social mobility tend to exhibit high extrinsic motivation, often driven by

family expectations or societal pressure. At the same time, cultural pride and the desire to represent one's heritage internationally can foster intrinsic and integrative motivation.

Conversely, cultural identity can also create internal conflict when English is perceived as foreign or threatening to traditional values. In such cases, motivation may be weakened due to feelings of disconnection or cultural tension. Students may struggle to fully engage with the language if they feel that doing so requires distancing themselves from their own identity. These findings suggest that motivation in language learning is not only about individual goals but also about how well students can reconcile their cultural roots with the new linguistic and cultural environment they are entering.

2.1 Cultural identity affected motivation learn English

Cultural identity also played a complex role in shaping students' motivation. Several students from strong ethnic backgrounds, such as Batak and Javanese, expressed that cultural values like perseverance, ambition, and family honor increased their drive to succeed in English. These intrinsic motivations were rooted in the desire to elevate their cultural group and fulfill familial or societal expectations. Conversely, one participant stated that cultural identity did not significantly influence their

motivation, suggesting that individual and contextual factors intersect in varied ways.

Code	Category	Quote
IBM-Q3/SO1	Identity-Based Motivation	"As a Batak person who is known for being tough and ambitious in education and career, I felt motivated because I wanted to compete globally."
IBM-Q3/SO2	NO Identity- Based Motivation	"No, because everyone basically has their own cultural identity."
IBM-Q3/SO3	Identity-Based Motivation	"Yes. Because my environment supports the use of English from childhood, it motivates me to keep improving

		and sounding more natural."
IBM-Q3/SO4	Identity-Based Motivation	"My motivation comes more from personal awareness and responsibility... not directly from my cultural identity."
IBM-Q3/SO5	Identity-Based Motivation	"I want to use English to promote my culture and communicate with people from other cultures. That motivates me to learn."
IBM-Q3/SO6	Identity-Based Motivation	"In my culture, English is associated with education and global opportunity, so I feel a strong motivation to

learn it to gain
respect and
success."

Table 2. 1 *Participants perceptions of cultural identity affected motivation to learn English.*

Table 2.1 illustrates the varying roles cultural identity plays in student motivation. While some participants, like S02 and S04, felt their motivation stemmed from individual factors rather than cultural roots, the majority acknowledged that their cultural background contributed to their motivation either through ambition, pride, or a desire to represent their culture on a global platform.

Participant S01 noted a strong ethnic-driven ambition, saying, "As a Batak person who is known for being tough and ambitious in education and career, I felt motivated because I wanted to compete globally" (IBM-Q3/S01). This illustrates how cultural self-perception can inspire academic and professional aspirations. Meanwhile, S05 saw English as a cultural bridge, explaining, "I want to use English to promote my culture and communicate with people from other cultures" (IBM-Q3/S05). This reflects the concept of identity investment,

where learning a language becomes a way to expand one's influence and cultural presence.

Most participants stated that their cultural identity directly influenced their motivation to learn English. Students from cultures that emphasize education, such as Batak and Javanese, feel driven to excel because of family expectations and the will to aspire. Others mentioned that they were driven to learn in order to promote their local culture in a global context. However, there were also participants who stated that their motivation was personal and not directly related to their cultural background. This suggests that cultural identity can be a source of identity-based motivation, but also that cultural influences are contextual and vary between individuals.

2.2 Cultural values support or hinder English learning

Students' values, inherited from their cultural upbringing, had a dual effect on their English learning. Some cited diligence, discipline, and a "never give up" mentality as helpful, especially when encountering grammar difficulties or speaking anxiety. However, other cultural values like avoiding public mistakes or maintaining humility at times hinder students from actively participating in class discussions or expressing opinions.

Code	Category	Quote
VDL-Q4/SO1	Value-Driven Learning	"One of the Batak values that really helped me was the 'never give up' spirit... But the value of 'shame cover' sometimes hinders me from speaking up."
VDL-Q4/SO2	Value-Driven Learning	"My accent."
VDL-Q4/SO3	Value-Driven Learning	"The relaxed and open-minded culture in Depok helps me to practice English more. But sometimes I don't focus enough on grammar because I'm too relaxed."
VDL-Q4/SO4	Value-Driven Learning	"My culture values hard work and learning, which helps me stay motivated."

		But habits like being too modest can hold me back from speaking up."
VDL-Q4/SO5	Value-Driven Learning	"My patience and persistence... helped me with English. But cultural norms made me avoid direct disagreement in class."
VDL-Q4/SO6	Value-Driven Learning	"Discipline and memorization helped with grammar, but I was hesitant to speak freely or make mistakes."

Table 2.2 *Participant's perceptions of cultural values support or hinder English learning.*

Table 2.2 illustrates that students' cultural values have both enabling and limiting effects on their English learning process. While many participants credited their

cultural upbringing for giving them determination and endurance, some admitted that cultural expectations about humility, emotional restraint, and perfectionism discouraged them from actively engaging in speaking tasks or taking risks during class.

Participant S01 explained this dual impact clearly: “One of the Batak values that really helped me was the 'never give up' spirit... But the value of 'shame cover' sometimes hinders me from speaking up” (VDL-Q4/S01). This shows how internalized cultural pride in resilience could coexist with a fear of public embarrassment. Similarly, S04 acknowledged the benefit of discipline and academic effort, while also admitting, “Being too modest can hold me back from speaking up” (VDL-Q4/S04).

The findings show that cultural values can provide both encouragement and barriers to learning. Values such as striving for discipline and perseverance help students persevere in the face of language learning difficulties, such as grammar or speaking anxiety. However, values such as shyness, reluctance to stand out, and unwillingness to correct others were perceived as inhibiting active participation in class. One participant mentioned that the value of “never giving up” helped her learn, but fear and shyness when expressing her opinion in English inhibited

her confidence to speak. This suggests that cultural integration in teaching should consider values that reinforce as well as those that may inhibit.

2.3 Cultural Relevance in Learning Content

All participants agreed that English lessons become more meaningful and enjoyable when connected to their local culture. They expressed a preference for activities that allow them to explore or present aspects of their heritage such as storytelling, traditional customs, or local wisdom in English. This relevance not only improved engagement but also bridged the gap between local identity and global language use, making learning feel more personal and less foreign.

Code	Category	Quote
CRL-Q5/SO1	Cultural Relevance in Learning Content	"If English lessons could be related to my own culture, like creating short stories about Batak customs... I would definitely be more enthusiastic."

CRL-Q5/SO2	Cultural Relevance in Learning Content	"I feel it's more interesting because there are many differences and we can learn more from them."
CRL-Q5/SO3	Cultural Relevance in Learning Content	"Yes, definitely interesting. Because learning a language is not only about grammar, but also about culture... it's more exciting and lively."
CRL-Q5/SO4	Cultural Relevance in Learning Content	"Yes, absolutely. Integrating cultural elements makes learning more interesting and meaningful. It gives insight into different ways of thinking and living."

CRL-Q5/SO5	Cultural Relevance Learning Content	in	"Yes, because it connects English learning with something familiar. That would help us express our local culture globally."
CRL-Q5/SO6	Cultural Relevance Learning Content	in	"Definitely yes. It feels more personal and authentic when I see something from my culture used as a learning topic."

Table 2. 3 *Participant's perceptions of cultural
Relevance in learning content.*

Table 2.3 shows that all participants responded positively to the idea of integrating cultural elements into English learning. Their comments highlight that cultural relevance increases enjoyment, encourages participation, and bridges the gap between the foreign nature of English and their familiar cultural background.

Participant S01, for example, emphasized the potential impact of using personal heritage in learning: “If English lessons could be related to my own culture, like creating short stories about Batak customs... I would definitely be more enthusiastic” (CRL-Q5/S01). Likewise, S06 noted how personal and meaningful learning became when culture was integrated: “It feels more personal and authentic when I see something from my culture used as a learning topic” (CRL-Q5/S06).

All participants stated that English lessons would be more interesting and fun if they were linked to their local culture. Activities such as telling stories about local customs or creating short stories based on local traditions in English were considered to increase engagement. When learning content reflects students' cultural identity, they feel more connected and motivated. In other words, cultural integration bridges the gap between foreign language and local background, making learning more personalized and contextualized. This reinforces the importance of culturally responsive pedagogical approaches in English language learning.

3. Students' Perceptions and Experiences of the Role of Cultural Identity in the English Learning Process

This section responds to the second research question: "What are the perceptions and experiences of students regarding the role of cultural identity in shaping their English language learning journey?" It delves into the way students interpret, experience, and navigate the relationship between their cultural identity and their engagement with English. The analysis captures personal reflections on moments when cultural background either facilitated or hindered learning, including issues such as accent-related insecurity, difficulties in expressing cultural concepts in English, and challenges in adapting to culturally different communication styles. At the same time, it also reveals instances where cultural identity became a source of pride, confidence, and connection during the learning process. This section highlights how students' perceptions are shaped by their individual backgrounds, peer interactions, and classroom dynamics, offering insights into how identity and language learning are co-constructed in daily academic life. Ultimately, it emphasizes that English language learning is not only a linguistic activity, but also a deeply personal and cultural experience.

3.1 Challenges they faced due to cultural differences while learning English

Students faced several communication-related challenges shaped by cultural norms. For instance, high vocal tone, which is normal in some ethnic groups, was misunderstood in English contexts as aggressive. Others found it hard to adapt to turn-taking and assertiveness in discussions, which clashed with their upbringing that emphasized politeness and patience. Students overcome these challenges through practice, feedback, and increased cultural awareness.

Code	Category	Quote
CBC-Q6/SO1	Cultural Barriers in Communication	"In Batak culture, speaking in a high tone is normal... but in English, it can sound angry. I learned to control my tone and body language."
CBC-Q6/SO2	Cultural Barriers in Communication	"Pronunciation is difficult to adjust with our native tongue."

CBC-Q6/SO3	Cultural Barriers in Communication	"The challenge is adapting to my friends' accents so that communication remains smooth. I overcame it by practicing more with them."
CBC-Q6/SO4	Cultural Barriers in Communication	"We are taught to be humble and avoid standing out, which makes it hard to speak confidently. I remind myself that mistakes are part of learning."
CBC-Q6/SO5	Cultural Barriers in Communication	"Sometimes I hesitate to correct others or speak my opinion... I overcome it by writing first, then building courage to speak."

CBC-Q6/SO6	Cultural Barriers in Communication	"My culture taught me to listen more than speak. So I struggled with speaking tasks. I practiced through self-recording and joining discussions gradually."
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Table 3. 1 *Participant's perceptions Challenges they faced due to cultural differences while learning English.*

Table 3.1 highlights that all participants faced communication-related challenges stemming from cultural upbringing. While each experience was different, most related to how their native cultural habits clashed with the expectations of English learning environments especially in speaking activities that required assertiveness or spontaneity.

Participant S01 described a key moment of cultural misunderstanding: "In Batak culture, speaking in a high tone is normal... but in English, it can sound angry. I learned to control my tone and body language" (CBC-Q6/S01). This example illustrates how expressive speech,

valued in one culture, may be misinterpreted in another. S04 further shared the impact of cultural humility on classroom participation: “We are taught to be humble and avoid standing out, which makes it hard to speak confidently” (CBC-Q6/S04).

The participants admitted to facing various communication challenges that are influenced by cultural norms. For example, using similes or implied messages often involves difficulty deciphering the English context. In addition, the value of lack of confidence makes it difficult for some students to appear confident or correct others' opinions in discussions. To overcome these challenges, students do practice, receive feedback from peers and lecturers, and build cultural awareness. This emphasizes the need for learning strategies that pay attention to cross-cultural sensitivity and provide a safe space for expression.

3.2 Memorable moments in which their cultural background significantly influenced their English learning experience

Memorable moments in students' English learning often involve culturally significant events. One student recalled teaching a class where regional language differences became a barrier, while another shared how

their unique accent, once a source of insecurity, became a source of pride. These stories reflect how culture is not just a background factor, but an active presence in students’ language development, shaping both struggle and growth.

Code	Category	Quote
CML-Q7/SO1	Cultural Memories Learning	"During my teaching practice, students spoke in Javanese krama and I couldn't understand it at all. I realized how culture deeply affects communication."
CML-Q7/SO2	Cultural Memories Learning	"My accent dominated my English pronunciation... but one friend said he liked it because it sounded unique. That changed my view of accent as identity."

CML-Q7/SO3	Cultural Memories Learning	in	"I was trusted to be the main speaker in a group presentation because my pronunciation was clearer. That gave me confidence."
CML-Q7/SO4	Cultural Memories Learning	in	"Living in a supportive environment that values community and learning helped me practice English without fear."
CML-Q7/SO5	Cultural Memories Learning	in	"When I explained my traditional dance in English to my classmates, I felt proud. It helped me see English as a tool to promote my culture."

CML-Q7/SO6	Cultural Memories Learning	in	"In a debate club, I shared a story from my cultural tradition. The audience reacted positively. It was the first time I felt my culture had value in English."
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Table 3. 2 *Participant's perceptions Memorable moments in which their cultural background significantly influenced their English learning experience.*

Table 3.2 shows that memorable experiences often emerged when students used English as a tool to express or negotiate their cultural identity. These instances helped build self-confidence and reshaped students' view of English as not just a foreign tool, but a medium for cultural expression.

Participant S01 reflected on a moment of cultural realization: "During my teaching practice, students spoke in Javanese krama and I couldn't understand it at all. I realized how culture deeply affects communication" (CML-Q7/S01). This underscores the challenges of navigating linguistic diversity even within a shared national context. Meanwhile, S06 shared a moment of

cultural pride: “In a debate club, I shared a story from my cultural tradition. The audience reacted positively; it was the first time I felt my culture had value in English” (CML-Q7/S06), illustrating how recognition from others can validate both language skills and cultural identity.

Students' meaningful experiences usually occur when they use English to express their cultural identity. Some participants mentioned moments when they explained or told local cultural stories in English, which made them feel proud and more confident. Even the local accent that was previously considered a weakness became a source of uniqueness and appreciation from others. These findings suggest that recognition of cultural identity in language classrooms can strengthen motivation and build positive emotional connections to English as a means of self-expression.

B. Discussion

The research findings will be explored in multiple explanations based on the previously mentioned findings. Thematic analysis was used to determine the findings from the data.

1. Cultural Identity as a Source of Pride or Conflict

The findings reveal that cultural identity plays a dual role in English language learning as a source of pride and as a potential point of conflict. Students from Batak and Ngapak cultural backgrounds expressed pride in their assertive and direct communication styles. However, they also acknowledged that such styles sometimes conflict with the norms of politeness expected in English. In contrast, Javanese students, who are accustomed to more subtle and indirect communication, reported discomfort in adapting to the more explicit and expressive nature of English.

This aligns with Wang (2024), who found that students from culturally strong backgrounds often face identity conflict when confronted with Western communication norms. Beyond discomfort, these experiences affect classroom participation, self-confidence, and anxiety levels. Gardner (1985) stated that attitudes toward learning are significantly shaped by one's cultural background, which in this context, creates either closeness or distance from the target culture. Furthermore, the need for relatedness in Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) suggests that cultural mismatch may weaken intrinsic motivation when students feel their identity is not respected.

Therefore, it is essential for educators not only to acknowledge but also to adapt teaching strategies to students' cultural dynamics positioning culture not as a background factor, but as an active part of classroom interaction and expression.

2. English Learning as an Identity Shaping Process

English learning in this study is seen not merely as a cognitive task but as a process of identity formation and negotiation. Students are not simply “learning” the language, but also reflecting on who they are, the values they hold, and how they wish to be perceived. For example, students from Depok described themselves as more flexible due to frequent code-switching between Indonesian and English, while Javanese students were more reserved in speech due to unfamiliarity with direct communication styles.

These findings reinforce Norton & De Costa's (2018) view that language learning is a space for identity negotiation. In the Indonesian context, the assertive and expressive style of English often clashes with cultural norms of politeness and social hierarchy (Riyanti, 2019). Hence, the role of teachers is crucial as safe facilitators in this negotiation space (Nunan & Choi, 2010), helping students navigate identity shifts without feeling that they are losing their cultural grounding.

Students also shared that meaningful learning moments occurred when they could express their culture through English, such as telling stories about traditional dances or customs. These experiences strengthened their identity and deepened their emotional connection to the language.

3. Motivation Fueled by Aspirations and Belonging

This study reveals that students' motivation to learn English is influenced by cultural values such as perseverance, family honor, and the desire to represent their ethnic group or region on a global stage. For example, Batak students mentioned a strong drive to “compete globally,” while others were motivated to promote their local culture through English.

These findings support the theory of identity-based motivation (Lou & Noels, 2021) and the concept of identified regulation within Self-Determination Theory, where external goals such as cultural recognition become internalized as personal values. Gardner (1985) emphasized that integrative motivation emerges when students aim to be part of the target language community; however, in this study, students viewed English as a tool to strengthen and showcase their own cultural identity.

Interestingly, some students reported that their motivation was not directly linked to culture but stemmed from personal interest or individual responsibility. This suggests that cultural influence on motivation is contextual and varies across individuals (Norton, 2013).

4. Challenges in Balancing Identity and Motivation

This study also found that students face notable challenges in balancing their cultural identity with the demands of English language learning. These challenges include communication barriers caused by local accents, cultural values like humility that discourage correcting others, and habits such as waiting for one's turn, which may limit active classroom participation.

These findings are consistent with Vergara-Burgos (2024), who emphasized the importance of intercultural awareness in EFL classrooms. Students also reported difficulty adjusting voice tone, intonation, and expression styles that conflict with local norms. To address these challenges, students engaged in practice, sought feedback from peers or instructors, and developed cultural awareness through real experiences.

The most meaningful learning moments occurred when students felt their culture was acknowledged for example, when completing assignments that involved telling local stories in English. In such cases, local accents that were initially seen as barriers became valued strengths in the learning environment. This

confirms that culturally responsive curricula and pedagogy (Nambiar et al., 2020) can bridge identity gaps and significantly boost motivation.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This chapter provides a conclusion and suggestion based on the previous chapter's findings and discussions.

A. Conclusion

Cultural identity plays a fundamental and multidimensional role in shaping students' motivation to learn English as a foreign language. Through the lived experiences of students from diverse cultural backgrounds, it was revealed that identity influences not only how learners approach language learning, but also how they engage emotionally, socially, and cognitively with the language. Cultural values such as perseverance, humility, pride, and community orientation act both as motivators and as barriers depending on how they align or conflict with the norms of English language use. The research found that students experience greater motivation when their cultural identity is respected, acknowledged, and integrated into learning activities indicating that learning becomes more meaningful when it is culturally relevant. Furthermore, the study affirms the relevance of Gardner's Socio-Educational Model and Deci & Ryan's Self-Determination Theory in explaining how integrative and intrinsic motivation are closely tied to learners' autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Ultimately, English learning in Indonesia must not be treated as a neutral, culture-free

process, but rather as an identity negotiation shaped by the learners' cultural roots and aspirations. Pedagogical approaches that value and incorporate students' cultural identities will foster deeper engagement, sustained motivation, and a more empowering language learning experience.

B. Suggestion

Based on the findings of this study, it is suggested that educators, curriculum developers, and institutions take a more culturally responsive approach to English language teaching by acknowledging the vital role of students' cultural identities in shaping their motivation and learning experiences. Teachers should create inclusive classroom environments that allow students to express and integrate their cultural backgrounds into the learning process, as this fosters engagement, confidence, and a sense of belonging. Curriculum designers are encouraged to incorporate culturally relevant materials that reflect students' local values and experiences, making the content more relatable and meaningful. Institutions should provide training programs that equip teachers with the skills to manage cultural diversity effectively and promote inclusive pedagogies. Moreover, students should be encouraged to embrace their cultural identity as a valuable asset in their language learning journey, rather than a barrier, which can enhance both motivation and self-expression. Lastly, future researchers are recommended to expand this study

by exploring similar themes across broader cultural contexts and using diverse methodologies to deepen the understanding of the relationship between culture and English language learning.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1 Questionnaire

Questionnaire		
No	Question	Answer
1.	Full name	Short answer
2.	Are you currently in your 8th semester of English Language Education at UIN WALISONGO?	Multiple choice
3.	Ethnicity or cultural identity you consider to represent yourself	Short answer
4.	Would you be willing to participate in the interview as a participant in this study?	Multiple choice
5.	Would you be willing if the interview was recorded for transcription and data analysis purposes?	Multiple Choice
6.	Do you come from a culturally unique background that may influence your learning experience?	Multiple Choice
7.	Have you ever thought about how your culture affects your motivation to learn English?	Multiple Choice
8.	Do you have access to a quiet environment for an online or offline interview session?	Short answer

APPENDIX 2 Interview Guidelines

Interview Guidelines

No	Interview Question	Answer
<i>For Question 1</i>		
1.	Do you feel your cultural identity influences the way you learn English? If yes, how?	
2.	Have you faced situations where your cultural identity clashed with English learning? Can you describe them?	
<i>For Question 2</i>		
3.	Does your cultural identity affect your motivation to learn English? How?	
4.	Can you share an example where your cultural values either helped or hindered your English learning?	
5.	Do you feel that integrating cultural elements into English lessons would make learning more engaging for you? Why or why not?	
<i>For Question 3</i>		
6.	What challenges have you faced while learning English due to cultural differences? How do you overcome these challenges?	
7.	Can you share a memorable moment when your cultural background influenced your English learning?	

Interview participants

Students name		Semester	Interview date	Interview location
Amalia Husna	Farihal	8th	24 April 2025	UIN WALISONGO SEMARANG
Farrah Jundana	Aizza Rosyadi	8th	24 April 2025	UIN WALISONGO SEMARANG

Audiva Salsabila	syifa	8th	26 April 2025	UIN WALISONGO SEMARANG
Aura Deswita	Nabila	8th	1 Mei 2025	UIN WALISONGO SEMARANG
Dimas Ramadhan	Gilang	8th	1 Mei 2025	UIN WALISONGO SEMARANG
Sifa Janani	Imnatul	8th	2 Mei 2025	UIN WALISONGO SEMARANG

Coding translations

Coding S01-S06	Translations Student 1/10 – Participant 1/10	Coding VDL	Translations Value Driven Learning
Q1-7	Interview Questions 1 - 10	CRL	Cultural Relevance in Learning Content
CL	Cultural Identity as a Learning Lens	CBC	Cultural Barriers in Communication
CCL	Cultural Conflict in Language Use	CML	Cultural Memories in Learning
IBM	Identity-Based Motivation		

Interview transcript

CL-Q1	Do you feel your cultural identity influences the way you learn English? If yes, how?
S01	Yes, I feel that my cultural identity as a Batak person has greatly influenced the way I learn English. As people who live in a Batak environment, we are used to a firm and direct way of communication. In learning English, I tend to deliver conversations in a to-the-point

	and straightforward manner, although sometimes I forget that in English culture, sometimes there needs to be politeness or more subtle expressions.
S02	A little. My Javanese and Ngapak cultural background influences how I learn English because I'm used to certain pronunciation patterns and local expressions that sometimes interfere when speaking English. For example, in Ngapak, we pronounce every syllable clearly and directly, so sometimes I carry that habit into English, which affects my accent.
S03	Yes, my cultural identity does. Because I am from Depok and used to mixed English-Indonesian, I am more flexible in English pronunciation and conversation.
S04	Yes, if cultural identity here includes habits, then I would say it has some influence. For example, I have a habit of watching foreign films, especially those in English. Through these films, I learn different English accents and expressions. This habit, which is influenced by my interest in global culture, supports my English learning.
S05	Yes, I feel my cultural identity influences the way I learn English. For example, in my culture, politeness and respect are very important, so I tend to prefer learning English in a more formal and respectful way.
S06	Yes, my cultural identity definitely influences the way I learn English. For example, coming from a culture that values indirect communication, I sometimes struggle with the directness and assertiveness often expected in English conversations. It affects how I interpret and produce meaning in speaking and writing.

CCL-Q2	Have you faced situations where your cultural identity clashed with English learning? Can you describe them?
S01	Once. When I was in a speaking class, the lecturer told us to roleplay a western-style daily conversation, such as greeting with a greeting like "Hi, how are you?" with a cheerful intonation. For me personally, it was awkward at first, because in Batak culture, we rarely greet like that, especially with people who are not familiar. I'm more used to a more "serious" greeting. So at the time I felt a bit "fake" when I did it, like I was playing a character that wasn't me.
S02	One of the most noticeable examples is the accent. As an Indonesian who is used to speaking with the influence of the local language, my

accent often comes out when speaking in English. I once read a dialog during a drama rehearsal, and my friend laughed because my pronunciation sounded “funny” or “foreign”. At the time I felt a bit embarrassed, but on the other hand I realized that my accent is part of my identity. Although it sometimes makes me insecure, it also encourages me to keep practicing my pronunciation and understand that it's okay to have a distinctive feature in language.

- SO3 I have. In class, many of my friends from Java have a medok accent. Sometimes I feel different because my pronunciation is more neutral and it makes me have to adjust myself during group work.
- SO4 Yes, there are times when my cultural background feels different from the way English is used or taught. For example, in my culture, we tend to be indirect or polite in communication, but in English, especially in Western contexts, people are often more direct. Sometimes I hesitate when speaking English because I'm unsure if my way of expressing things is appropriate. To overcome this, I try to learn more about cultural differences and adapt accordingly by cross-checking and observing how native speakers communicate.
- SO5 Yes, I have faced situations where my cultural identity clashed with English learning. For instance, in my culture, we don't usually speak directly and openly about our opinions, especially if they differ from others. However, in English learning, we're often encouraged to express our opinions directly and openly, which can make me feel uncomfortable and struggle to participate in discussions.
- SO6 Yes, in group discussions during English class, I found it hard to speak up and interrupt, which is often necessary in some Western conversational settings. In my culture, it's more respectful to wait for a pause, but in fast-paced English discussions, waiting can mean losing the chance to contribute.

IBM-Q3	Does your cultural identity affect your motivation to learn English? How?
SO1	Yes, the influence is quite big. On the one hand, as a Batak person who is known for being tough and ambitious in education and career, I felt motivated because I wanted to be able to compete globally and bring the good name of the family.
SO2	No, because everyone basically has their own cultural identity.

SO3	Yes. Because my environment supports the use of English from childhood, it motivates me to keep improving and sounding more natural.
SO4	Not directly. My motivation comes more from personal awareness and responsibility. As an English education student, I realize that learning English is essential for my academic and professional development. So, even though cultural identity may not be a strong factor, my motivation comes from my goals and commitments.
SO5	Yes, my cultural identity affects my motivation to learn English. I want to learn English because I want to be able to communicate with people from other cultures and understand their perspectives. I also want to use English as a tool to promote my culture and share knowledge about my culture with others.
SO6	Yes, it does. In my culture, English is associated with education and global opportunity, so I feel a strong motivation to learn it to gain respect and success. However, sometimes I also feel pressure to balance it with maintaining my native language and traditions.

VDL-Q4	Can you share an example where your cultural values either helped or hindered your English learning?
SO1	One of the Batak values that really helped me was the “never give up” spirit. We are taught to be strong, diligent and not to give up, especially when it comes to education. When I had trouble understanding English grammar, I didn't stop. I looked up videos, practiced, and even asked friends for help. But on the other hand, the value of “shame cover” in my culture sometimes hinders me. I was once reluctant to speak in front of the class for fear of being laughed at if I got it wrong. If I'm more relaxed, I might be able to improve faster.
SO2	My accent.
SO3	The relaxed and open-minded culture in Depok helps me to practice English more. But sometimes, because I'm too relaxed, I don't focus enough on grammar.
SO4	One example is when I'm in an environment that values education and encourages English practice. My cultural values that emphasize hard work and learning help me stay motivated. However, sometimes cultural habits like being too modest or afraid of making mistakes can hold me back from speaking up in English.

S05	One example where my cultural values helped my English learning is my patience and persistence. In my culture, we value patience and perseverance, so I didn't give up easily when facing difficulties in learning English. I kept practicing and trying until I understood and could use English well.
S06	One example is my cultural emphasis on discipline and memorization, which helped me with vocabulary and grammar. But it also made me hesitant to speak freely or make mistakes, which slowed down my speaking fluency development.

CRL-Q5	Do you feel that integrating cultural elements into English lessons would make learning more engaging for you? Why or why not?
S01	I totally agree. If English lessons could be related to my own culture, such as creating short stories about Batak customs or explaining traditional events in English, I would definitely be more enthusiastic.
S02	I feel it's more interesting because there are many differences and we can learn more from them.
S03	Yes, definitely interesting. Because learning a language is not only about grammar, but also about culture, so it's more exciting and lively.
S04	Yes, absolutely. Integrating cultural elements into English lessons makes learning more interesting and meaningful. It not only helps me understand the language better but also gives me insight into different ways of thinking and living. This expands my knowledge and helps me relate the language to real-life situations.
S05	Yes, I feel that integrating cultural elements into English lessons would make learning more engaging for me. By studying other cultures through English, I can understand different perspectives and values, and improve my ability to communicate with people from other cultures.
S06	Yes, definitely. When lessons include stories, topics, or comparisons from my own culture, I feel more connected and interested. It also helps me see English not just as a foreign tool but as a way to express my identity and values.

CBC-Q6	What challenges have you faced while learning English due to cultural differences? How do you overcome these challenges?
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S01	One of the biggest challenges is intonation and expression. In Batak culture, speaking in a high tone is normal, even a sign of enthusiasm. But in English, a high pitch can sound angry or aggressive. I was once reprimanded because my classmates thought I was angry during a discussion, when I was just excited. Since then I have learned to control my tone of voice and try to be more aware of my expressions and body language when speaking in English.
S02	Pronunciation is difficult to adjust with our native tongue.
S03	The challenge is that sometimes I have to adapt to my friends' accents so that communication remains smooth. I overcame it by practicing more with them and correcting each other.
S04	One challenge is adapting to the different communication styles. In my culture, we are taught to be humble and avoid standing out, which sometimes makes it hard to speak confidently in English. I overcome this by staying focused on my goals and reminding myself that making mistakes is part of the learning process.
S05	One challenge I've faced is understanding idioms and expressions used in English. I overcame this challenge by researching idioms and expressions online and in reference books, and practicing using English in real-life situations.
S06	One challenge is understanding humor and idioms, which are very culture-specific. I overcome this by asking teachers or friends for explanations and trying to read or watch content that explains cultural references in context.

CML-Q7	Can you share a memorable moment when your cultural background influenced your English learning?
S01	One of the most unforgettable moments for me happened during my teaching practice (PPL) at a junior high school in Semarang, Central Java. At that time, I was teaching an English lesson on “descriptive text”. In the middle of the explanation, some students started asking questions but they were using Javanese subtle language (krama). As a Batak person from Medan, I really didn't understand what they were saying. I could only smile in confusion and try to guess what they meant from their facial expressions and hand gestures. When I tried to answer, they chuckled instead of mocking, but seemed confused too because they didn't understand my response.
S02	When the accent dominates English pronunciation, it makes it sound funny. In the early days of college, when there was an assignment to

have a conversation in front of the class, my English pronunciation was still mixed with my regional accent. until one of my friends said that he actually liked hearing my accent because it made pronunciation easier to understand and sounded unique and distinctive. From then on, I began to learn that accents are not necessarily wrong, but can be part of the cultural identity that is brought into the learning process.

- SO3 An unforgettable moment during a group presentation, I was trusted to be the main speaker because my pronunciation was considered clearer. It made me more confident.
- SO4 Yes, one memorable moment was when I lived in a supportive environment where people encouraged speaking English. My cultural background, which values community and learning together, helped me feel comfortable practicing English with others in that setting. It became a positive and motivating experience.
- S05 A memorable moment for me was when I first learned about American culture through English. I was impressed by the values of freedom and equality that are highly valued in American culture. I felt that learning about other cultures through English helped me understand different perspectives and values, and improved my ability to communicate with people from other cultures.
- S06 I remember during a storytelling activity, I shared a traditional tale from my culture. My classmates were fascinated, and I felt proud using English to express something deeply meaningful from my background. It motivated me to keep learning so I could share more stories.
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Transkip questionnaire

Time stamp	Full Name	Are you currently in your 8th semester of	Ethnicity or cultural identity you consider	Would you be willing to participate in the	Would you be willing if the interview was recorded	Do you come from a culturally unique background	Have you ever thought about how your	Do you have access to a quiet environment for
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		the English Language Education Program at UIN Walisongo?	to represent your self	interview as a participant in this study?	ded for transcription and data analysis purposes?	ground that may influence your learning experience?	culture affects your motivation to learn English?	an online or offline interview session?
4/23/2025 10:43:39	Amalia farihal husna	Yes	Medan batuk	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Offline
4/23/2025 10:44:53	Arini Sabila Anjani	Yes	Batang, Jawa Tengah	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	online
4/24/2025 19:09:55	kartika tyas	No	no	No	No	No	No	yes i have
4/24/2025 19:12:55	amalia	Yes	central java	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	no
4/24/2025 20:42:32	Aura Nabila Deswita	Yes	Semarang, Cent	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, I do

	Ningt yas		ral Java					
4/25/ 2025 8:29: 45	Sifa Imna tul Jana ni	Yes	"Jav anes e Ngap ak cultu re beca use I'm from Pem alan g."	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Offlin e
4/25/ 2025 14:3 1:08	Audi va Syifa Sals abila	Yes	West Java	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	onlin e
4/25/ 2025 14:5 5:35	Rizk a Ayu Cahy a Ningr um	Yes	Java nese	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not really
4/25/ 2025 21:1 7:00	arfik a nur aini dalila	Yes	jawa	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	onlin e
4/25/ 2025 21:2 7:58	Farra h Aizz a Jund ana	Yes	Tega l, Cent ral Java	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	yes, offlin e

	Rosy adi							
4/25/2025 21:32:54	Khoir unisa Isaadah	Yes	Java	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maybe I can, but I prefer online
4/25/2025 21:40:02	Hanna Syahria Rahmadani	No	Sundanese ethnicity	Yes	Yes	No	No	online
4/25/2025 21:59:36	nityasapratidina	Yes	patricentral java	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes – I can arrange a quiet environment that is suitable for an interview, (online)
4/26/2025 8:59:06	Aura Chodijah	Yes	Indonesian	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	yes, i do

4/26/ 2025 15:2 7:03	Dima s Gilan g Ram adha n	Yes	Java ness e	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Of cours e
4/28/ 2025 6:34: 00	Endi na	No	Polit e	No	No	No	No	No
5/3/2 025 22:0 7:19	Firda Fadlil a	Yes	javan ese?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	yes, onlin e

APPENDIX 3 Documentation

Documentation when the researcher conducted an interview with the participant.



Figure 3.1 the researcher conducted interviews with students (S02)



Figure 3.2 the researcher conducted interviews with students (S03)



Figure 3.3 the researcher conducted interviews with students (S04)



Figure 3.4 the researcher conducted interviews with students (SO6)

CURRICULUM VITAE

A. Personal Data

Name : Siti Nur Hanifah
Place of Birth : Kendal
Date of Birth : 28th April 2003
Address : Sendang Dawung, Kangkung, Kendal,
East Java
Email : Hanifahiva28@gmail.com
Phone-Number : 0858-6682-6836

B. Education Background

1. TK Mardi Rahayu
2. SD N 1 Sendang Dawung
3. MTs Darul Amanah Kendal
4. MA Darul Amanah Kendal
5. Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo Semarang