



**THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
SOCIAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY OF ANKARA
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**ENHANCING ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN INDONESIA: A CULTURAL
APPROACH THROUGH TARGET LANGUAGE INTEGRATION**

Master's Thesis

Syifana Arumaisya

Department of Foreign Languages Education

English Language Education

July 2025



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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the integration of target language culture in English Language Teaching (ELT) in Indonesia, a topic of growing importance as intercultural competence becomes essential in global communication. Despite the recognition that language and culture are inherently interconnected, cultural content is often underrepresented in ELT practices, particularly in diverse educational settings such as public and private schools in Indonesia. A key problem addressed by this research is the lack of empirical studies comparing how target culture is incorporated across different types of schools and how these differences affect teaching strategies, student engagement, and language acquisition outcomes. The primary aim of this study is to explore how Indonesian English teachers perceive and implement the integration of target culture in ELT and to examine the institutional, pedagogical, and contextual factors that shape these practices. The study employs a qualitative research design using thematic analysis. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with ten English teachers each five from public and private or international schools and selected through purposive and convenience sampling methods. The data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis framework. Six key themes emerged: language-culture correlation, sociocultural influences in learning, institutional and curricular factors, teacher preparedness and attitudes, student outcomes and motivation, and equity and resources disparities. The findings revealed significant contrasts between public and private school contexts, particularly in terms of access to cultural materials, curriculum flexibility, and professional training. Teachers in private schools demonstrated greater ease in incorporating cultural elements, while those in public schools faced structural limitations. These results suggest that culturally responsive ELT in Indonesia requires targeted policy support, improved teacher training, and more equitable resource allocation. Future research should include classroom observations and a more diverse sample, including urban public schools, to capture a broader representation of teaching practices.

Keywords: English Language Teaching, Intercultural Competence, Public and Private School Comparison, Target Language Culture, Teacher Perceptions.

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, hedef dil kültürünün Endonezya'daki İngilizce Öğretimi (ELT) bağlamında nasıl entegre edildiğini incelemektedir. Küresel iletişimde kültürlerarası yeterlilik giderek daha önemli hale geldikçe, bu konu da önem kazanmaktadır. Dil ve kültürün doğası gereği birbirine bağlı olduğu kabul edilmesine rağmen, özellikle Endonezya'daki devlet ve özel okullar gibi farklı eğitim ortamlarında kültürel içerik genellikle ELT uygulamalarında yeterince temsil edilmemektedir. Bu araştırmanın ele aldığı temel sorun, farklı okul türlerinde hedef kültürün nasıl entegre edildiğini karşılaştıran ampirik çalışmaların eksikliğidir. Bu farkların öğretim stratejileri, öğrenci katılımı ve dil edinimi üzerindeki etkisi yeterince araştırılmamıştır. Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, Endonezyalı İngilizce öğretmenlerinin hedef kültürün ELT'ye entegrasyonunu nasıl algıladıklarını ve uyguladıklarını keşfetmek ve bu uygulamaları şekillendiren kurumsal, pedagojik ve bağlamsal faktörleri incelemektir. Araştırma, tematik analiz yöntemiyle yürütülen nitel bir desen kullanmaktadır. Veriler, amaçlı ve uygun örnekleme yöntemleriyle seçilen, beşi devlet okullarında, beşi ise özel ya da uluslararası okullarda görev yapan toplam on İngilizce öğretmeniyle yapılan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yoluyla toplanmıştır. Veriler, Braun ve Clarke'ın (2006) altı aşamalı tematik analiz çerçevesi kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Çalışmada altı ana tema ortaya çıkmıştır: dil-kültür ilişkisi, öğrenmede sosyokültürel etkiler, kurumsal ve müfredatla ilgili faktörler, öğretmen yeterliliği ve tutumları, öğrenci çıktıları ve motivasyonu ile kaynak ve fırsat eşitsizlikleri. Bulgular, özellikle kültürel materyallere erişim, müfredat esnekliği ve mesleki gelişim açısından devlet ve özel okul bağlamları arasında belirgin farklar olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Özel okul öğretmenleri kültürel unsurları daha kolay entegre edebilirken, devlet okulu öğretmenleri yapısal sınırlamalarla karşı karşıya kalmaktadır. Bu sonuçlar, Endonezya'da kültürel açıdan duyarlı bir İngilizce öğretimi için hedefe yönelik politika desteği, öğretmen eğitiminde iyileştirme ve daha adil kaynak tahsisi gerektiğini göstermektedir. Gelecekteki araştırmalar, öğretim uygulamalarını daha geniş yelpazede temsil edebilmek için sınıf içi gözlemleri ve büyük şehirlerdeki devlet okullarını da kapsayan daha çeşitli örneklemeleri içermelidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *İngilizce Öğretimi, Kültürlerarası Yeterlilik, Devlet ve Özel Okul Karşılaştırması, Hedef Dil Kültürü, Öğretmen Algıları*

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves as a foundation for examining how to incorporate target language culture into English Language Teaching (ELT) in Indonesia. It starts by highlighting the importance of learning foreign languages, pointing out the benefits for academic achievement, cognitive growth, and understanding between cultures. While it recognizes that communication is central to language learning, the chapter also notes the common gap between language and culture in educational settings. It stresses the deep connection between language and culture, illustrating how the inclusion of target culture can improve Indonesian students' language understanding, social skills, and motivation. Ultimately, this chapter prepares for a closer look at how cultural representation in ELT materials, teacher attitudes, and student results can influence learning, leading to the development of research questions that will guide the exploration of these vital topics. Thus, this chapter focused on the background of the study, formulation of the problem, objectives of the research, and significance of the research.

Learning a foreign language has become increasingly popular and even mandatory in particular regions of the world. This is due to the fact that learning a foreign language offers several advantages for individuals who learn it. Several studies have proven that learning a foreign language provides convenience and advantages (Chuang et al., 2018; Fox et al., 2019; Hopp et al., 2019). A rising database of research from the past three decades, but especially during the last 15 years, has shown the substantial and important advantages of bilingualism and multilingualism (Baker & Wright, 2017). A study from Abdullaev, (2021) found that the advantages of learning a foreign language include providing access or convenience in work, travel and studying abroad, as well as access to immigration. In line with this statement, a study from Fox et al. (2019) added that three major areas of the advantages in learning a foreign language are: (1) How language learning enhances academic success (2) How language learning helps students' cognitive development (3) How language learning impacts students' attitudes and ideas about language learning and other

cultures. In other words, learning a foreign language not only has practical advantages but also facilitates exposure to various cultures and improves intercultural communication abilities.

Although communicating is the main goal of learning a language, some people do not see the need to become skilled in the language's culture. Students and teachers both share this opinion. Since they are unaware of the significance of culture in language learning, some teachers fail to incorporate culture into their language lessons (Cetz, 2015). A study from Bat-Yondon (2021) reveals that foreign language instructors are unsure of how to include culture in their lessons. It has been mentioned in a study from Brooks (1968) which states that teachers are confused of exactly what they should be teaching in the first place since they lack a defined understanding of what "culture" is. In other instances, teachers' limited time in class and their limited cultural expertise are constrained, making the target culture seem insignificant (Aydemir, 2013). Additionally, teachers argue that they lack time to teach culture since they must prioritize improving students' linguistic proficiency (Byrd, 2011). Many students believe that learning a foreign language through subject-specific instruction is sufficient, and that all that is needed to become competent in speaking the language is to increase conversation practice. However, a large portion of students studying a language as a foreign language are unaware of the significance of cultural components in language learning as they did not live in the country where the target language is spoken.

Language and culture are inherently intertwined; mastering a language requires an understanding of its cultural nuances. Cultural knowledge is necessary to communicate effectively in a foreign language because language and culture are strongly correlated, according to Gao (2006). This is especially important in Indonesia because students frequently come across cultural allusions from the West that don't align with their own experiences. Therefore, integrating aspects of the target culture into English language instruction will assist students in overcoming these disparities and enhance their comprehension and use of the language in authentic settings. Research indicates that exposure to the target culture greatly improves students' socio-cultural skills. For instance, Research from a variety of EFL contexts has demonstrated that students who obtain cultural exposure in addition to language instruction have better language comprehension and output (Khouni & Boudjelal, 2019). In Indonesia, where there are many different local cultures, incorporating English-speaking cultures helps foster intercultural sensitivity by assisting

students in appreciating both their own and other people's cultural identities (Mohamed & Farahani, 2023).

Students' motivation and engagement can be raised by incorporating the target culture into English language instruction. Learning can be made easier and more pleasurable by being familiar with cultural components including traditions, social conventions, and values (Doghonadze, 2011). This strategy can persuade Indonesian students who might prefer Western cultural elements to learn English since they believe it is a global language (Hernandez et al., 2021). Understanding cultural context enables students to communicate with people from diverse cultures. Understanding cultural norms, such as appropriate speech or behavior, can assist avoid miscommunications that result from cultural differences. In a multicultural country like Indonesia, where people frequently engage with others from diverse origins, this ability is extremely crucial (Khouni & Boudjelal, 2019).

In addition to enhancing language learning, knowing the cultural background of English fosters a closer bond with the language, as noted by Hidayati et al. (2017). Consequently, learning a language becomes more engaging and fulfilling. The impact of cultural awareness of English on the grammatical knowledge of Indonesian EFL students was examined in a study by Mashudi et al. (2022). There were two groups in the study. Traditional teaching methods were used with one group, while English cultural elements were used with the other. According to the findings, the group that was exposed to the cultural information performed higher on the grammar test. This implies that cultural sensitivity can enhance specific language abilities, such usage and knowledge of grammar. Another study focused on the learning strategies employed by Indonesian learners across different languages, including English. It was shown that cultural sensitivity motivates students to choose their resources and methods more carefully. Participants stated that conversing with local speakers and reading real texts increased their awareness of cultural quirks, which in turn affected how they approached learning (Abir, 2023). This suggests that cultural awareness influences how students navigate their educational experiences in addition to helping them acquire a language.

Sociocultural factors have a considerable impact on second language acquisition (SLA), according to Sholihah et al. (2024). Because several cultures coexist in Indonesia, students frequently apply their native cultural knowledge to their English language studies. When cultural

aspects overlap, this transfer can make understanding easier, but when cultural norms diverge greatly, it can also provide obstacles. Research shows that students who are more interculturally aware report making more progress in learning English, which emphasizes the value of including culture education in language programs. A more inclusive learning environment is also produced by cultural knowledge, which increases empathy for target language speakers. According to Mohamed and Farahani (2023), learners who comprehend cultural settings are better able to interact meaningfully with native speakers, which is crucial for the development of communicative competence. In Indonesia's multilingual setting, where cultural sensitivity is frequently necessary for efficient communication, this social component of language learning is very important (Mokoginta, 2024).

From 2000 to the present, studies in Indonesia on cultural representation in English language teaching (ELT) have focused on several critical factors, including cultural representation in textbooks, instructor perspectives, and student outcomes. These studies highlight the need of incorporating cultural awareness into English language acquisition, which reflects Indonesia's complex cultural landscape. Several studies have examined the cultural character of English textbooks used in Indonesian classrooms. For example, a study conducted by Zahara and Rusmawaty (2022) looked at how high school English textbooks reflect Indonesian cultural variety. The study used qualitative content analysis to divide cultural representations into four categories: product, person, practice, and perspective. The results found that while cultural content was available, teachers thought that the representation was insufficient to capture the whole spectrum of Indonesian cultures (Zahara & Rusmawaty, 2022). Another study conducted by Alfaya, et al. (2023) aimed to investigate the representation of cultural content in English textbooks entitled "Work in Progress," which is widely used in Indonesian secondary schools. This research found that target culture was predominantly represented (53.4%), followed by neutral culture (18.2%), international culture (14.6%), and source culture (13.8%). The authors argued for a more balanced representation of various cultures to enhance students' intercultural competence.

Researchers have also investigated teacher views on cultural representation in ELT materials. A survey found that many instructors felt current textbooks do not adequately depict Indonesian culture. Teachers expressed a desire for a more thorough cultural curriculum that reflects students' origins and experiences. This view is important because it affects how instructors

approach language instruction and cultural education in their classrooms (Ariawan, 2020). The incorporation of cultural understanding into language acquisition has demonstrated favorable benefits on student outcomes. Students increase their communicative ability and have a better knowledge of intercultural differences when they are exposed to both local and target cultures through textbooks. This is especially crucial in Indonesia's multicultural society, where effective communication frequently needs sensitivity to various cultural norms (Hidayati et al., 2017). The scope of studies undertaken in Indonesia the past two decades has revealed substantial insights on the representation of culture in English language teaching materials, instructor perceptions of these representations, and their impact on student outcomes.

Cultural awareness has a big influence on Indonesian learners' learning of the English language because it helps them communicate more effectively and changes their perception of the target language. In contrast to conventional teaching techniques, incorporating English cultural resources into grammar training increased EFL students' performance, according to research by Mashudi et al. (2022). Given that students who interact with cultural content are more likely to acquire a sophisticated grasp of the language, this emphasizes the significance of cultural context in language learning. Furthermore, research by Hidayati et al. (2017) highlights how cultural awareness promotes sensitivity and empathy for target language speakers, which is essential given Indonesia's multilingual landscape. According to the study, students who expressed greater intercultural awareness were more assured of their proficiency in the English language and more adept at negotiating cross-cultural situations. According to this correlation, cultural awareness helps students create successful, culturally relevant communication tactics in addition to improving their language proficiency.

Additionally, promoting cultural awareness in students depends heavily on teachers' opinions on how different cultures are portrayed in English textbooks. According to research by Tedjasuksmana (2013), many Indonesian teachers understand how important it is for textbooks to accurately represent both the target and local cultures. Understanding the cultural aspects of language acquisition allows teachers to better assist their students in choosing relevant resources and teaching methods, which will ultimately increase student performance (Sholihah et al., 2024). According to this study, which also looked at the influence of sociocultural development on EFL learners, students with a moderate level of intercultural awareness reported making better progress

in learning English. These results highlight the need for a culturally sensitive curriculum that incorporates cultural components in addition to teaching language mechanics, thereby equipping Indonesian students for successful communication in a world growing more interconnected by the day.

To improve Indonesian students' educational experiences, cultural sensitivity must be incorporated into English language instruction. According to Sholihah et al. (2024), students' linguistic abilities and ability to communicate effectively are much enhanced when they comprehend the cultural background of a language. The findings also revealed that students' intercultural competency is enhanced by exposure to both local and target cultures, which is essential in Indonesia's multicultural society. This is also supported by a study from Wang (2023) that mentioned cultural background can affect communication techniques, learning methods, motivation, and even how the target language is perceived. In this process, teachers are essential because their opinions and methods about ethnic representation in instructional materials have a direct effect on student performance. A more thorough cultural curriculum that represents the culture of the target language is something that many teachers express a wish for, but obstacles such a lack of resources and time frequently prevent its integration.

Additionally, when it comes to teaching English, teachers are still uncertain about which culture to teach. By examining how teacher varying levels of understanding and awareness of cultural integration impact their teaching strategies and, in turn, student learning outcomes, this study seeks to close the gap. This study specifically examines how cultural integration strategies differ across public and private schools, where exposure to various cultures may be less common and more common, respectively. Furthermore, the topic of target culture integration in English teaching within the Indonesian setting is still not widely covered in theses and dissertations. A preliminary search conducted by the researcher across online repositories of 20 prominent Indonesian universities with English Language Education major (e.g., Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, Universitas Islam Indonesia, Universitas Negeri Malang, and others) yielded fewer than five theses that specifically focused on the integration of target culture in English language teaching. Most literature takes the form of journal articles or content analyses of textbooks, rather than dedicated theses (Ariawan, 2020; Khoiriyah, 2018; Putri, 2024). This observation suggests that the topic remains considerably underexplored in the Indonesian academic context, particularly at the thesis level. In addition, this study attempts to

compare how the target language culture is exposed to English language teaching in two distinct contexts: public and private learning environments. Therefore, this study is anticipated to fill this knowledge gap and offer insightful information about the educational effects of cultural integration.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the effects of integrating target culture on English language teaching in Indonesia's educational settings, especially in public and private schools. This study also attempts to investigate teacher's perception towards integrating target culture in their teaching as well as students' attitude or motivation in learning English. In addition, this study explores benefits and challenges of target culture in the context of English language teaching in Indonesia, as well as what they are undertaking to address these issues.

1.2 Research Questions

For the purpose of this study, three proposed research questions were formulated:

1. What are the effects of integrating target culture on English language teaching in Indonesia's educational settings?
2. What are the benefits and the challenges of teaching culture in the context of English Language teaching?
3. How do public and private schools in Indonesia differ in integrating target culture into English Teaching?

1.3 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its attempt to address a noticeable gap in English language teaching research in the Indonesian context specifically, the limited exploration of how the integration of target culture (i.e., the culture of English-speaking countries) influences students' attitudes and motivation in learning English. While culture is often acknowledged as an important component of language learning, its practical integration, particularly target culture, remains underrepresented in both academic research and classroom implementation in Indonesia.

On a practical level, the findings of this study may provide valuable insights for English teachers and curriculum designers regarding the potential of culturally rich materials and approaches to foster greater student interest, engagement, and cultural awareness. This is especially important in preparing students not only to be linguistically competent but also culturally competent in an increasingly globalized world. On an empirical level, this study contributes to the growing body of literature that advocates for intercultural competence in language education. By highlighting the current practices, challenges, and perceptions surrounding target culture integration, the study expands the scholarly conversation and encourages more localized research efforts on cultural dimensions in ELT, especially at the secondary education level in Indonesia.

1.4 Definitions of Significant Terms

Communicative Competence: The ability of native speakers to engage effectively by observing "non-verbal communication cues such as gestures and facial expressions," including when and how to say anything in a given situation (Sauvignon, 1976).

Cultural Diversity: The term "cultural diversity" basically refers to differences in social class, race, language, and other factors, while "diversity" is defined as including gender, age, religion, sexual preferences, and so on (Melnick & Zeichner, 1995).

Culture: An entire society's members' collective sets of views, attitudes, conventions, conduct, social habits, etc. (Richards et al., 1986).

English Medium Instruction: In countries or areas where English is not the primary language spoken by individuals, academic courses are taught in English (apart from English itself) (Macaro et al., 2018).

Intercultural Awareness: Adaptability and context-specificity in the use of culturally grounded forms, practices, and frameworks of knowledge in real-time communication (Byram, 1997).

Intercultural Competence: The capacity to guarantee that individuals with diverse social identities have a common understanding and can engage with others as multifaceted individuals with distinct identities (Byram et al., 2002).

Intercultural Communicative Competence: A complex ability needed to interact with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself in an effective and appropriate manner (Sauvignon, 1972).

Target Culture: The culture of the language being taught, whether it be second or foreign (Şen, 2010).

Target Language: The language being learned, regardless of whether it is the first, second, third or fourth language (Lightbown and Spada, 2006).



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter delves into the complex role of cultural integration in English Language Teaching (ELT), especially in the context of Indonesia. It reviews established theoretical frameworks such as those proposed by Byram (1997) and Kramsch (1993), emphasizing the significance of intercultural competence and sensitivity in the language learning process. Additionally, it outlines the historical development of cultural integration in Indonesian ELT, recognizes the ongoing discussions about its importance, and tackles the challenges presented by stereotypes and cultural biases. Lastly, this chapter distinguishes between Inner and Outer Circles of English use and examines the differences between learning a second language and a foreign language in relation to the target culture. By addressing these critical elements, this chapter lays the groundwork for a thorough investigation of the relationship between language and culture in ELT.

2.1 Cultural Integration in English Language Teaching

A number of significant ideas and models, most notably a framework proposed by Byram (1997) for cultural understanding and a concept of intercultural competency proposed by Kramsch (1993), enable the integration of target language culture into English language instruction in Indonesia. The importance of intercultural competence which includes not only language proficiency but also the capacity to understand and navigate cultural nuances is emphasized by Kramsch (1993). According to this approach, in order to communicate effectively in a foreign language, learners must be mindful of both their own and the language's cultures, which fosters empathy and flexibility in cross-cultural relationships. This idea highlights the necessity of incorporating cultural education into English language instruction in Indonesia, where students regularly come across Western cultural references, in order to enhance their intercultural competence and communication abilities.

A person who learns a foreign language experiences a form of enculturation in which they pick up new worldviews and cultural frames of reference that mirror those of the target language

culture and its speakers (Alptekin, 2002). Intercultural communication ability is inextricably linked to language learning, especially English language proficiency. Intercultural awareness, according to Byram (1997), is the capacity to apply culturally based forms, practices, and frames of understanding in real-time communication in a flexible and context-specific way. It also includes a conscious understanding of the potential contribution these concepts can make to intercultural communication. According to Sauvignon (1972), this is known as intercultural communicative competence (ICC), which is the intricate capacity to interact and communicate effectively with individuals who are linguistically and culturally distinct from oneself. The three stages Byram (1997) suggested for cultivating this intercultural communication skill are basic, advanced, and intercultural.

Table 1. Level of Intercultural Competence
(Byram (1997) as cited in Baker, 2012)

Level	Description
Level 1 Basic Cultural Awareness	An awareness of: 1. Culture as a set of shared behaviours, beliefs, and values; 2. The significance of context and culture in any meaning interpretation 3. Our own culturally influenced values, views, and behaviors, as well as our capacity to express them 4. Our capacity to evaluate and contrast the culturally generated behaviors, values, and beliefs of others with our own
Level 2 Advanced Cultural Awareness	An awareness of: 5. The relative nature of cultural norms 6. Cultural awareness as tentative and subject to change 7. Various viewpoints or voices within a cultural community 8. Individual as belonging to a variety of social groups, including cultural ones 9. Knowledge of potential mismatches and misunderstandings between particular cultures as well as shared ground between them.
Level 3 Intercultural Awareness	An awareness of: 10. Culturally grounded frames of reference, forms, and communication techniques as emerging and hybrid in intercultural communication, as well as connected to particular cultures 11. Initial exchange in cross-cultural communication may be predicated on cultural generalizations or stereotypes, but the capacity to transcend these through 12. An ability to mediate and negotiate across several emerging socioculturally grounded communication modes and frames of reference using the previously mentioned cultural awareness in intercultural communication.

Cultural representation extends beyond the names of traditional arts, for example, and includes providing EFL users (students) with intercultural information. In this situation, culture might be represented by its products (physical objects), individuals (figures or famous people), activities (ceremonies, lifestyle, and so on), or viewpoints (way of thinking, stereotypes) (Silvia, 2015). According to a study by Muir (2007), there are three types of culture: deep culture, popular culture, and high culture. High culture encompasses literature, art, philosophy, politics, and education. While popular culture encompasses customs, ceremonies, and appropriate social contact, as well as family patterns, way of life, and even concrete catering, tea, and football cultures. Deep culture consists of values, ways of thinking, codes of conduct, religious beliefs, and moral standards, among other things.

Furthermore, Adaskou et al. (1990) categorize culture into four senses that EFL materials can represent: aesthetic, sociological, semantic, and pragmatic. The phrase "aesthetic sense of culture" in EFL materials describes features of products and individuals that usually appeal to learners' two senses (hearing and sight). Typically, pop songs, TV shows, movies, comics, novels, and other media are used to convey this idea. Second, sociological sense is frequently used in EFL materials to discuss topics like neighborhood, job and leisure, and family life. Thirdly, ideas, opinions, or thoughts about culture are reflected in the semantic sense of culture. This can take many different forms, including opinions, customs, and general beliefs. Finally, the pragmatic sense of culture encompasses customs, paralinguistic proficiency, social skills, and prior knowledge.

Byram's cultural understanding model improves on this strategy by emphasizing particular aspects of cultural competency that should be integrated into language instruction. The five essential components that Byram (1997) identifies are knowledge, attitudes, interpretative and relational abilities, discovery and interaction skills, and critical cultural awareness. This model encourages teachers to create a curriculum that exposes students to the cultural settings that affect language use in addition to covering language fundamentals. Studies carried out in Indonesia have shown that integrating these theoretical frameworks into English language instruction improves student outcomes, such as enthusiasm for and participation in the learning process (Mashudi et al., 2022). Additionally, research indicates that integrating local and target cultures enhances the learning process and helps students develop intercultural sensitivity while appreciating their own

cultural identities (Zahara & Rusmawaty, 2022; Mohamed & Farahani, 2023). All things considered, these theories provide a solid basis for acknowledging the critical role that cultural integration plays in improving Indonesian students' acquisition of the English language.

Recent studies have largely focused on how ELT in Indonesian schools incorporates the culture of the target language. According to research, incorporating aspects of English-speaking cultures into the curriculum might increase students' motivation and involvement. Setiadi et al. (2021), for instance, investigated the representation of the target culture in a well-known English textbook, demonstrating that successful cultural integration can improve students' comprehension of language in context. Similarly, Riadini and Cahyono (2021) looked at the cultural content of senior high school textbooks, highlighting the importance of the target culture in helping pupils become interculturally competent. Syahri and Susanti (2016) further added to this conversation by doing a content analysis of senior high school English textbooks. Their findings showed that target culture was given more weight than local culture, suggesting that more balanced cultural representation is required. These observations emphasize how crucial it is to expose children to other cultural viewpoints in order to enhance their language learning process.

In order to properly integrate target culture into ELT, research emphasizes the significance of instructors' perspectives and instructional strategies. While many educators recognize the value of incorporating cultural information into their classes, Marhamah et al. (2017) looked at EFL teachers' perspectives on the subject and found that they frequently struggle to put it into practice. This conclusion is reinforced by Zahara and Rusmawaty (2022), who identified successful methods for integrating target culture that can increase student motivation and enhance learning results. According to Mohamed and Farahani (2023), students who are exposed to the target culture not only improve their language proficiency but also grow more interculturally sensitive, which makes it easier for them to handle a variety of social circumstances. The importance of cultural integration in language instruction was further highlighted by Raharjanti (2020), who assessed an EFL textbook used by Indonesian high school students, examining how effectively it portrayed the target culture and how well it promoted intercultural understanding.

The critical evaluation of cultural content in textbooks has received a lot of attention lately. Setyono and Widodo (2019) performed an in-depth review of EFL textbooks utilized in Indonesian senior high schools, uncovering inconsistencies in how target culture and local culture are

represented. According to their research, certain textbooks successfully include elements of English-speaking cultures, but others are shallow and don't present a whole picture. This emphasizes how crucial it is for curriculum designers to make sure that local and target cultures are portrayed in a way that promotes thorough language acquisition. Collectively, these studies demonstrate how important it is to incorporate the culture of the target language in order to improve Indonesian students' English language learning and, eventually, their entire intercultural communicative ability.

Beyond academic frameworks, Avgousti (2018) found that integrating cultural activities like role-playing and storytelling into the classroom greatly improves students' communication ability. Furthermore, according to a study by Maghfirotilah (2016), using real materials—such as music and movies from English-speaking countries—can help students become more culturally conscious and enhance their listening comprehension abilities. To prevent potential conflicts and misunderstandings, teachers should carefully balance the integration of target culture with local cultural norms as stated by Sari et al. (2020). Research from Winarsih et al. (2024) lends more credence to this, highlighting the necessity for educators to cultivate their own intercultural competency in order to successfully manage cultural integration in the classroom.

Incorporating culture into ELT is critical for assisting students in grasping the language in a more holistic manner, beyond merely grammar and vocabulary. In Indonesia, like in many other nations where English is not the primary language, the need of incorporating the target language's culture into English instruction is becoming increasingly recognized. In order to give students the cultural awareness required for fruitful cross-cultural encounters, a number of studies and curriculum modifications have looked into and implemented efficient techniques for incorporating culture into ELT. The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture has long prioritized creating curricula that represent both regional and international viewpoints. The Curriculum 2013 (K–13), which has served as the foundation for English instruction in schools since its introduction, places a strong emphasis on critical thinking, communicative ability, and the incorporation of cultural elements from Indonesia and the English-speaking world. However, prior research indicates that although K–13 offers a foundation for cultural integration, the implementation has frequently prioritized linguistic proficiency above cultural understanding (Hidayati et al., 2017).

Numerous studies have pointed up weaknesses in Indonesian ELT textbooks and resources' explicit incorporation of cultural knowledge. Cahyono and Widiati (2006), for example, noted in their study that whereas ELT textbooks typically include topics pertaining to Western cultures, there is frequently little examination of the various cultures that are present in the English-speaking globe. According to this study, materials tend to undervalue the importance of other English-speaking nations such as Australia, Canada, and South Africa as well as the multicultural reality of English-speaking communities in favor of concentrating primarily on the cultural features of native English-speaking nations like the United States and the United Kingdom.

Furthermore, earlier studies have indicated the necessity of resources that strike a balance between the local Indonesian environment and the target language culture. Silvia (2015) promotes the creation of ELT materials that acknowledge and value the cultural backgrounds of Indonesian students in addition to including Western cultural themes. This method is thought to create an atmosphere in which students may identify with the material and learn about how English is used around the world. The function of supplemental materials, such as multimedia, authentic texts, and cultural exchange programs, in addition to textbooks has been a major focus of research on ELT materials. To expose students to a greater variety of cultural experiences, the use of literature, music, movies, and internet resources from different English-speaking nations has been encouraged more and more in classrooms. Byram and Wagner (2018) found that using real resources in the curriculum improves students' intercultural communication abilities and provides a more complex understanding of the target language.

Over the past few decades, Indonesia has witnessed substantial shifts in cultural integration in language instruction due to a variety of historical, political, and social causes. English language teaching (ELT) in Indonesia has its origins in the late Dutch colonial era, when it was initially made available as a foreign language (Groeneboer, 1998). However, English instruction was halted during the Japanese occupation since it was prohibited. English, mainly taught using conventional grammar-translation techniques, resurfaced as a crucial foreign language after Indonesia gained its independence (Mistar, 2014). The first president and vice president since Indonesia's independence, President Soekarno and Vice President Mohammad Hatta, were in charge of the newly liberated country at the time, which had established a new government known as the Indonesian Republic or the Old Order of Indonesia. Under the leadership of this first president,

who made the politically and philosophically sound choice that Dutch and Japanese should not be taught in schools since they were colonial languages, English started to gain recognition and usage in Indonesia. English was viewed as one of the languages of instruction since it was more commonly recognized as a means of worldwide communication (Dardjowidjojo, 2000; Mistar, 2005).

English is also one of the subjects assessed in the national exam, which was previously known as the national exam for elementary, middle, and high school. English is also utilized as an entrance exam for colleges and universities since it is regarded as being equally significant to other courses. Students are expected to meet a number of requirements in order to pass the exam because English is so highly regarded in Indonesia. This demonstrates that Indonesians are required to study English in order to pass this important test. As a result, numerous initiatives are underway to assist Indonesian students in developing their English proficiency. Therefore, a sufficient curriculum is required to support kids' learning. A number of adjustments have also been made in an attempt to assess and enhance the curriculum in order to produce a better one each year.

The curriculum in Indonesia has undergone several changes. A study by Widodo (2016) has discussed curriculum changes in Indonesia from 2004 to 2013 including the goals of learning and the successful implementation to it. With the introduction of the 2004 English Language Teaching Curriculum, also known as *Kurikulum Berbasis Kompetensi* (KBK) or the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), the Indonesian educational system has undergone significant changes over the years. This curriculum, which was implemented in accordance with National Education System No. 20's 2003 Act, placed a strong emphasis on macro skills like speaking, listening, reading, and writing in order to improve students' communicative ability. It combines Halliday's systemic functional grammar frameworks (Halliday, 1985, 1976, 1994, 2008; Halliday & Mattieshen, 2004) with the communicative competence models from Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, and Thurrell (Celce et al., 1995). But in spite of its ambitious objectives, the implementation ran into a number of problems, including teachers' reluctance to create their own resources and a strong reliance on commercially available textbooks. Effective teaching and learning were also hindered by problems such as rigid assessment procedures and poor classroom management, which led to a disconnect between the objectives of the curriculum and the realities of the classroom (Mubarok & Sofiana, 2022).

To address these issues, the 2006 ELT Curriculum included a School-Based Curriculum (SBC), also referred to as *KTSP*, which gave schools more freedom to create and execute curriculum based on student needs and local circumstances. The curriculum was updated to address the issues of globalization that Indonesia faces as information, communication, and technology (ICT) continue to grow. This change sought to include the difficulties of globalization into the educational framework while addressing the varied sociocultural backgrounds of the pupils. Through venues where they could exchange resources and offer input on curriculum materials, the SBC promoted cooperation among English teachers. These educators could use an English Teacher Development Group (ETDG) forum (known as *Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran* or MGMP in Bahasa Indonesia) to discuss their curriculum with educators from other schools in the same district. This forum allows English teachers to provide feedback on one other's curriculum materials, including syllabus, lesson plans, and instructional units. District-level boards of education supervised and assisted in these forums. Nevertheless, instead of fully adopting the SBC principles, many teachers persisted in coordinating their lessons with national exams in spite of this flexibility (Pajarwati et al., 2021). Although this curriculum reform's emphasis on context and communication competence remained crucial, implementation irregularities continued because of persistent bureaucratic control over assessments.

While the implementation of KTSP or SBC was underway, in mid-2006, the Indonesian government enacted a policy on International Standardized Schools (ISS) policy to improve the quality of education that aims to facilitate students with exceptional or above average academic abilities with their age. The desire to increase Indonesia's global competitiveness and develop a workforce prepared for a worldwide economy served as the impetus for this program. The policy required schools to adhere to OECD accreditation procedures, employ ICT, and provide English medium instruction (EMI), among other international criteria. However, obstacles arose throughout implementation, including teachers' lack of English proficiency, reliance on Bahasa Indonesia as the major medium of instruction, and a disproportionate benefit to children from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. After a judicial examination by Indonesia's Constitutional Court, which placed a strong emphasis on ensuring that all people have equal access to high-quality education free from socioeconomic discrimination, the ISS program was finally discontinued in 2013. Even though the ISS policy is no longer in place in secondary education, world-class university programs that offer English-medium instruction continue to flourish in higher

education, demonstrating continuous efforts to bring Indonesian education into line with international standards while addressing regional needs and difficulties.

The 2013 ELT curriculum was in use for quite a long time before being superceded by the *Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar*, which was recently launched in 2021. By emphasizing student-centered instruction, the 2013 ELT curriculum allows students to engage with content that speaks to their interests and cultural backgrounds. It is a five-phase learning cycle designed to improve teamwork and critical thinking abilities. Nonetheless, several criticisms have been made of its restrictive character and the little flexibility it gives educators. Furthermore, there is still a strong focus on formal evaluations that could not accurately reflect students' abilities, even while the curriculum aims to improve educational quality through process- and product-based assessments (Levy-Feldman, 2025). Continuous adjustments are necessary to guarantee that the curriculum successfully meets both local requirements and international expectations as Indonesia continues to tackle the difficulties posed by its educational reforms. A change toward more interactive and context-based learning was signaled by the advent of audio-lingualism and communicative techniques in the late 20th century. This underscored the increasing understanding of the significance of cultural context in language acquisition (Stockton, 2018).

The incorporation of culture into English language teaching approaches has produced heated arguments and disputes, particularly over the degree to which culture should be emphasized in language education. Different perspectives on this matter have been voiced by academics, highlighting the difficulties in teaching language and cultural awareness. For instance, McKay (2003) argues that knowing cultural contexts is essential to efficient communication and that culture plays a significant role in language instruction. She argues for a balanced approach to incorporating culture into the curriculum by emphasizing that language learners require cultural understanding to successfully navigate social interactions. This point of view is in line with Byram's (1997) model of intercultural competency, which maintains that cultural sensitivity should be integrated into language teaching methods since it is essential for successful communication.

Some educators, on the other hand, question the importance of incorporating culture into language training. According to Sercu et al., (2006), not all teachers believe that integrating cultures is beneficial. While some educators maintain that culture plays a significant role in language learning, others argue that language instruction can be carried out without regard to

cultural context and yet improve students' language competency. As observed by Külekci and Ata (2019), who discovered that some teachers felt unprepared to address cultural problems in their classes, this disagreement might lead to a variety of teaching styles. These divergent opinions raise concerns regarding the best approaches to incorporate culture into English language courses and the potential effects on students' intercultural competency.

Furthermore, obstacles like prejudices and stereotypes make integrating culture into language instruction much more challenging. Papademetre et al. (2003) stress the significance of addressing these problems in order to assist students in gaining a more profound comprehension of culture. Teachers ought to engage students in conversations and exercises that challenge their beliefs and promote cultural sensitivity. Scholars like Atay et al. (2009) continue the discussion by highlighting the value of direct cultural training while simultaneously acknowledging its drawbacks. Ultimately, the continuous debate over incorporating culture into English language instruction reflects broader cultural perspectives on multiculturalism and the recognition of many identities in learning environments.

2.2 Cultural Contexts in Language Learning: Inner and Outer Circles

The concept of the Inner Circle and Outer Circle in language learning, particularly as it relates to English, is derived from the significant World Englishes model proposed by Braj Kachru (1985). The nations in the Inner Circle are those where English is the primary language and means of communication. This category includes countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. In these so-called "norm-providing" environments, English is not only used as a first language but also establishes the norms for English language instruction globally (Kachru et al., 1985). According to McKay (2003), the cultural origins of these Inner Circle countries have a significant impact on how English is taught and understood around the world. For students in different circles, this dominance might provide difficulties since they may feel pressured to live up to these expectations, which can occasionally compromise their own linguistic identities.

Because of their historical ties to British colonialism, the nations in the Outer Circle are those where English is widely used as a second language. English is crucial in government, education, and the media in countries like India, Nigeria, Kenya, and Malaysia, even though most

speakers do not speak it as their first language. This circle is characterized by "norm-developing" contexts in which regional dialects of English, influenced by indigenous languages and cultures, emerge (Kachru et al., 1985). According to research by Bayyurt (2013), these regions use English for a variety of pragmatic purposes, but they also contribute to the language's development by bringing unique grammatical features that reflect regional cultural identities. This instance emphasizes how important it is to recognize the varied ways in which English is used and understood in different cultural settings.

The emphasis on cultural components from both Inner and Outer Circles is a topic of continuous discussion when target language culture is incorporated into teaching approaches. Some academics advocate for a well-rounded strategy that takes into account both Outer Circle reality and Inner Circle standards. For instance, rather than rigidly adhering to native-speaker models, Canagarajah (2006) promotes acknowledging the variety of English language competencies that represent learners' cultural backgrounds. However, critics contend that students may struggle to communicate well in international settings if they lack a firm grasp of Inner Circle norms (Seidlhofer, 2013). Ultimately, creating successful language teaching methods that include relevant cultural components requires an understanding of the distinctions between the Inner and Outer Circles. The need for inclusive teaching methods that value both native and non-native English speakers is highlighted by this continuing debate, which reflects broader cultural views regarding globalization and linguistic diversity.

In this regard, it is crucial to differentiate between learning English as a second language and as a foreign language, since these distinctions have a significant impact on the way culture is incorporated into language instruction. There is a contrast between learning a language as a foreign language and learning a language as a second language which lies in the context and learning objectives. Contextually, learning a language as a second language typically occurs in a country where the foreign language is spoken, as opposed to learning a language as a foreign language, which refers to learning a language other than the mother tongue in a country where the foreign language is not spoken (Moeller & Catalano, 2015). This alludes to the many objectives of learning the language. Learning a language as a second language is typically done for a specific reason, such as a personal interest or for professional or academic requirements. However, learning a language as a second language attempts to communicate with native speakers and expose learners

to situations where the language is used in daily life. Therefore, it can be seen that learning a language is inseparably linked to understanding its culture in order to derive a deeper meaning from the context.

The significance of exposing learners to culture when they are studying foreign languages has been mentioned in numerous studies. A person learning a second or foreign language must comprehend both the linguistic structures and the cultural aspects of the language in order to communicate (Ali et al., 2015). In addition, Vygotsky (1978) emphasized that involvement in culturally coordinated activities is necessary for learning to take place. Active participation in social discussion is crucial as learning is viewed as a conscious, purposeful activity that is never passive or accidental which means it is always aware and intentional (Brevik, 2020). Nonetheless, as viewed by previous researchers it has been clear that culture plays an important role in learning a language.

Which one is closer to the target culture can be determined from the context and setting. Learning a language as a second language leads learners to eventually come into touch with the target culture due to a variety of factors, including learners who are indirectly influenced by the culture brought by the second language they use on a daily basis (Coşkun, 2018). According to Al Darwish (2017) learning a language in the community where it is spoken allows learners to be more directly exposed to the target culture through their interactions with locals and experiences in daily life. This supports the notion that study abroad students get "immersed" in the local way of life and that their exposure to the apparently vibrant linguistic environment of the nation is what eventually results in potential gains in their target language proficiency (Segalowitz et al., 2004).

Previously, Hammerly (1982) defined culture and divided it into three categories, which are: achievement, informational, and behavioral. A society's aesthetic and literary achievements are included in its achievement culture. The knowledge of native speakers who are educated about their culture is referred to as informational culture. This knowledge may include the knowledge that a society values. It's crucial for students to comprehend this kind of culture so that they won't come across as being overly naive when they interact with the target culture (Hammerly, 1982). It is proposed that language classes should concentrate on behavioral culture since it deals with the knowledge needed to function in daily life and actions are closely related to communication.

Walker and Noda (2000) believe that Foreign Language students should consider all three of Hammerly's concepts of culture. A study from Goldoni (2013) added that students become fully immersed in the target culture by interacting with locals more. Students can learn the target language more rapidly by interacting directly and frequently with locals since they will unavoidably practice everyday conversations that will help them comprehend the authentic linguistics of the target language (Septiani et al., 2021). This exposure can help students use language efficiently because students listen to the way local people speak, starting from their pronunciation, intonation, to phrases or sentences that are often used by local people naturally. As language learners gain proficiency in a second language and exposure to a second culture, they often integrate their new experiences into their previous ones in order to make them relevant to their daily lives (Kramsch, 1993). Through this process, learners acquire a practical understanding of the vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, idioms and cultural references that are frequently exclusive to the target language.

Furthermore, the target language immerses learners in the cultural aspects associated with it. Language and culture are intricately intertwined. Nothing has received more attention or less impact than the connection between language and culture (Walker & Noda, 2000). By learning the target language, learners gain valuable insights into the customs, traditions, values, and perspectives of the community that speaks it. Understanding the cultural nuances enhances language comprehension and enables learners to communicate more effectively, showing respect and appreciation for the target language community.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodological framework used to examine how target culture is integrated into English Language Teaching (ELT) in Indonesia. A qualitative method based on thematic analysis was used to reveal the intricacies of this phenomenon. This study uses semi-structured interviews to investigate instructor perceptions and student attitudes in the natural environments of Indonesian schools. Convenience and purposive sampling were used to select participants, who represent both public and private/international schools and offer a range of viewpoints. The six-phase structure developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) ensures rigor in data processing through member verification, reflexivity, and inter-coder reliability. The particular research design, participant selection, data collecting, and analytical techniques that underpin this investigation are described in the parts that follow.

The study seeks to understand the impact of incorporating target culture on English language instruction within Indonesian educational environments. Additionally, it investigates teachers' views on integrating target culture into their lessons and explores students' attitudes and motivation towards learning English. Furthermore, the research delves into the advantages and challenges associated with target culture in English language teaching in Indonesia, as well as the strategies educators are employing to tackle these issues. To achieve these aims, a qualitative research approach was chosen, with thematic analysis serving as the main method for data analysis. The research questions that guide this study are:

1. What are the effects of integrating target culture on English language teaching in Indonesia's educational settings?
2. What are the benefits and the challenges of teaching culture in the context of English Language teaching?
3. How do public and private schools in Indonesia differ in integrating target culture into English Teaching?

This chapter is organized into four sub-sections, which cover the research design, context and participants, research instruments and data collection method, and data analysis techniques.

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design, which is appropriate for exploring the in-depth perceptions and experiences of English teachers regarding the integration of target language culture in English language teaching. A qualitative approach allows for a deeper understanding of complex social phenomena, such as cultural interpretation and pedagogical decision-making, which cannot be captured through numerical data alone. By using this design, the study aims to uncover the nuanced ways in which teachers interpret, implement, and respond to cultural elements within their teaching practices in the Indonesian educational context. Qualitative research provides a deep understanding of phenomena in their natural contexts, highlighting the meanings individuals assign to their experiences (Septiani et al., 2021). In particular, this research employs thematic analysis, a flexible and commonly used qualitative method that focuses on identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns of meaning (themes) within qualitative data.

As noted by Braun and Clarke (2006), The process of finding, examining, and summarizing patterns or themes in data is known as thematic analysis. It merely arranges and provides a detailed description of the data set (for example, through focus groups or interviews). Finding themes in the data that represent important or fascinating patterns is the aim of a thematic analysis, which is then used to describe the study or make a point. Strong thematic analyses clarify and depict the data rather than merely summarizing it (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Thematic analysis is not restricted to a specific epistemological or theoretical framework, making it well-suited for examining various perspectives on the integration of target language culture in ELT.

Thematic analysis offers a structured method for examining interview data, enabling researchers to pinpoint common themes concerning teachers' perceptions, students' attitudes, and the advantages and challenges of incorporating target language culture. As the investigation into culture in Indonesian ELT practices shows, both local and target cultures are integrated. This study aims to explore how schools with varying backgrounds incorporate target language culture into their English instruction. The qualitative approach is well-suited for obtaining detailed, descriptive

insights into the experiences of teachers in both public and private school environments (Mokoginta, 2024).

3.2 Context and Participants

This research was carried out in two different educational settings in Indonesia: public schools and private/international schools. These settings were selected to offer a comparative view on the ways in which target language culture is addressed and applied across two educational contexts. The differing resources, curricula, and student demographics in these environments are anticipated to provide important insights into the intricacies of cultural integration in ELT.

The study included ten participants, equally divided between teachers from public (n=5) and private or International (n=5) schools. The public school teachers utilized the Indonesian Ministry of Education curriculum, while the private school teachers implemented global frameworks such as Cambridge or International Baccalaureate, as well as curriculum depending on their institution's affiliation. The sample consisted of six female and four male teachers, with ages ranging from 25 to 30 years. All participants had at least three years of experience teaching English. Ethnically, the group reflected the diverse regional demographics of their school locations; for example, teachers in Java were primarily Javanese, those in Sumatra were Sumateran, and those in West Java were Sundanese. In terms of educational background, nine teachers held degrees in English Language Education, and one had a degree in Psychology with a Montessori certification. Six out of the ten participants possessed Cambridge TKT certifications. Geographically, eight teachers were located in Java's urban areas, while two taught in rural areas outside of Java Island.

Convenience sampling, a non-probability technique in which people are picked according to their accessibility and proximity to the researcher, was used to select the participants (Saumure & Given, 2008). This approach is frequently utilized in qualitative research to effectively collect data from easily accessible sources. As pointed out by Patton (2014), cases that are easily accessible and convenient are often selected by qualitative researchers, since the primary goal is not to generalize to a larger population but to gain an in-depth understanding of a particular phenomenon. This entails finding and choosing people, or groups of people, who are knowledgeable and skilled in a phenomena of interest (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Patton,

2002). This approach ensured that the participants had the necessary knowledge and experience to offer valuable insights for the study. The inclusion of participants from both groups is intended to compare student achievement, as well as the educational settings and resources used in these institutions. Considering the exploratory nature of this study and the limitations of time and resources, convenience sampling was considered suitable for identifying participants who could offer valuable and relevant insights.

The participants were spread out across different regions of Indonesia. Participants ranged from small towns to major cities and capitals, including Jakarta, Bogor, Timika, Magelang, Yogyakarta, and the Riau Islands. Given that Java Island is Indonesia's most populous island and has an appropriate level of educational advancement, the majority of participants were drawn from the Java Island. To give variation to the data obtained, several participants from outside the island of Java were recruited, specifically from Sumatra and Papua. Furthermore, researchers chose a number of participants from these cities because they are thought to produce notable differences when compared to participants from the island of Java. Sumatra's educational system is still developing, while Papua's educational system is slightly underdeveloped. Therefore, a number of sample participants were chosen in the hopes that they would provide insight into topics that were very diverse and might not be found on the island of Java's major cities. Following this, the interview was performed in either English or Indonesian, depending on the participants' preferences. Changes to the language helped participants feel more at ease while answering questions, which made the interview process easier and more seamless.

The table below provides an overview of the demographic and professional profiles of the ten English teachers who participated in this study. This includes the code from each participant (Teacher 1 until Teacher 10 coded as T1 to T10), school type, teaching level, location, and relevant professional background in intercultural teaching.

Table 2. Participant Demographic and Professional Profiles

Code	School Type	Level	Location	Curriculum	Cultural Training/ Exposure	Certification
T1	Private International	Junior High	Jakarta	IB	Native-speaker collaboration program	Montessori
T2	Private International	Junior High	Yogyakarta	IMYC	IMYC training	TKT Cambridge
T3	Private	Senior High	Tangerang	Merdeka Curriculum	None	TKT Cambridge
T4	Private International	Senior High	Yogyakarta	Cambridge	International training with MFEA toolkit	TKT Cambridge
T5	Private International	Senior High	Bogor	Merdeka Curriculum	Native-speaker collaboration program	TKT Cambridge
T6	Public	Junior High	Magelang	Merdeka Curriculum	None	TKT Cambridge
T7	Public	Junior High	Rural Riau	Merdeka Curriculum	None	None
T8	Public	Senior High	Rural Yogyakarta	Merdeka Curriculum	None	None
T9	Public	Junior High	Rural Yogyakarta	Merdeka Curriculum	None	None
T10	Public	Junior High	Timika	Merdeka Curriculum	MGMP peer session	TKT Cambridge

3.3 Research Instrument and Data Collection

The research instrument for this study comprises a semi-structured interview guide designed to gather in-depth insights from English language teachers in both state and private schools in Indonesia. This method was selected to enable a thorough and adaptable investigation of teachers' views, experiences, and methods concerning the incorporation of target language culture in ELT. Semi-structured interviews strike a balance between guided questions and open

dialogue, giving participants the opportunity to expand on their answers and bring up topics that the researcher might not have foreseen (Adams, 2015).

The interview questions were structured after Şen's (2010) study. The interview questions were adapted and expanded from Şen's original instrument, which sought to identify key cultural elements, language features, and sources of knowledge deemed essential by educators for effectively teaching culture. Furthermore, Şen's research highlighted many potential sources influencing English language learning. These included media (TV, films, songs), authentic materials (realia, artifacts), digital resources (websites, social networks, images), direct interaction (native speakers, visits to foreign countries), as well as pedagogical resources (course books, publications, teacher training). Considering these potential sources as well as Şen's interview framework, the researcher employed one modified set of ten questions to explore the integration of target culture within the participants' English language teaching practices. This approach allows an in-depth exploration of how teachers use varied materials to improve cultural awareness in their classrooms.

The development of the interview protocol in this study was guided by both relevant literature and expert input. A total of ten interview questions were designed to explore teachers' perceptions, practices, and challenges in integrating target language culture into English Language Teaching. The questions were initially formulated based on a review of previous studies, particularly Şen (2010) and Coşkun (2018), whose works provided valuable insights and served as inspiration. While none of the questions were directly copied, some were adapted and modified to suit the Indonesian context and to align with the specific research questions of this study.

For example, Question 2 and Question 5 were adapted from Şen's (2010) interview items, which addressed the role of culture and sources of knowledge in teaching culture. Similarly, Questions 1, 3, and 7 were influenced by themes found in Coşkun's (2018) study, which explored how Turkish ELT students understand and engage with the target culture. Coşkun emphasized that familiarity with the target culture can help learners "live real" and communicate more effectively, highlighting the importance of cultural competence in language learning. These perspectives helped shape questions that delve into the value of cultural integration, its perceived impact on students' motivation and skills, and the strategies teachers use in practice.

After drafting the interview questions, the protocol underwent an expert review process. Two experts from the Social Sciences University of Ankara provided detailed feedback on the content, clarity, and relevance of each question. Based on this input, the questions were collaboratively revised, added to, or reworded by the expert and the researcher to ensure alignment with the research objectives and to enhance the validity and reliability of the instrument. This iterative process ensured that the final version of the interview questions was well-structured, purposeful, and grounded in both empirical literature and expert judgment. The finalized interview protocol aimed to gather in-depth information on four key areas: teachers' understanding of target language culture, their strategies for integrating it into ELT, the challenges they encounter, and the perceived effects on student learning and motivation. The full list of interview questions is included in Appendix 1.

Before the primary data collection, a pilot study was carried out to evaluate the efficacy and clarity of the interview questions, refine the interview guide, and enhance the researcher's interviewing skills. This process followed the recommended steps outlined by Majid et al. (2017). First, a set of open-ended questions was developed based on the research objectives, focusing on English teachers' understanding and implementation of target culture in language teaching. Three participants—two from private schools and one from a public school—were purposively selected for the pilot phase. All participants had relevant experience with cultural content in English language teaching and were not included in the main study. Individual interviews were conducted in Indonesian, recorded with consent, and each session lasted approximately 30 minutes. The researcher used probing techniques to encourage deeper responses and began each interview with informal conversation to build rapport. After the pilot, the recordings were transcribed and analyzed to identify any issues with question wording, sequence, or depth. Minor revisions were made, including rephrasing some items, adding topical probes, and reorder the interview questions. The pilot study also provided the researcher with practical experience in conducting semi-structured interviews, managing conversation flow, and adapting to participant responses. Additionally, the pilot study offered an opportunity to enhance the researcher's interviewing skills and familiarize with the flow of conversation, thereby ensuring greater consistency and depth in data collection for the main study. As a result, the interview protocol was refined and adjustments were made to better capture participants' perspectives on the integration of target language culture

in English language teaching within the Indonesian context. The pilot confirmed the appropriateness of the interview guide and strengthened the research instrument for the main study.

The participants' teaching contexts, including the curricula and resources utilized in their schools, were covered throughout the interview. It specifically inquires about the ways in which the target language culture is incorporated into their teaching methods, looking for instances of particular activities or courses that incorporate cultural aspects. Additionally, the interview investigates any differences in approach between state and private schools, as well as the differences from the challenges faced by teachers in both settings in integrating the target language culture. Furthermore, the instrument also inquired about the participants' past professional development experiences related to cultural integration and their suggestions for how support could have been improved in this area.

The researcher used semi-structured interviews with a recording device to assure the completeness and correctness of the responses in order to gather the data. Interviews were conducted in a quiet and private setting to help participants feel comfortable and willing to share their thoughts and experiences. Due to time constraints and the researcher's limited stay in Indonesia, not all interviews could be conducted face-to-face. As a result, a combination of in-person and online interviews was employed. Face-to-face interviews were arranged with participants who were geographically accessible during the researcher's visit, while online interviews (via voice or video call) were conducted with participants located in different regions or those unavailable for in-person sessions during the research timeframe. Regardless of the mode, all interviews followed the same protocol and were recorded for consistency and reliability. Each participant was interviewed once, and the duration of each session ranged from 30–60 minutes.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data analysis was analyzed using six phases of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is frequently referenced to Braun and Clarke (2006) due to their seminal work in establishing a clear, six-phase framework for conducting this type of qualitative data analysis. This framework has been widely adopted across various fields because it is not tied to a specific epistemological or theoretical perspective, making it versatile for diverse research contexts (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Many studies have successfully employed Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis to uncover

meaningful insights. The popularity of this method stems from its clarity and usability, allowing researchers to engage deeply with their data while maintaining a reflexive awareness of their own biases and assumptions. By following Braun and Clarke's process, researchers can ensure a systematic and rigorous analysis that enhances the validity and reliability of their findings. The six-phase framework that are noted by Braun and Clarke (2006) are listed below.

Table 3. Six phases of thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006)

Phase 1	The researcher familiarized themselves with the data by repeatedly reading it in an active way. The interview, which was categorized as verbal data, was transcribed in order to conduct a thematic analysis.
Phase 2	Creating the first codes. In this stage, the researcher used each initial code to generate a preliminary list of ideas about what was in the data and what was intriguing about them.
Phase 3	The researcher searched for themes by beginning to analyze the codes and reflected on how different codes might have combined to form a predominant theme.
Phase 4	To determine which themes were appropriate for data with several themes, the researcher compared and reviewed the themes.
Phase 5	To determine which themes were appropriate for data with several themes, the researcher compared and reviewed the themes.
Phase 6	The thematic analysis was written up, and the researcher created a report. A concise, logical, non-repeating, and captivating description of the narrative the data conveyed, both within and between themes, was provided by the analysis.

Ensuring the validity and reliability of interview data is essential in qualitative research to establish the credibility of the results. According to Gibbs (2007), qualitative validity indicates that the researcher employs certain techniques to guarantee the findings are accurate, while qualitative reliability demonstrates that the researcher's methodology is consistent across researchers and projects. To boost validity, researchers can use recording devices for precise

transcription, conduct member checks to confirm how participants interpret their responses, and apply triangulation to validate findings from various data sources (Emerson & Poliner, 1988). Moreover, involving peer reviews can enhance reliability by promoting transparency and consistency in data analysis (Wicherts, 2016). By using these strategies, qualitative researchers can significantly improve the credibility and reliability of their study results.

To ensure the trustworthiness and rigor of the data analysis, several strategies were implemented. First, the researcher kept a reflexive journal throughout the data analysis process to record their own assumptions, biases, and interpretations. This practice helped reduce the impact of personal subjectivity on the findings (Finlay, 2002). Although formal inter-coder reliability was not established through multiple coders, the researcher enhanced trustworthiness by conducting repeated reviews of the coded data over time and by seeking feedback from an academic advisor. These steps helped ensure internal consistency and alignment between the themes and the original data. Finally, member checking was performed by sharing the preliminary findings with participants such as sending a raw transcripts and analysis script to the participants for verification and accuracy to verify that the analysis accurately represented their experiences and perspectives (Birt et al., 2016). By complying with these methodological guidelines, this study sought to offer a thorough and perceptive investigation of target language culture integration in ELT within the Indonesian context, contributing valuable knowledge to the field and informing future research and practice.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Prior to conducting the interviews, the researcher meticulously addressed ethical considerations by obtaining informed consent from all participants. Participants were thoroughly informed about the study's purpose, the confidentiality of their responses, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty, ensuring they felt safe and respected throughout the process. This approach fostered an environment conducive to open communication and upheld the integrity of the study by building trust with participants, which is crucial for collecting accurate and reliable data.

The study adhered to the Social Sciences University of Ankara's ethical guidelines and received prior approval from the university (see appendix 2). Informed consent forms were

distributed to participants, who confirmed their consent before proceeding (see appendix 3). For participants unable to attend in person, consent was obtained electronically. Participation was entirely voluntary, with participants informed of their right to withdraw without consequences during the consent process. All information was anonymised in order to protect participant identity. To maintain the participants' gender and place of origin, pseudonyms were employed, guaranteeing that the same person was consistently referred to. Given the multicultural nature of the participants, interview questions were carefully crafted to be culturally neutral and respectful of diverse perspectives, ensuring inclusivity and sensitivity throughout the research process. Voice recordings were collected during the interview, it is securely stored and deleted post-transcription to minimize data security risks.

3.6 Data Reduction

Miles and Huberman (1994) argue that data reduction is essential to qualitative research. The goal is to choose, focus, simplify, and transform raw data—such as field notes or interview transcripts—into something more manageable and relevant. In this study, data reduction was conducted continuously throughout the research process, beginning with the transcription of interviews and the initial coding of significant statements related to the research questions. The researcher systematically organized the data by coding segments according to emergent themes and sub-themes, discarding irrelevant information and summarizing key points to sharpen the focus of the analysis. By identifying patterns, clusters, and links in the data, this sequential approach made sure that only the most important and pertinent information was retained for additional research. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), data reduction is a continuous process that occurs throughout the analysis and helps to produce reliable and perceptive findings.

3.7 Data Display

According to Miles and Huberman (1994) model, data display comes after data reduction. This step entails displaying the arranged data in a structured or visual manner to aid in understanding and conclusion-drawing. Thematic matrices and tables that matched the coded data with the identified themes and sub-themes were used in this study to show the data. With the help of these visual aids, the researcher is able to identify links, contrasts, and trends in the data by methodically comparing patterns among various individuals and school kinds. These displays

provided the foundation for making inferences and validating the findings by arranging the data in an understandable and accessible manner. As Miles and Huberman (1994) point out, effective data displays are crucial for valid qualitative analysis because they help researchers understand what's happening in the data and make informed analytical decisions.



CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter examines the effects, benefits, challenges, and the differences between public and private schools in integrating target language culture into English language teaching in Indonesia. By conducting a qualitative thematic analysis of interviews with 10 English teachers, the research dives into the complexities of integrating culture into education. The findings shed light on the intricate connections between language learning, cultural awareness, and various institutional factors, uncovering both the opportunities and hurdles in promoting a culturally rich approach to English instruction. The thematic analysis paints a detailed picture of cultural integration, drawing on insights from researchers like Gao (2006) and Byrd (2011). The themes and sub-themes outlined here create a clear framework for understanding these dynamics, tackling the research questions about the impacts of cultural integration, its advantages and challenges, and the distinctions between public and private educational settings.

4.1 Thematizing of the Interview

In this section, six intriguing themes following the sub themes were chosen. The researcher identified these themes based on patterns found after transcribing the audio interviews and several citations from previous studies. The themes and sub themes align with thematic analysis principles, theoretical coherence, and addresses the research questions. Thematizing was used as the process to facilitate the researcher in analyzing data from the interview.

Using the six-step method outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), the researcher carefully conducted a thematic analysis process to produce the themes and sub-themes in this study. To start, she immersed herself in the interview data by reading the transcripts multiple times and jotting down notes to spot initial patterns and ideas. The researcher then came up with some preliminary codes that emphasized the key concepts and patterns she saw in the data. These codes were then organized into broader themes that captured meaningful patterns and insights. The researcher refined and named the themes based on how well they related to the research questions and their ability to weave a coherent narrative about the data. She then honed and labeled them based on

how well the themes connected to the research questions and their capacity to construct a coherent narrative about the data.

Each theme explicitly connects to previous researchers or theories from the literature, ensuring consistency with the literature review and the research framework. For example, theme 1, *Language-Culture Correlation* is drawn from research by Mohamed & Farahani (2023) and Gao (2006), both of which emphasize the connection between language and culture and the ways in which they benefit students, including by fostering intercultural sensitivity through the incorporation of English-speaking cultures. In addition, Mohamed & Farahani (2023) also emphasize the textbooks' part on cultural representation in their study. Theme 2, *Sociocultural Influences on Learning* is derived from research by Sholihah et al. (2024) and Hidayati et al. (2017), where both of these studies equally highlight cultural background and cultural sensitivity. Both findings from this study also show the importance of balancing local culture and target language culture so that there are no obstacles in learning when teaching target culture to students.

Theme 3, *Institutional and Curricular Factors*, draws on research by Ariawan (2020), who observed that private schools typically have greater flexibility to incorporate global frameworks like Cambridge International, allowing for more meaningful cultural learning, and a study by Zahara and Rusmawaty (2022), who discovered that public school teachers frequently feel constrained by strict curricula that prioritize exam-oriented instruction over intercultural content. The inclusion of this theme was supported by these institutional disparities. Theme 4, which focuses on *Teacher Preparedness and Attitudes*, draws on the work of Bat-Yondon (2021), who pointed out that many public institutions fall short in providing teachers with training in intercultural competence. Additionally, Byrd (2011) stressed how important teachers' beliefs and confidence are when it comes to effectively weaving culture into language instruction. These observations matched up with the data patterns that showed varying degrees of teacher readiness and their grasp of what "culture" really means.

Theme 5, *Student Outcomes and Motivation*, was influenced by Mashudi et al. (2022), who demonstrated that students engaged in culturally-rich instruction often showed improved test performance and language skills, and Doghonadze (2011), who emphasized how cultural exposure can enhance learners' motivation and intercultural awareness—both of which emerged in the differing experiences of public and private school students in this study. Theme 6, *Equity and*

Resource Disparities, ties in closely with Aydemir (2013), who highlighted the differences in access to cultural materials and programs depending on the type of school. Similarly, Ariawan (2020) emphasized how private schools enjoy advantages like immersion opportunities and greater parental involvement.

Themes such as “Language-Culture Correlation” and “Sociocultural Influences on Learning” were chosen because they directly addressed the research questions on the effects or challenges of integrating the target language culture. In order to highlight the distinctions between Indonesian public and private schools, the researcher also included themes such as “Institutional and Curricula Factors” and “Equity and Resource Disparities”. Every theme was chosen carefully to offer more profound understandings of the study issues, making sure that they were not only descriptive but also interpretive and significant in relation to English language instruction in Indonesia.

Table 4. Thematizing table of interview

Themes	Sub-Themes	Coding
Theme 1 Language-Culture Correlation	Cultural awareness as a prerequisite for communicative competence	INT/TH1-CAPCC
	Cultural representation in instructional materials	INT/TH1-CRM
Theme 2 Sociocultural Influences on Learning	Balancing local and target cultures	INT/TH2-BLTC
Theme 3 Institutional and Curricula Factors	Curriculum rigidity in public schools	INT/TH3-CRPS
	Curriculum flexibility in Private school	INT/TH3-PSF
Theme 4 Teacher Preparedness and Attitudes	Teacher’s training gaps	INT/TH4-TTG
	Teacher’s confidence in cultural instruction	INT/TH4-TCCI
Theme 5	Motivation through cultural	INT/TH5-MTCE

Student Outcomes and Motivation	exposure	
	Skill development	INT/TH5-SD
Theme 6 Equity and Resource Disparities	Public vs private school limitations	INT/TH6-SL
	Public vs private school advantages	INT/TH6-SA

Thematic analysis results structured around the three research questions, highlighting key patterns in teachers' perceptions, institutional practices, and observed outcomes across public and private schools in Indonesia.

Table 5. Theme alignment with research questions

Research Questions	Relevant Themes
What are the effects of integrating target culture on English language teaching in Indonesia's educational settings?	Language-Culture Correlation, Student Outcomes theme
What are the benefits and the challenges of teaching culture in the context of English Language teaching?	Sociocultural Influences, Equity and Resources theme
How do public and private schools in Indonesia differ in integrating target culture into English Teaching?	Institutional Factors, Teacher Preparedness theme

4.2 Coding of Interview

The researcher generated codes to assign labels based on the themes that had been determined in this study. Generating codes is also part of analyzing data from interviews that help the researcher in analyzing the research data in detail. The following table outlines the structure of the coding used in this study to categorize data during the thematic analysis process. Each code represents the data source, theme, sub-theme, participant number, and school type. This system was used to maintain consistency and transparency in the analysis while preserving participant anonymity.

Table 6. Breakdown of Code Components in Data Analysis

Code	Component	Explanation
INT	Data source	Interview
TH1	Theme number	Theme 1: Language–Culture Correlation
CAPCC	Sub-theme	Cultural Awareness as Prerequisite for Communicative Competence
T1	Teacher number	Teacher 1
PR	School type	Private

For example, the code INT/TH1-CAPCC-T1-PR refers to a quotation drawn from an interview (INT), categorized under Theme 1 (TH1), specifically the sub-theme of Cultural Awareness as a Prerequisite for Communicative Competence (CAPCC), provided by Teacher 1 (T1) from a private school (PR).

Following this, the coding system presented below was applied consistently across all six themes and their respective sub-themes. Each code segment reflects the structure outlined previously, ensuring a systematic way of identifying patterns in the data. The table lists the full set of thematic codes used in the study, along with their meanings, to enhance transparency and support the traceability of findings throughout the analysis.

Table 7. Sample of interview coding and its meaning

Coding	Meaning
INT/TH1-CAPCC-T1-PR	The data were gathered through interviews with participants in the <i>theme 1 Language-Culture Correlation</i> theme section with sub-theme <i>Cultural Awareness as a Prerequisite for Communicative Competence</i> from teacher 1 who teaches at a private school.
INT/TH1-CRM-T2-PR	The data were gathered through interviews with participants in the <i>theme 1 Language-Culture Correlation</i> theme section with sub-theme <i>Cultural Representation in Instructional Materials</i> from teacher 2 who teaches at a private school.
INT/TH2-BLTC-T3-PR	The data were gathered through interviews with

	participants in the <i>theme 2 Sociocultural Influences on Learning</i> theme section with sub-theme <i>Balancing Local and Target Cultures</i> from teacher 3 who teaches at a private school.
INT/TH3-CRPS-T4-PR	The data were gathered through interviews with participants in the <i>theme 3 Institutional and Curricula Factors on Learning</i> theme section with sub-theme <i>Curriculum Rigidity in Public Schools</i> from teacher 4 who teaches at a private school.
INT/TH3-PSF-T5-PR	The data were gathered through interviews with participants in the <i>theme 3 Institutional and Curricula Factors on Learning</i> theme section with sub-theme <i>Private School Flexibility</i> from Teacher 5 who teaches at a private school.
INT/TH4-TTG-T6-PU	The data were gathered through interviews with participants in the <i>theme 4 Teacher Preparedness and Attitudes</i> theme section with sub-theme <i>Teacher's Training Gaps</i> from teacher 6 who teaches at a public school.
INT/TH4-TCCI-T7-PU	The data were gathered through interviews with participants in the <i>theme 4 Teacher Preparedness and Attitudes</i> theme section with sub-theme <i>Teacher's Confidence in Cultural Instruction</i> from teacher 7 who teaches at a public school.
INT/TH5-MTCE-T8-PU	The data were gathered through interviews with participants in the <i>theme 5 Student Outcomes and Motivation</i> theme section with sub-theme <i>Motivation Through Cultural Exposure</i> from teacher 8 who teaches at a public school.
INT/TH5-SD-T9-PU	The data were gathered through interviews with participants in the <i>theme 5 Student Outcomes and Motivation</i> theme section with sub-theme <i>Skill Development</i> from Teacher 9 who teaches at a public school.
INT/TH6-SL-T10-PU	The data were gathered through interviews with participants in the <i>theme 6 Equity and Resource Disparities</i> theme section with sub-theme <i>Public vs Private School Limitations</i> from teacher 10 who teaches at a public school.
INT/TH6-SA-T10-PU	The data were gathered through interviews with participants in the <i>theme 6 Equity and Resource Disparities</i> theme section with sub-theme <i>Public vs Private School Advantages</i> from teacher 10

4.3 Findings

This study explored the integration of target language culture in English language teaching within Indonesian educational settings, focusing on both public and private school environments. Using thematic analysis, six major themes emerged from the data: (1) Language–Culture Correlation, (2) Sociocultural Influences on Learning, (3) Institutional and Curricular Factors, (4) Teacher Preparedness and Attitudes, (5) Student Outcomes and Motivation, and (6) Equity and Resource Disparities. These themes highlight the effects, benefits, and challenges of cultural integration, while also capturing how public and private schools differ in their approach. The findings are presented sequentially according to Themes 1 through 6. Based on the interview data, Teachers 1 to 5 are categorized as private school teachers, while Teachers 6 to 10 represent public school teachers. Relevant excerpts or quotations from participants that align with each theme or sub-theme are included, followed by a brief explanation to contextualize each quote within the scope of this study.

4.3.1 Theme 1: Language-Culture Correlation

Participants consistently expressed that language and culture are deeply intertwined, and that incorporating cultural context into English teaching enhances comprehension and engagement. Many teachers emphasized that understanding the cultural context of English-speaking countries helps students interpret meaning more accurately and communicate more appropriately. Teachers reported employing various strategies to explain culturally rooted expressions, such as idioms and sayings (e.g., "*break a leg*") to help students better understand their meanings and cultural nuances. However, they also noted challenges, particularly when students struggled to grasp unfamiliar cultural references like Thanksgiving or

Western holidays. These issues reflect broader concerns raised by Gao (2006) and Mohamed & Farahani (2023), who emphasize the role of cultural context in language development and intercultural sensitivity.

Moreover, the dominance of target cultures (e.g., American or British) over local culture in textbooks was a recurring concern, especially in internationally published materials (Alfaya et al., 2023). Several teachers (e.g Teacher 1, Teacher 4, Teacher 6, Teacher 8, and Teacher 9) also reflected on how cultural elements in teaching materials, especially textbooks, either supported or limited the development of students' cultural awareness. For example, teachers from private schools noted that internationally published textbooks often provide a richer representation of English-speaking cultures, while teachers in public schools sometimes found the cultural content in government-published textbooks to be limited or superficial. Public school teachers often relied heavily on standardized textbooks due to curricular constraints, while private school teachers were more likely to supplement materials with authentic cultural resources, a distinction also supported by Zahara & Rusmawaty (2022). This supports Mohamed and Farahani's (2023) argument regarding the role of instructional materials in shaping students' exposure to culture. Overall, teachers expressed that integrating cultural context into language teaching can enrich students' understanding and lead to more meaningful engagement with the English language.

4.3.1.1 Cultural Awareness as a Prerequisite for Communicative Competence

Teacher 1 illustrated how daily engagement with cultural elements was systematically integrated into their teaching practice:

"There are several cultural elements that we apply in our school. We have a program called 'one idiom every morning', or like one English expression. So we introduce new idioms such as 'break a leg' like that. We practice alternately every morning, so students are taught parts of the English culture every day. If we do not learn like that, our English is limited, right?"

(INT/TH1-CAPCC-T1-PR-022)

This statement highlights the deliberate and structured approach to integrating culture into language instruction. By introducing an idiom or expression daily, Teacher 1 fosters regular exposure to English-speaking cultural norms, thus normalizing cultural learning as part of everyday classroom practice. The choice to focus on idioms is particularly noteworthy, as idiomatic expressions often encapsulate unique aspects of cultural worldviews that literal language cannot convey. Therefore, Teacher 1's strategy not only enhances linguistic knowledge but also

develops students' sociolinguistic competence, preparing them for more authentic communication with native speakers.

Moreover, Teacher 1's emphasis on cultural learning as a prerequisite for comprehensive English proficiency aligns with Gao's (2006) argument that culture and language are inseparable. Without exposure to the cultural meanings embedded within language, students risk developing a fragmented or superficial understanding of English. Mohamed and Farahani (2023) similarly stress that the absence of cultural education limits learners' ability to use language appropriately in varied contexts. Thus, Teacher 1's practice of embedding cultural elements into daily lessons can be seen as a critical method for fostering true communicative competence among learners.

Similarly, Teacher 9 emphasized the inseparable link between language acquisition and cultural understanding:

"As the language they learn comes from a country, of course we automatically need to learn the culture too. There must be a difference in daily speaking between Indonesian and English, and that needs to be taught to students. Language and Culture is inseparable, without understanding the culture, we cannot learn the language perfectly"

(INT/TH1-CAPCC-T9-PU-006)

The statement from Teacher 9 highlights the fundamental distinctions between the cultural settings of English and Indonesian, implying that these pragmatic differences must also be taken into consideration for language acquisition to be effective. This point of view draws attention to a significant pedagogical challenge: language learners need to adjust to the social and communication norms of the target culture in addition to mastering vocabulary and grammar. In order to close the gap between local and foreign communication habits, Teacher 9 promotes explicit cultural training by recognizing these gaps.

This insight supports the findings of Mohamed and Farahani (2023), who contend that students are not adequately prepared for genuine intercultural conversation when language instruction is conducted without regard to cultural context. It also backs up Gao's (2006) argument that understanding when and how language should be utilized effectively within various cultural contexts is a component of communicative competence. As a result, Teacher 9's explicit instruction

of cultural differences is consistent with best practices in English language instruction, which seek to give students intercultural communicative competence in addition to language proficiency.

Teacher 4 provided a more detailed reflection, emphasizing both the benefits and the complexities of cultural integration:

"It is very important to learn target culture in my opinion, because our culture and Western culture are very different. While we want to learn the language, English, we cannot learn English and think it is similar to our culture. Of course, we need to see examples of Western culture that are native. We take Western culture that is positive and helps in learning and apply it in our learning. Sometimes there are parts of their culture that do not connect at all with our culture, or a culture that does not exist here that they (students) are not familiar with, for example Thanksgiving. We do not have it, but to teach English, we introduce Thanksgiving to them so that one day, when they talk to a native, they know what natives have in their country, including Thanksgiving too. We introduce it so that they can understand more about English through its culture too."

(INT/TH1-CAPCC-T4-PR-015)

Teacher 4's reflection offers a critical and balanced perspective on the process of integrating target culture into English language instruction. While emphasizing the necessity of cultural exposure, Teacher 4 also stresses the importance of cultural selection, recognizing that not all elements of Western culture are easily transferable or relevant to Indonesian students. By introducing culturally unfamiliar concepts such as Thanksgiving, Teacher 4 aims to equip students with background knowledge that can facilitate more meaningful interactions with native speakers, thus enhancing their cultural literacy alongside their language skills.

This selective approach to cultural integration resonates with the views of Byram (1997) on developing "intercultural speakers" who are capable of navigating between cultures. Furthermore, Teacher 4 exhibits a culturally responsive pedagogy that is consistent with modern models of intercultural communicative skills by recognizing any disparity in cultures (Byram, 1997; Mohamed & Farahani, 2023).

In contrast, Teacher 2 observed that her students already exhibited a high degree of familiarity with foreign cultures:

"I can say that I often bring authentic materials and use idioms to chat with my students more often since I taught here than I used to teach at a previous institution (although both institutions are international schools). The children here at the school I teach now are very familiar with foreign cultures more than me, and even more than their own culture."

(INT/TH1-CAPCC-T2-PR-008)

Teacher 2's observation reveals a different dynamic wherein students' high exposure to global cultural products, media, and experiences has resulted in a greater ease with understanding target language cultures. This environment allows teachers to engage with more complex and authentic materials without the same foundational cultural instruction required in other contexts. Consequently, Teacher 2 is able to focus more on fluency-building activities, such as casual conversation using idioms, thereby promoting higher-order communicative skills among students.

However, Teacher 2's reflection also raises a subtle concern about the potential overshadowing of local cultural identities, a theme that has been highlighted in critical discussions of English as a global language (Hidayati et al., 2017). While familiarity with global cultures may facilitate language learning, it can also lead to a detachment from indigenous cultural values. Therefore, while cultural integration clearly benefits linguistic development, it must be carefully managed to maintain a balance between global readiness and local cultural preservation.

4.3.1.2 Cultural Representation in Instructional Material

In addition to communicative competence, the participants also frequently addressed the materials used in the classroom and how these materials either supported or limited the representation of the target language culture. Teachers from private school settings generally described more flexible and culturally rich resources compared to their public school counterparts. These differences reflect broader disparities in curriculum design, institutional support, and pedagogical autonomy, all of which influence how English language learners in Indonesia experience the cultural dimension of language learning.

Teacher 5, who works in a private school with a bilingual learning environment, highlighted how the school's institutional structure supports both linguistic and cultural immersion:

“For language learning, indeed, the teachers at school are supported to use English daily, especially on Tuesdays and Thursdays, because in our school in addition to the bilingual environment, Tuesdays and Thursdays are English Day which is indeed mandatory full English for students and teachers. But then again, we have to look at whether or not at home the children are used to using English. So far, some students who are fluent at home do use English daily and they do watch English shows.”

(INT/TH1-CRM-T5-PR-002)

Teacher 5's response illustrates the structural and cultural supports embedded within private school settings that encourage the use of English as a medium of communication. The concept of “English Days” demonstrates institutional efforts to immerse students in authentic linguistic environments, where students not only practice English but are also exposed to its cultural nuances through daily interaction. Such practices allow students to go beyond textbook language, engaging instead in real-world communicative exchanges that are reflective of English-speaking societies.

However, Teacher 5's reflection also reveals an awareness of the home environment's impact on language acquisition and cultural familiarity. While schools may design immersive programs, the inconsistency in students' home language use can either reinforce or limit the cultural exposure gained at school. This highlights the importance of continuity between in-school and out-of-school contexts in building cultural fluency. The regular viewing of English-language media at home, as mentioned by Teacher 5, functions as an informal yet potent means of cultural learning, allowing students to internalize sociolinguistic patterns, idiomatic expressions, and culturally situated behavior, which further amplifies their cultural input and aligns with Gao's (2006) concept of the extended language-learning environment.

Similarly, Teacher 1, also from a private school, emphasized the utility of a specially designed institutional toolkit that integrates both academic content and cultural elements:

“I really see that in this school we rarely use worksheets but mostly practice, the practice is that we have our own toolkit from (their institution center) in Jakarta. It's called Alfa and Friends.

Alfa and Friends is very complete and covers a variety of things, not just what is taught in school like ordinary school material, but up to the solar system or how to grow crops, it's all there. Then Alfa and Friends originated from Malaysia, Malaysia is indeed an ESL country, not EFL, well even though we are an EFL country but because we adapted from Malaysia, our school also focuses on ESL, so English as a second language is not a foreign language, because we also have ESL subjects at school."

(INT/TH1-CRM-T1-PR-040)

Teacher 1's experience reveals the pedagogical advantage of using internationally-developed learning kits that incorporate culturally contextualized materials. The "Alfa and Friends" toolkit integrates content beyond linguistic skills, including cross-cultural scientific and social knowledge, helping bridge the gap between content and culture. The incorporation of such a toolkit suggests a deliberate effort to contextualize English learning within a global framework, promoting both linguistic competence and cultural literacy.

Furthermore, the distinction drawn between ESL and EFL reflects an ideological shift in the way English is taught within this school. By positioning English as a second language rather than a foreign one, the institution implicitly recognizes the cultural proximity and practical relevance of English to students' lives. This philosophical stance affects not only pedagogical strategies but also student motivation and identity. It encourages students to view English not as a distant, foreign construct, but as a living language connected to real-life contexts, further enhancing their engagement and openness to cultural learning as a medium for understanding the world. This aligns with Mohamed and Farahani's (2023) argument that cultural representation in learning materials can significantly enhance learners' engagement and broaden their global perspectives. Teacher 1 further added:

"Well, on average, they (students) can already speak English in terms of vocabulary, but sometimes there are some children who, for example, when it's time for ESL, before the teacher comes in, they complain, 'Miss, I can't speak English,' but when the ESL teacher comes in, they automatically speak English."

(INT/TH1-CRM-T1-PR-040)

Teacher 1 observes how environmental and contextual cues influence students' perception of language and their willingness to use it. The shift in students' behavior expressing hesitancy one moment, and then fluently engaging in English when prompted by the presence of the ESL teacher, suggests that cultural and social expectations play a role in shaping language use. Teacher 1 also highlights how culturally responsive instruction can build students' confidence, especially when English learning is framed within familiar classroom rituals and safe spaces. Such patterns reinforce the significance of teacher identity and classroom atmosphere in promoting cultural immersion. When students view English not as a high-stakes test subject but as a natural mode of interaction, their learning becomes more authentic and meaningful.

Teacher 2, also teaching at a private institution, elaborated on the structured nature of her teaching toolkit:

“Even in the PDF, there are activities (there’s a toolkit from the institution’s curriculum), for example, if activity 1 has this and that, everything is already prepared in the toolkit (the warm up, practice and stuffs), what’s missing is just the PPT, oh I just need to make the PPT, then I need the questions, oh I just need to make the questions, or I just need the pictures, I just need to find the pictures, so mostly everything is complete there. So when I teach the students, I don’t need to think, it’s just a matter of how I convey it to my diverse children, that’s all I need to prepare before teaching.”

(INT/TH1-CRM-T2-PR-018)

Teacher 2’s testimony reflects the convenience and pedagogical efficiency of curriculum toolkits that are systematically designed and culturally inclusive. These materials reduce the cognitive load on teachers while ensuring consistency and completeness in the delivery of both language and cultural content. Teacher 2’s comment points to the level of institutional preparation and thoughtfulness embedded in private school curricula, enabling educators to focus more on pedagogical strategies and differentiation rather than on basic material creation which is particularly useful in multicultural classrooms.

Teacher 2’s emphasis on how to “convey it to diverse children” further emphasizes the culturally responsive dimension of the teaching process, requiring teachers to mediate between local and

global contexts, a point echoed in Hidayati et al. (2017), who emphasize the need for culturally responsive pedagogy in Indonesian ELT settings. While materials may be standardized, their implementation must be adapted to suit student diversity, background knowledge, and cultural readiness. This suggests that cultural representation in instructional materials alone is insufficient unless teachers are empowered to contextualize and personalize the learning experience. She further elaborated on the cultural depth embedded in the curriculum:

“Yesterday at my school, coincidentally, the theme in my curriculum was celebration for 7th graders. The celebrations in the curriculum really studied celebrations in foreign languages, such as Saint Patrick's Day, Thanksgiving, La Tomatina, so the curriculum itself actually instructed and facilitated learning that and not just forcing students to learn but also make them understand, like ‘oh Halloween, Halloween is when people wear scary costumes’ not only like that, but students were taught to learn why that culture exists, what its essence is, what the values behind it are, and so on.”

(INT/TH1-CRM-T2-PR-016)

Teacher 2 highlights an advanced level of cultural integration in classroom instruction in this quote. Rather than merely teaching superficial facts about foreign celebrations, the curriculum fosters deeper cultural inquiry by encouraging students to explore the origins, meanings, and social values of each tradition. This is consistent with Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence, which places equal emphasis on linguistic skills and attitudes, knowledge, and critical cultural awareness. The syllabus described here reflects this multidimensional approach, fostering both cultural knowledge and empathy.

Such an approach enriches student understanding of global cultures and builds the analytical skills necessary for navigating cross-cultural interactions. It also reflects a shift from passive cultural exposure to active cultural engagement, enabling students to appreciate diversity and draw connections between cultures rather than viewing them as isolated or exotic phenomena.

Teacher 4, another private school teacher, emphasized the cultural framing embedded in their resource choices:

“We use the British Council as our learning resource, so there are many activities that have a

western context and culture. Maybe there are also stories that the public (native speakers) know, for example The Red Riding Hood. In the materials, the names, conversations and daily contexts are adapted to the target culture, like traditions that are also from abroad.”

(INT/TH1-CRM-T4-PR-010)

The use of British Council materials reflects an institutional prioritization of authentic, culturally-embedded language resources. These materials typically offer exposure to authentic dialogues, culturally relevant narratives, and everyday contexts in Western societies. Such exposure not only enhances students’ language competence but also deepens their understanding of the cultural frameworks within which the language operates. This deliberate choice supports Bat-Yondon’s (2021) claim that meaningful exposure to the target culture helps learners navigate communication in real-life cross-cultural encounters.

Teacher 4 expresses by introducing Western stories and traditions, students become familiar with the cultural scripts and value systems of English-speaking societies, which in turn aids their intercultural literacy. This integration of culture through storytelling and context-based learning mirrors the sociocultural theory of language acquisition, where meaning is co-constructed within relevant cultural settings.

In contrast, the public school teachers shared more constraints in the cultural representation of their materials. Teacher 6 explained how she adapts from formal textbook content:

“In the textbook, there are cultural elements taught to students but they only teach formal language, so I also teach them from what I have known and I experienced how to speak like foreigners, or the way they communicate. From the movie, we can see that the language is not as formal as in the textbook.”

(INT/TH1-CRM-T6-PU-034)

This quote sheds light on the pedagogical challenges faced by public school teachers, who often rely on government-issued textbooks that lack authentic cultural context. Teacher 6 highlights a critical gap between formal textbook language and real-world communication. To bridge this,

Teacher 6 leverages personal experiences and multimedia resources, particularly films, which offer students a more accurate representation of colloquial language and cultural interaction.

This adaptation demonstrates teachers' initiative in contextualizing and enriching limited materials. It also reflects the need for more culturally grounded content in public education curricula to prepare students for realistic communicative settings. The reliance on films and personal anecdotes indicates a grassroots effort by educators to expose students to English as it is naturally spoken and culturally embedded.

In addition, Teacher 9, also from a public school, highlighted a critical issue regarding students' comprehension and material suitability:

“Books from the Ministry of Education, in my opinion children can still follow it, but if it's an Erlangga book, it's not suitable for my children's level. It's like it's too difficult, the level is too high, so if we ask for BOS (assistance funds) we have to request the Ministry of Education's book, not the Erlangga book.”

(INT/TH1-CRM-T9-PU-026)

Teacher 9's statement highlights a critical issue regarding accessibility and comprehensibility of English learning materials in public schools. While more globally oriented books like the one published by Erlangga may contain richer cultural input, they are often not developmentally appropriate for students in under-resourced settings. They may be misaligned with students' proficiency levels and local realities. Consequently, public school teachers often prefer government-issued textbooks. The preference for Ministry of Education materials stems not only from curriculum alignment but also from their simpler language and the inclusion of comparative cultural examples, which help students relate foreign concepts to their local experiences. This finding echoes the observations of Zahara and Rusmawaty (2022), who note that teachers often rely on culturally neutral or familiar materials due to curricular and linguistic constraints. This insight underscores the importance of culturally adaptive and level-appropriate materials. While authentic and globally informed resources are beneficial, their effectiveness depends on their alignment with students' linguistic proficiency and cognitive readiness. For equitable cultural education, curricular design must consider both content richness and student accessibility.

The findings under Theme 1 reveal that both private and public school teachers recognize the significance of cultural integration as a central component of English language learning. Across contexts, teachers articulated that cultural awareness is essential to developing communicative competence, as language cannot be meaningfully understood or used without cultural context. Teachers emphasized the importance of teaching idiomatic expressions, cultural practices, and social norms—such as "break a leg" or Thanksgiving traditions—not merely for vocabulary acquisition, but to prepare students for authentic communication with native speakers. Private school teachers, in particular, received greater institutional support and enjoyed curricular flexibility, allowing for the use of idiomatic drills, themed cultural days, and regular integration of global cultural content in classroom activities. Public school teachers also valued cultural exposure but often faced greater limitations in both resources and curriculum, prompting them to supplement textbooks with personal experiences or digital media to fill cultural gaps.

In relation to materials, the disparity between private and public schools was especially evident. Private school teachers had access to comprehensive toolkits and culturally rich curricula that incorporated international events, Western traditions, and globally recognized holidays. These materials often encouraged students to critically engage with the cultural meanings behind celebrations and customs, fostering not only knowledge but also intercultural sensitivity. In contrast, public school teachers described textbooks as limited in cultural scope and often overly formal or detached from students' realities. Some resorted to using films or modifying teaching strategies to portray more natural, culture-infused communication. Additionally, while public school teachers preferred locally adapted resources for accessibility, private school educators were able to work within ESL frameworks that viewed English as a second rather than foreign language. Overall, Theme 1 underscores the teachers' shared belief that cultural understanding is vital in language education, though institutional and contextual factors heavily influence how culture is represented and taught in the classroom.

4.3.2 Theme 2: Sociocultural Influences on Learning

The findings revealed that sociocultural values strongly influence how English and its associated cultures are received in Indonesian classrooms. Teachers in both public and private schools discussed the importance of aligning cultural content with students' local values and sensitivities. In public schools, teachers reported constraints in addressing cultural gaps due to

institutional limitations, as well as concerns about community sensitivity to foreign cultural content. Meanwhile, private school teachers, while having more freedom, expressed concern about overshadowing Indonesian cultural identity with dominant foreign cultural narratives. This theme reflects the concerns raised by Sholihah et al. (2024) and Hidayati et al. (2017), who caution against a situation where students feel overwhelmed or alienated by unfamiliar cultural references in the target language. These studies emphasize the need to balance cultural exposure to avoid this situation. Teachers, particularly those in public schools, often felt the need to mediate cultural content, selecting what was appropriate and relatable for their students while avoiding topics that could cause discomfort or resistance. These decisions were shaped not only by individual teacher judgment but also by the expectations of school administrators and parents. In private schools, where students were more frequently exposed to global perspectives, teachers found it easier to introduce diverse cultural content. However, even in these settings, there was awareness of the need to contextualize cultural lessons to avoid misinterpretation or cultural dissonance. Teachers highlighted that effective integration requires careful selection and adaptation of content so that students remain open to intercultural understanding without compromising their own cultural values.

4.3.2.1 Balancing local and target cultures

Teacher 1, who teaches at a private school, highlighted an interesting observation about student responsiveness to English-language instruction:

"There are those who are already very fluent in English, and they actually obey (listen more to the teacher's instructions) when the teacher uses English, like instructions, they understand better and are more willing to listen if they use English."

(INT/TH2-BLTC-T1-PR-012)

Teacher 1's statement illustrates the pragmatic role of English as not only a subject of instruction but also a functional medium of classroom management. It reflects how linguistic familiarity can affect classroom dynamics and engagement. Students who are already proficient in English exhibit heightened engagement when English is used consistently, suggesting that their familiarity with the target language fosters a more natural and fluid classroom experience. The alignment between

language of instruction and student linguistic ability can therefore enhance instructional clarity and behavioral responsiveness.

However, underlying this observation is a deeper cultural implication. The students' preference for English as the medium of instruction reflects how cultural identity can become intertwined with language competence. English in this context functions both as a communicative tool and as a marker of status, exposure, and global orientation. While this may indicate successful linguistic immersion, it also raises questions about the risk of privileging global (or Western) linguistic norms over local cultural values. The effectiveness of English must be balanced with the need to maintain cultural grounding, especially in a country where English is not the native or dominant language.

This is where the risk of students being overwhelmed or alienated by unfamiliar cultural references in the target language becomes relevant, as described by Sholihah et al. (2024) and Hidayati et al. (2017). Although students may appear linguistically adept, the underlying cultural implications of constant English use can subtly overshadow their native cultural values, particularly if English is used in a way that does not recognize or affirm local identities. Teachers, therefore, face the delicate task of leveraging student proficiency while ensuring that local cultural context remains visible and valued in the learning environment. In this case, balancing fluency with cultural grounding is key to fostering intercultural competence without compromising cultural identity.

Teacher 2, who also teaches in a private school, shared a reflection on her unique experience teaching bilingual or international-background students:

“Here I could say I learn more English than the students because sometimes the students are better than me who is technically their teacher. Because some of them are mixed kids, their parents don't want them to lose their Indonesian culture, that's why they put their children in my school. In my school, under the logo, there is even a slogan ‘Jogja Educational Spirits’ so that we don't lose our Indonesian identity, Indonesian culture and specifically Javanese culture (as the school is located in where most Javanese).”

(INT/TH2-BLTC-T2-PR-010)

Teacher 2's response provides rich insight into how schools can serve as cultural mediators, especially for students in globalized, multicultural education environments. Teacher 2 describes a situation where her students who had international exposure or mixed heritage possess advanced English skills, sometimes exceeding those of their teachers. Rather than creating a deficit-oriented perspective, she embraces a collaborative and reciprocal learning process, revealing how cultural exchange can happen within the classroom in both directions.

Additionally, the school's emphasis on preserving local identity, symbolized through its slogan "Jogja Educational Spirits," speaks to a deliberate institutional effort to harmonize global and local cultural values. This reflects a broader educational philosophy aligned with the concept of *glocalization*—the blending of global and local elements to create culturally relevant learning experiences. In this context, English is not taught in isolation but situated within a broader cultural narrative that prioritizes local identity and heritage, particularly Javanese traditions, alongside global competencies.

This aligns with the recommendation by Hidayati et al. (2017), who argue for maintaining a cultural balance in English language education. Their study stresses the importance of avoiding the alienation that can occur when cultural content is too heavily skewed toward the target language and context. In this case, parents and schools act as cultural gatekeepers, ensuring that students remain connected to their roots even as they engage with global perspectives. This model also supports Sholihah et al.'s (2024) view that successful cultural integration depends not only on student readiness but also on teacher discretion, curriculum choices, and the broader values endorsed by the institution. Teacher 2 further elaborated:

"There are a lot of children who came from mixed married parents, or students who grew up abroad. The students who go to school here are students who are generally already bilingual at home, and they want to be more 'localized' by their parents. Their parents want them to be schooled here so that they can still get international exposure but not lose their Indonesian culture or identity. There is even one of my students whose parents deliberately registered her to a national class (there are national and international class options) because her parents wanted their child to be trained more in Indonesian language and culture."

(INT/TH2-BLTC-T2-PR-012)

This observation brings to light the parental role in mediating cultural balance in children's education. The deliberate choice by parents to enroll their children in national classes despite their existing bilingual abilities signals a conscious cultural strategy. Parents are not merely choosing educational institutions based on linguistic outcomes but also based on cultural preservation. Many parents of bilingual or multicultural children are aware of the risk of cultural disconnection, especially if their children are raised primarily in English-speaking or globalized contexts. By enrolling them in national rather than international classes, parents seek to create a learning environment where children can remain grounded in their heritage, even while navigating international or English-dominant settings, even as it accommodates global literacy.

The dual-stream system within the school—offering both national and international classes—further supports this balance, allowing flexibility in how culture and language are taught. This aligns with the broader discourse in intercultural education, which calls for schools to function as cultural bridges rather than agents of assimilation. Here, education becomes a means of cultural negotiation, where students are encouraged to retain their roots while also becoming global citizens.

This case exemplifies what Sholihah et al. (2024) describe as the active mediation of cultural exposure. Parents and educators are increasingly aware that unfiltered exposure to global content, while beneficial in some respects, can dilute students' understanding of their own heritage. Teachers in this situation must act as cultural negotiators, ensuring that lessons preserve national identity while also building intercultural awareness. The intentional offering of both national and international curriculum streams is an institutional strategy for addressing these needs.

Teacher 4, also from private school, pointed out the need to blend both Western and Indonesian cultural elements in materials:

“Yes, in the book, the conversations and daily contexts are adjusted to Western culture or the target language, so sometimes we combine it with Indonesian culture, so they can relate to it better and understand it better. We combine it.”

(INT/TH2-BLTC-T4-PR-006)

Teacher 4's statement underscores a practical pedagogical approach: blending target culture with local culture to aid comprehension and engagement. While Western contexts dominate many English language textbooks, this approach involves intentional adaptation by the teacher to make learning more relatable. The integration of local culture helps to scaffold understanding, especially for students who may find culturally unfamiliar material abstract or disconnected from their lived experiences.

This method aligns with culturally responsive pedagogy, which advocates for connecting instruction to students' cultural contexts. Instead of replacing or sidelining the target culture, it is placed in dialogue with local culture, fostering critical comparisons and deeper understanding. This practice not only enhances cognitive comprehension but also affirms students' cultural identities within the classroom, making learning more inclusive and meaningful. By combining familiar cultural references with unfamiliar target culture content, teachers facilitate deeper understanding while avoiding alienation.

According to Hidayati et al. (2017), such strategies are essential especially for learners in EFL contexts who may find foreign cultural content difficult to grasp or emotionally distant. By making deliberate cultural adjustments, teachers like Teacher 4 act as mediators between global and local narratives. They enhance student engagement and comprehension while reducing resistance that may arise from a lack of cultural familiarity. This blended approach not only supports linguistic acquisition but also promotes intercultural empathy and cultural pride.

Teacher 9, a public school teacher, echoed a similar philosophy:

“If we are teaching English, we usually teach it to relate to the culture in the English-speaking country itself, it is important for them to know what the culture of the language itself is like. But in my opinion, learning a language cannot be separated from our own language or culture, it needs to be related so that it is more contextual to the children.”

(INT/TH2-BLTC-T9-PU-004)

Teacher 9's statement reflects a dual emphasis on linguistic accuracy and cultural grounding. While acknowledging the necessity of introducing target culture elements which is essential for understanding pragmatic and contextual language use, she cautions against disassociating

language learning from students' cultural realities. This aligns directly with Sholihah et al.'s (2024) and Hidayati et al.'s (2017) arguments that teaching English must involve cultural adaptation to avoid alienation or disengagement.

Such a stance reinforces the idea that intercultural competence is not a matter of choosing between cultures, but of developing the ability to navigate and mediate between them. When teachers consciously relate English content to local traditions and norms, they cultivate students' ability to engage in cross-cultural dialogue rather than merely adopting foreign behaviors. This balanced approach aligns with Byram's (1997) concept of the "intercultural speaker," who can reflect on their own cultural identity while understanding and respecting others'.

In public schools, this balance becomes especially crucial, as students often have less exposure to global cultural content outside of school. Teachers, therefore, must carefully select and frame cultural examples in a way that maintains relevance and relatability. This also highlights how local cultural representation in English instruction serves as a bridge, making foreign concepts accessible while reinforcing national identity. The goal is not to minimize the importance of the target culture but to position it as complementary rather than dominant.

This theme illustrates the nuanced efforts made by English teachers to strike a balance between introducing students to global (target language) cultures while maintaining a strong connection to local and national cultural identities. The findings demonstrate that although English language teaching (ELT) is inherently tied to the cultures of English-speaking countries, teachers in the Indonesian context are increasingly aware of the potential for cultural overload if target culture exposure is not moderated.

Teachers from both private and public schools expressed the importance of contextualizing foreign cultural content to match students' backgrounds and learning environments. For instance, private school teachers often encountered students who were already bilingual or had international exposure. These students and their families valued the preservation of Indonesian and, in some cases, specific ethnic identities such as Javanese. As a result, schools and teachers intentionally infused local values and practices into their curriculum, sometimes even allowing parents to choose between national and international program tracks based on cultural considerations. This

strategic decision-making aligns with Sholihah et al. (2024) and Hidayati et al. (2017), who warn of the risks of cultural alienation when students are overwhelmed by unfamiliar cultural content.

In public school settings, teachers emphasized the need to make foreign culture more relatable by connecting it with students' everyday experiences. These educators often adapted textbook materials to include local cultural references, thereby enhancing comprehension and classroom engagement. This practice reflects the broader pedagogical recommendation to frame intercultural learning not as a replacement of the local culture, but as a bridge to understanding diversity. Teachers positioned themselves as cultural mediators, carefully selecting content to foster both openness to global perspectives and a strong sense of national identity.

Overall, this theme underscores that successful cultural integration in ELT does not lie in the complete immersion in the target culture, but rather in a thoughtful and balanced approach, one that respects and leverages students' existing cultural frameworks while gradually expanding their intercultural competence. This balance is particularly critical in multilingual, multicultural societies like Indonesia, where language education is not just a linguistic endeavor, but also a cultural negotiation.

4.3.3 Theme 3: Institutional and Curricular Factors

Curricular structure and institutional policy played a significant role in shaping how culture is integrated. Teachers from public schools consistently reported limitations caused by rigid national curricula that prioritize grammar mastery and preparation for government standardized examinations as well as limited class hours. These teachers noted that their syllabi offer little room for the integration of cultural content, and they have limited autonomy to adapt materials or incorporate intercultural elements, leaving little room for cultural exploration. This aligns with findings by Zahara and Rusmawaty (2022) and Ariawan (2020), who noted similar curricular rigidity in public education systems. In contrast, teachers from private and international schools described greater curricular flexibility. Private school teachers described a more flexible environment that allowed for cross-disciplinary cultural projects, such as drama performances, virtual exchange programs, and international day events. In addition, several private institutions also follow global curricula (e.g., Cambridge International), which embed cultural components into the language learning experience, offering students a broader intercultural outlook which

encourages global cultural awareness and the integration of cross-disciplinary projects. Some schools also organize cultural exchange programs and special classes in which English is used as the medium of instruction, allowing both teachers and students to interact with English in more meaningful, culturally-rich contexts. However, private schools are likewise subject to limitations, as they struggle to balance their curriculum with the results of government standardized examinations. While the government creates the evaluation criteria for final school exams, the curriculum that is used is either the international curriculum or the school's own curriculum. As a result, the content they study and the content assessed in the final exam varies greatly. This barrier is also examined as a reflection of the issues Indonesian private schools face.

4.3.3.1 Curriculum Rigidity in Public Schools

Teacher 6 explicitly pointed out the outcome-oriented nature of public schools:

“From the past until now, public schools are still output-oriented, they look more at the results rather than the process, theory rather than practice, because no matter how we teach English, the most important thing is their exam results later, not how they can communicate well in English.”

(INT/TH3-CRPS-T6-PU-032)

This perspective reflects how the dominant focus on standardized assessments undermines process-oriented language learning, particularly those involving communicative and cultural skills. Even when curriculum reforms aim to promote greater flexibility, teachers often remain constrained by institutional hierarchies and performance metrics. This finding aligns with Zahara and Rusmawaty (2022), who highlighted that while public school curricula may undergo structural changes, they continue to be shaped by high-stakes testing and formal assessment regimes. As a result, English instruction is reduced to the mastery of grammatical forms and vocabulary for examination purposes, leaving little room for meaningful cultural engagement. Teacher 6 further elaborated on the disconnection between curriculum policy and classroom practice:

“Actually, by changing the curriculum, it actually provides freedom in teaching according to the teacher, the teacher makes worksheets according to the condition of the student, so each school is different. But in reality, again, we are just employees, we are only ordered by our superiors, so we know how it is. The reality is that we can only teach theory but in the (school) exam later, we

have to have those 4 skills, which is where we lack input from, because the curriculum focuses more on reading and writing only.”

(INT/TH3-CRPS-T6-PU-040)

Her comment reveals a gap between the ideals of curriculum decentralization, such as those promoted by Merdeka Curriculum, and the practical realities in many public schools. Although the curriculum technically allows for teacher autonomy, administrative control and rigid supervision reduce the teacher's role to that of an implementer rather than a designer of instruction. This echoes Ariawan's (2020) assertion that real curriculum flexibility remains elusive due to entrenched top-down governance within public school systems, limiting the ability of teachers to adapt materials or infuse lessons with intercultural content.

Time limitation also emerged as a major constraint, as reflected in Teacher 9's experience:

"If from the curriculum itself, the focus is on learning objectives, it depends on what kind of learning objectives we choose (Merdeka curriculum) well, for me, the goal is still to have knowledge and practice, I make it as balanced as possible, for practice, usually if I have enough time, I will do crafts with the children and then put it on the wall, because usually the English learning hours are short, only 90 minutes, because sometimes writing is not finished in one meeting, so I slip in practice little by little"

(INT/TH3-CRPS-T9-PU-020)

Teacher 9's comment illustrates how limited instructional time restricts teachers from integrating engaging, culturally rich, and interactive activities. Despite her effort to maintain a balance between theoretical and practical learning, short class periods force her to compromise on communicative or cultural depth. Zahara and Rusmawaty (2022) similarly found that time constraints were among the key barriers for public school teachers trying to move beyond textbook-based instruction. The practical implication is that even well-intentioned teachers are often unable to prioritize cultural learning when constrained by insufficient contact hours and rigid pacing schedules.

A related concern is the limited speaking practice in public schools, as emphasized by Teacher 10:

"That's why our weakness in public schools is the lack of practice, so it produces many generations who learned English but only in writing. When it comes to speaking, they still lack confidence because there is very little practice."

(INT/TH3-CRPS-T10-PU-037)

This quote reinforces the point that public school curricula continue to favor receptive over productive skills. In this context, English becomes a subject of study rather than a tool for communication. Ariawan (2020) observed that such imbalances not only hinder students' communicative competence but also obstruct cultural understanding, since speaking and listening tasks are often the most suitable vehicles for introducing and exploring target language cultures. The lack of opportunities to use English communicatively contributes to a disconnect between language and culture in the classroom.

The absence of cultural programs was another challenge noted by Teacher 8:

"Compared to private schools, we also want our students to be more exposed to the target language culture. As an English teacher I would also be happy if my students became more fluent in communicating in English. We also want and I feel that in terms of teaching, we are able to teach English like teachers in private schools teach their students, I am also sure that my students are able because they are already familiar and good at English. But what is still unfortunate and difficult to change is because in public schools there are no programs or cultural events at school. Even if there are, they are only valid in popular public schools (high ranking favorite schools) or large public schools in the capital city that are indeed filled with top-ranking students."

(INT/TH3-CRPS-T8-PU-026)

Teacher 8's concern underscores disparities between public and private school environments. While private schools often organize events like cultural days or international celebrations, public schools—particularly those outside of major urban centers—lack institutional support for such programming. Zahara and Rusmawaty (2022) noted that access to cultural enrichment activities in

public schools is often limited to high-performing or elite institutions. For many teachers, this creates frustration, as they recognize their students' potential yet remain bound by systemic limitations.

Lastly, Teacher 7 reflected on the difficulties some teachers face in adapting to curriculum changes:

"Actually, the current curriculum is quite good because it gives teachers more freedom in designing lesson plans and adjusting them to the school or the conditions of their students, but in my school there are several obstacles I saw that arise from the changing curriculum. In my school, there are many teachers who have been teaching for decades, so changing the curriculum is a bit confusing for them. They still find it difficult to adapt to the new system, lesson plans, syllabuses, the format changes again and the names also change again, that's what's still confusing and the teachers are still adapting."

(INT/TH3-CRPS-T7-PU-033)

While curriculum reform offers promise, its effectiveness depends on teacher readiness and institutional support. For more senior educators, adapting to new formats, pedagogies, or expectations can be overwhelming without proper training. As Ariawan (2020) emphasized, the success of curriculum decentralization is contingent upon professional development and capacity building, without which reforms may result in confusion rather than innovation. Teacher 7's observation highlights the practical challenges of reform implementation at the school level, particularly in schools where institutional inertia persists.

In conclusion, public school teachers encounter multiple structural and institutional barriers that hinder the integration of cultural content into English language teaching. Although curriculum reforms suggest greater flexibility, the dominance of exam-focused instruction, administrative constraints, limited instructional time, and lack of cultural programming collectively restrict the meaningful inclusion of intercultural dimensions. These findings affirm earlier scholarship and emphasize the urgent need for systemic support if public school educators are to effectively engage students with both the language and the cultures it represents.

4.3.3.2 Curriculum Flexibility in Private School

Teacher 1 highlighted the richness of their school's co-curricular activities:

“What is really visible from our school is that there are many events but the events are also according to the theme, for example that week the theme was about foreign culture, later the peak of the event was a cultural dance performance of other countries' cultures. Students are given the opportunity to express themselves, there is market day (learning entrepreneurship and bargaining usually), professional visit (transport theme visit to the airport), or culture day (thanksgiving, etc.)”

(INT/TH3-PSF-T1-PR-022)

This quote demonstrates how private schools often organize thematic, cross-disciplinary events that integrate language learning with cultural expression. Cultural days, market simulations, and professional visits serve not only to reinforce vocabulary and communication but also to foster intercultural awareness in authentic contexts. Such practices align with Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence, which advocates for experiential learning that enables students to “live through” cultural encounters. The freedom to design such events stems from curriculum autonomy that is more common in private institutions, as noted by Zahara and Rusmawaty (2022), allowing English teaching to be both contextual and culturally responsive. Teacher 1 further elaborated on how government-based curricula are integrated into school-wide projects:

“In our school, there is such a thing as alpha and friends (one of the learning media used in the school containing material and activities), but we also adjust to the name P5 from the government, strengthening the character of the Pancasila profile, which is mandatory. Now the adaptation of our school curriculum to the Merdeka curriculum (government based curriculum) is from our school's events. The events usually included the learning themes from the Merdeka curriculum.”

(INT/TH3-PSF-T1-PR-024)

Here, the teacher illustrates how even national mandates, such as the *P5* character education initiative are approached creatively within the school's curriculum. Instead of treating cultural education and character-building as isolated goals, the school uses events and projects as integrated learning tools. This supports the idea that flexible curriculum structures promote interdisciplinary learning, which has been shown to enhance both language acquisition and intercultural competence (Ariawan, 2020). The integration of government values into event-based learning demonstrates how private schools can harmonize national priorities with global educational practices.

Similarly, Teacher 2 spoke of their school's adoption of an international curriculum:

“My school uses the IMYC curriculum or International Middle Year Curriculum. This is from the UK from the International Curriculum Association. I really like it because the curriculum has a lot of tasks, a lot of practice so students are active and they like it. Then what I also like is that the curriculum is themed, there are themes, and the themes are very diverse, really covering everyday and whole life, from daily life to skills, everything is really themed from this curriculum.”

(INT/TH3-PSF-T2-PR-008)

This quote highlights how international frameworks such as the IMYC offer thematic, student-centered learning that naturally integrates cultural content. By focusing on themes relevant to students' lives and encouraging active participation, the curriculum provides more opportunities for students to explore different cultural norms and values. This approach is supported by Pratt & Nesbit (2000), who stress that culture should not be taught as a discrete body of knowledge but rather as an embedded element in meaningful learning activities. Thematic curricula like IMYC help foster this integration organically, promoting deeper engagement with cultural diversity.

Teacher 3 also emphasized the role of regular cultural events in their school:

“For cultural programs, we also have events every semester, such as cultural day, sometimes there are performances, sometimes there are bazaars, the theme is international culture.”

(INT/TH3-PSF-T3-PR-010)

This recurring exposure to international cultural practices provides students with consistent opportunities to explore and reflect on cultural differences. By participating in cultural performances and marketplaces, students experience language in use, which reinforces both linguistic and intercultural skills. These practices reflect Byram's (1997) assertion that learners need opportunities not only to observe other cultures but also to interact and reflect on those experiences. Such events provide the experiential learning environment necessary for cultivating intercultural attitudes like curiosity and openness.

Teacher 4 discussed the influence of imported teaching materials and methods:

“Related to the curriculum that we adapt, which is Cambridge, we adapt to the culture of the curriculum it came from, especially the culture of the book itself. Of course it will adjust to the culture of the book itself. Then we also adapted a method or a toolkit from Australia called MFEA or My First English Adventure. There are books and activities too so it's fun to learn. The activities from MFEA are fun and engaging, really good enough to help children learn”

(INT/TH3-PSF-T4-PR-004)

This statement illustrates how international materials and methods shape the content and cultural tone of instruction in private schools. By using materials developed in English-speaking countries, students are exposed to cultural norms, values, and idiomatic language embedded in the content. While this can enhance cultural awareness, it also requires teachers to contextualize the materials to ensure relevance to students' own backgrounds (Ariawan, 2020). The adoption of frameworks like Cambridge and MFEA also reflects private schools' emphasis on global standards, allowing them to deliver education that aligns with international benchmarks while maintaining flexibility in implementation.

Teacher 5 emphasized the school's explicit mission to foster intercultural competence:

“Yes, one of our school missions is to apply intercultural competence. It is our school's mission. They can talk globally. They can compete globally, as in some scholars in global respect, in the global context. So yeah, that's one of the skills that students should have.”

(INT/TH3-PSF-T5-PR-032)

This quote indicates a proactive institutional stance toward developing global citizens. When intercultural competence is embedded in the school's mission, it influences all levels of practice—from curriculum design to teacher training and classroom interaction. According to Wang et al (2022), such a commitment is essential for creating a coherent intercultural learning environment where values like respect, empathy, and open-mindedness are systematically cultivated. Schools that prioritize this competence are more likely to develop holistic programs that go beyond language proficiency to include global awareness and ethical engagement. Teacher 5 further shared a concrete example of such programming:

“We have a program called ERD or English Reinforcement Day. So the first thing they need to do in the program is that they need to speak to a foreigner. And the second one is they need to make a presentation after they speak to the foreigner. So in the ERD session, students are expected to have conversations with the native speaker, and also present well in our school. The ERD program is not by visiting some places only, but also by inviting native speakers to school. But in this year, 2024, we visited Batavia old to find a foreigner to speak with but the previous year, we just invited some native speaker as a guest teacher to our school.”

(INT/TH3-PSF-T5-PR-014)

This example demonstrates how schools create structured opportunities for intercultural interaction. Programs like ERD mirror experiential learning strategies recommended by Byram (1997), where learners engage directly with speakers of the target language, encouraging authentic communication and reflection. By combining real-world interaction with follow-up presentations, the program develops both linguistic and intercultural dimensions of competence. The inclusion of both inbound (guest speakers) and outbound (visits to public spaces) elements also reflects the school's commitment to providing varied intercultural experiences.

In summary, this sub-theme illustrates how private schools benefit from curricular flexibility and global frameworks that facilitate the integration of cultural content. Through thematic learning, cross-disciplinary events, and experiential programs, teachers in private settings are able to deliver culturally enriched instruction. These findings resonate with the literature that emphasizes institutional autonomy and global curricular adaptation as key enablers of intercultural competence in language education (Ariawan, 2020; Wang, 2022; Zahara & Rusawaty, 2022). Unlike their

public school counterparts, private school teachers are often better resourced and more empowered to create dynamic, culturally responsive English language classrooms.

4.3.4 Theme 4: Teacher Preparedness and Attitudes

Another key difference between public and private school teachers is related to their preparedness and perceptions of teaching culture. Public school teachers reported limited access to professional development in intercultural pedagogy and lacked exposure to international contexts. Many expressed uncertainty in defining or teaching "culture," reflecting the conceptual ambiguity noted by Brooks (1968). This often led to hesitation or reliance on minimal, superficial cultural references. One participant's limited exposure to the target culture, particularly due to a lack of international travel experience, was identified as an influential factor in shaping their classroom approach. The data revealed that teachers who had traveled abroad, especially to native English-speaking countries, tended to incorporate more nuanced and authentic cultural content. In contrast, teachers without such experiences, or who had only visited nearby Asian countries, often relied more on textbook examples or secondhand sources. On the other hand, private school teachers appeared more confident and proactive in integrating cultural content. These teachers often collaborate with native English speakers or participate in training provided by international institutions. They were also more likely to view cultural teaching as an opportunity to promote empathy, tolerance, and global readiness in students. These findings align with those of Bat-Yondon (2021) and Byrd (2011), who argue that teachers' beliefs and confidence significantly influence their classroom practices. These contextual differences highlight how professional background and international exposure contribute to teachers' confidence and flexibility in integrating culture into ELT

4.3.4.1 Teacher Training Gaps

Teacher 1, from a private school setting, shared the collaborative approach employed in their ESL classroom:

"So there are 3 teachers in the ESL class, 2 homeroom teachers and 1 ESL teacher. We stay in the class to collaborate with the ESL teacher (native speaker) but the children automatically switch language to English if they talk to the mister (ESL teacher)."

This example illustrates a significant support mechanism for teachers working alongside native English-speaking educators. Such collaboration not only models authentic language use for students but also provides local teachers with informal, ongoing exposure to intercultural communication practices. The presence of native speakers in the classroom environment, as described by Teacher 1, helps demystify cultural nuances and supports both teachers and learners in navigating cultural content. Byrd (2011) notes that such immersion and collaboration foster teacher competence and confidence in addressing cultural objectives, especially when local teachers may not have had formal education or training on intercultural pedagogy.

Similarly, Teacher 2 discussed the integration of international training through curriculum adoption:

“IMYC is very complete, it's like a full pack. It makes it very easy for teachers in my opinion, everything is already there even down to the sequence of tasks and instructions for teachers. Because IMYC is a full set so before using IMYC we have training first too, like to familiarize the content of IMYC.”

This highlights how institutional support and structured training—especially when adopting a global curriculum such as the International Middle Years Curriculum (IMYC) can bridge gaps in teacher understanding. The design of the IMYC includes explicit training to guide teachers through content, pedagogical methods, and cultural themes, thereby reducing the ambiguity noted by Brooks (1968). This contrasts with many public-school contexts, where teachers may lack access to such comprehensive frameworks. According to Bat-Yondon (2021), access to high-quality teacher training is one of the primary enablers of effective culture-integrated English language teaching, especially in non-native contexts.

In a similar vein, Teacher 4 emphasized how curriculum methods such as My First English Adventure (MFEA) are introduced through teacher workshops:

“MFEA or My First English Adventure is a method and toolkit, because we will have training to use and apply it, we are given training before using it in class.”

(INT/TH4-TTG-T4-PR-014)

This statement further underscores the importance of preparatory training in equipping teachers to apply intercultural methods effectively. MFEA, being a tool developed internationally, naturally embeds cultural norms and practices from English-speaking countries. The training provided ensures that local teachers can interpret and deliver this content meaningfully within their own classroom contexts. Byrd (2011) argues that when teachers are trained not just in curriculum content but also in how to culturally mediate that content, it leads to deeper and more confident engagement with culture in language teaching.

In contrast, public school teachers face a different reality in terms of professional development opportunities. Out of 5 participants who taught in public school, only 1 teacher mentioned teacher training opportunities. Teacher 10, from a public school, noted the role of MGMP as their primary training forum:

“For public schools we have MGMP (subject teacher meetings), maybe not special training but MGMP is quite helpful for teachers in voicing opinions, sharing teaching experiences with teachers from other schools, sharing learning materials and how to design lesson plans.”

(INT/TH4-TTG-T10-PU-008)

While MGMP serves as an important peer-support platform for knowledge exchange among teachers, it lacks the formalized and specialized focus on intercultural teaching that international training programs typically provide. As observed by Bat-Yondon (2021), such informal communities are helpful for collaboration but often fall short in equipping teachers with the theoretical grounding and pedagogical strategies necessary to teach culture effectively. The absence of structured cultural training in public education settings may reinforce the “surface culture” approach—mentioning holidays, food, or traditional clothing—without deeper exploration of values, communication styles, and perspectives. This echoes Brooks’ (1968) concern that a lack of conceptual clarity and training often leads to the neglect of cultural teaching or its reduction to simplistic, tokenistic references.

In summary, this sub-theme reveals a stark contrast in how teacher training affects the integration of cultural elements in English instruction. While private school teachers benefit from global curricular frameworks and structured training, which often includes direct interaction with native speakers, public school teachers depend on community-based sharing platforms such as MGMP. These findings reinforce the literature on the importance of teacher training in building confidence and capability to integrate culture (Byrd, 2011; Bat-Yondon, 2021). Without formal preparation and conceptual grounding, teachers may continue to avoid or oversimplify cultural topics in their classrooms, thereby limiting the development of students' intercultural competence.

4.3.4.2 Teacher's Confidence in Cultural Instruction

Teacher 1 from a private school clearly articulated the importance of equipping students with intercultural competence before traveling abroad:

“For me, learning the culture of the target language is important and also, to some point, they know when they want to come to the country where English has been spoken as a first language. They know the intercultural competences. So when they get into the society in that country, they learn the culture before they come to that country. They already know intercultural competence. They can develop cross-cultural understanding from Indonesia. So yeah, they have the skill before they come to another country that has spoken a different language.”

(INT/TH4-TCCI-T1-PR-010)

This quote reflects a solid conceptual understanding of *intercultural competence* and its importance in preparing learners for real-life communication. The teacher emphasized that cultural knowledge should precede physical mobility, aligning with Byrd's (2011) argument that teaching culture alongside language enhances students' preparedness for authentic interactions. This also demonstrates a proactive stance in instruction which equips learners with the social and cultural tools needed to navigate foreign environments effectively. The teacher's focus on cross-cultural understanding as a skill affirms Bat-Yondon's (2021) assertion that culture teaching must extend beyond basic facts to include intercultural mindset development.

Similarly, Teacher 2 emphasized the impact of culture on communication and interaction:

“Yes, I think it really affects the language because it is a communication tool. In communication or interaction, culture is very influential. For example, when we learn English, we learn English with Indonesians who have never been exposed to the culture of the English speaking country, it's like only Indonesian is translated into English so it is not contextual. If we are about to communicate with foreigners whose culture is different, maybe we will not connect or not understand, but if we learn with people who are familiar with the culture of foreigners, it can be more contextual and the conversation is more relevant.”

(INT/TH4-TCCI-T2-PR-004)

This teacher insightfully described the risk of language being taught in isolation from culture, leading to a lack of contextual or pragmatic appropriateness in communication. The teacher's awareness that learners may “not connect” or misinterpret if unaware of cultural context supports Brooks' (1968) warning that language divorced from its cultural roots can result in mechanical or awkward exchanges. This quote aligns with Bat-Yondon's (2021) call for teaching practices that reflect the communicative and cultural realities learners are likely to face in global interactions.

Teacher 3, drawing on personal experiences of travel, offered a vivid and confident approach to integrating culture into class:

“When we talk about culture, it's the culture of the language we teach. For example Australia, because I've been to Australia so several times in my class, I use various kinds of slang or dialects from Aussie itself so we learn how people are in Aussie, for example I told my students that Australians like to be on time. In addition to learning accents, dialects, or slangs that are often used in Aussie, for example, saying breakfast to brekkie, barbeque to barbie, I also share this to my students. Besides that, we also learn first what kind of habits they have, what their daily lives are like, I inform my children so that they know what outside culture is like.”

(INT/TH4-TCCI-T3-PR-002)

This example demonstrates not only high confidence but also a culturally immersive pedagogy grounded in lived experience. The teacher moves beyond superficial content and focuses on behavioral norms (e.g., punctuality), informal language (slang), and social customs which are the key elements of what Byrd (2011) terms as “deep culture.” The integration of travel-based

experiences into classroom teaching enables students to gain authentic insight into cultural dynamics, helping bridge the gap between textbook English and real-world communication. It also illustrates Brooks' (1968) notion of "culture as lived experience," which can be a powerful tool when translated effectively into pedagogical practice.

Teacher 4 emphasized cultural instruction as preparation for global readiness:

"It's very important for the students to learn the culture, due to the intercultural competence. I felt that when we are learning languages, cross-cultural communication skills are important. And also authentic language use, and also is real world preparation for them if they are going to the first English speaking country. I also often encourage those who want to go abroad, and I also promote the culture before they go there. For example, to Australia, Japan, Malaysia or Singapore, which are close and I've been there. I can provide information on what it's like there and they can learn, so they know that when they visit the country they are not clueless to information that they really don't know. It prepares them more."

(INT/TH4-TCCI-T4-PR-030)

This teacher explicitly connected cultural education with *real-world preparation*, advocating for an instructional approach that goes beyond linguistic competence. The emphasis on authenticity, global awareness, and cross-cultural communication reiterates the principles discussed by Bat-Yondon (2021), who notes that confident teachers often tie language learning to broader social, professional, and personal readiness. This quote also highlights how teacher confidence is linked to prior exposure and international experience, enhancing both credibility and effectiveness in the classroom.

Lastly, Teacher 5 provided a detailed reflection on their cultural learning journey:

"As I have background experience in teaching English, and also I have some experience in culture. When I was in undergraduate, I learned that target cultures means we're not only learning the language, but also we deep dive into the cultures. And to some point, we learned not only the lexical, the sentences, the meaning, but we also learned how society works in those languages. And I learned the languages by not having conversations, but also knowing more about the songs or the behavior of the people, the foods and also the movie that they produce in

that country. For example, English, I experienced student exchange when I was in undergraduate and I learned some Australian slang, Australian ideas, and got to know how they interact with their unique accents. And it's quite different from British or American English, to which extent the actual is more difficult. So yeah, I learned the target language, culture by some exposure, some international exposure, and also by movies."

(INT/TH4-TCCI-T5-PR-012)

Teacher 5's quote captures a sophisticated understanding of cultural immersion and its impact on language learning. Their reflection on how learning extends beyond grammar to behaviors, media, and social norms is in line with Byrd's (2011) notion of culture as a "lived phenomenon" and supports Brooks' (1968) view that real understanding of culture is holistic. Moreover, the teacher's international exposure (through student exchange) enhanced their confidence and allowed them to transmit nuanced cultural knowledge to their learners, aligning with Bat-Yondon's (2021) call for experiential learning as a foundation for confident cultural teaching.

While the theme of teacher preparedness emerged in the findings, it appeared less emphasized compared to other themes such as language–culture correlation or curriculum design. The data revealed that formal intercultural training was largely absent among public school teachers, with many relying on peer-sharing forums like MGMP. Despite being acknowledged by participants, this lack of training did not seem to be their primary concern, which made it less prominent in the interviews. Nevertheless, this point remains critical for understanding systemic gaps in professional development. The limited emphasis may reflect a normalized perception of inadequate training infrastructure, suggesting a need for deeper institutional support. Future research might explore the impact of comprehensive intercultural training programs to assess how they can enhance the quality of cultural integration in English language classrooms.

In sum, this sub-theme illustrates a clear pattern: private school teachers demonstrated higher levels of confidence and deeper engagement with cultural instruction compared to public school teachers, whose responses were often general and lacked specific cultural references. Teacher confidence is strongly linked to training, exposure, and personal experience, validating the arguments of Bat-Yondon (2021) and Byrd (2011). Confident teachers are more likely to move

beyond “surface culture” and offer students rich, meaningful, and relevant cultural insights that prepare them for real-world communication in a global context.

4.3.5 Theme 5: Student Outcomes and Motivation

Students’ motivation and language development were closely tied to their exposure to cultural content. Private school teachers observed that students were intrinsically motivated by culturally rich experiences such as international days, virtual exchanges, visits from native speakers or study abroad programs. These experiences contributed not only to increased engagement but also to improvements in grammar, vocabulary, and intercultural communication skills, as noted in Mashudi et al. (2022) and Doghonadze (2011). Conversely, public school teachers reported that while some students were occasionally curious about foreign cultures, they often displayed inconsistent engagement due to limited exposure, classroom hours, and lack of real-world application. Nonetheless, teachers reported that even basic cultural integration such as music, films, or storytelling could enhance understanding and reinforce linguistic concepts when meaningfully tied to lesson objectives.

4.3.5.1 Motivation through Cultural Exposure

Teacher 1 from a private school observed that cultural events positively impacted students’ motivation:

“Obviously, children like to learn more from events. They are more immersed and understand better than learning in class. And there is also variety in the learning too, it's not boring as if we learn only in class. That's what I like about private schools too, facilitated events like that (international day events).”

(INT/TH5-MTCE-T1-PR-028)

This statement reflects a core principle of experiential learning in which students retain information better when they are actively engaged. Events like international days serve as immersive experiences where students don’t just learn about culture; they live it through costumes, performances, and social interactions. As noted by Doghonadze (2011), culturally rich

environments stimulate learners' curiosity and foster positive emotional engagement, which is crucial in language acquisition.

Furthermore, this aligns with Mashudi et al. (2022), who argued that cultural integration can transform traditional learning environments into dynamic spaces for cross-cultural interaction. When students see the real-world relevance of their learning, such as understanding how language is used in festivals or daily life abroad, that makes them become more motivated. Teacher 1's observation underscores how these interactive experiences increase students' retention and enthusiasm beyond the textbook-based model.

Teacher 2 further emphasized the role of hands-on cultural activities in fostering excitement:

"In my class, what makes them excited is not what they will learn but what they will do, the activities. For example, if they want to learn about Halloween, they will be excited because they will be told to wear costumes. The kids at my school like it when they are told to cosplay, roleplay, make a drama, make a show like that. They really like it when they have to make something. They like to be told to make projects. But if the activity is given a worksheet, or just told to watch a video, they are not excited."

(INT/TH5-MTCE-T2-PR-020)

Teacher 2's quote clearly reinforces the idea that motivation stems from interactive and participatory learning. Activities such as drama, roleplay, and cultural projects not only spark students' interest but also provide authentic contexts for language use. This is in line with constructivist principles that stress the importance of learner-centered activities in fostering deeper cognitive engagement (Doghonadze, 2011).

Moreover, the emphasis on "doing" rather than "receiving" supports Mashudi et al.'s (2022) assertion that cultural instruction is most effective when tied to experiential learning. The teacher's example of Halloween not only teaches students vocabulary and expressions related to the holiday but also contextualizes those expressions in a meaningful, memorable way. This multimodal approach which combines visual, kinesthetic, and emotional elements can be especially effective in language retention and confidence building.

Teacher 3 discussed the motivational effect of introducing students to the real lives of people in foreign cultures:

“In my opinion, it is important to learn the culture of the language, even very important because I myself want my children to be motivated to learn English. So one of the ways, in my opinion, is by introducing foreign cultures. Because children are curious, they want to learn the language not only the language, but also the culture, what is it like outside, what are the daily life of foreigners, what schools are like there, everything, so informing or giving real examples in the classroom towards the target language culture is important and very influential, very affecting their motivation in my opinion.”

(INT/TH5-MTCE-T3-PR-008)

This response illustrates a key motivational driver or curiosity. The teacher believes that cultural knowledge enriches students’ perception of the target language and broadens their understanding of the world, which is also confirmed by Doghonadze (2011), who highlighted that cultural content sparks student curiosity and deepens language learning by making it relevant to their lives and interests.

By providing concrete, real-world examples from foreign cultures, the teacher bridges the gap between students’ local context and the global stage. This kind of comparative learning helps students relate to cultural norms, behaviors, and practices of other societies, increasing not just linguistic competence but also intercultural sensitivity. Mashudi et al. (2022) emphasized that such cultural comparisons help students develop higher-order thinking skills and empathy both essential in today’s globalized world.

Teacher 4 presented a nuanced view of student backgrounds in relation to cultural motivation:

“For the locals or students who have never been abroad, they are actually excited about foreign culture because they have never experienced it. They want to know the history of the outside too, so they are excited to learn about foreign culture. For those who grew up abroad, they like to learn our culture more as they are already familiar with foreign culture.”

This statement illustrates how prior exposure influences learner motivation. Students unfamiliar with foreign cultures demonstrate excitement as they discover new information. They show high enthusiasm due to the novelty of foreign culture, which creates a sense of wonder and desire to explore, validating Doghonadze's (2011) argument that novelty drives interest. Meanwhile, learners with international backgrounds find value in exploring their own culture from a comparative perspective. This duality confirms Mashudi et al.'s (2022) claim that motivation is heightened when cultural instruction responds to students' individual backgrounds and prior experiences.

Such findings echo Doghonadze's (2011) idea that motivation is not one-size-fits-all, it depends on the learner's context. The teacher's ability to balance both foreign and local cultural content can foster mutual respect and inclusivity in the classroom. Mashudi et al. (2022) argue that recognizing students' diverse cultural backgrounds allows for more personalized and meaningful instruction that boosts engagement and learning outcomes.

Teacher 5 emphasized that cultural context fuels learners' curiosity and makes language more appealing:

"It's really affected the student's motivations. Since they learn the new cultures and language, the teenagers really love to know about new ideas and new knowledge. They really are curious people. So when we deliver the languages, which culture, they are just excited about the use of the idioms itself or how the native speakers communicate daily, for example, when we say, 'when you are in Australia, you greet your friends with 'good day mate'. So they like to repeat it every day. They really love to learn the language with the culture, and I think that's really motivating them to learn English as well."

This response demonstrates how idiomatic language and daily expressions serve as both linguistic tools and cultural entry points. By learning how native speakers communicate in informal or colloquial settings, students engage more actively with the language and enjoy mimicking authentic usage. The act of repeating native phrases also illustrates active learner participation.

This form of mimicry, according to Doghonadze (2011), helps internalize pragmatic norms and enhances spoken fluency.

Furthermore, the teacher's focus on idiomatic language highlights the value of linguistic authenticity. Mashudi et al. (2022) emphasized that cultural insights, particularly those tied to daily communication, can significantly boost students' communicative competence. By understanding not just what to say but how to say it appropriately in different cultural contexts, learners become more effective and confident speakers.

From the public school context, Teacher 6 shared how audiovisual media became an effective cultural bridge:

“At school, there are TV facilities so I sometimes modify the learning plan through watching TV. So we watch it together and discuss it together in class. Well, it turns out that children are more interested if we use moving media such as TV or internet media. And it is interesting that they are more interested in native themselves, rather than local people from Indonesia. I think because they want to learn the authentic one.”

(INT/TH5-MTCE-T6-PU-004)

This response demonstrates the value of media in introducing culture and authenticity to the classroom. Using videos and digital content allows teachers to simulate a more immersive experience, even when direct exposure (such as travel or exchanges) is not feasible. Students' preference for native speakers reflects a desire for authenticity, which Doghonadze (2011) described as a key factor in increasing engagement in which learners are more likely to invest effort when the language they encounter feels real and practical.

The teacher's strategy of using media as a supplement reflects Mashudi et al.'s (2022) findings that visual and auditory materials help contextualize abstract language concepts. When students hear accents, observe social customs, and witness everyday interactions through video, they gain a deeper understanding of cultural nuances. This not only aids comprehension but also builds motivation, as students begin to imagine themselves communicating effectively in those real-world settings.

Teacher 7 provided a conceptual link between language and culture that resonated with learners:

“Because this language was born in a country, coming from a country, the culture must be different from our country right? Well the children want to know what is different, they are actually interested in understanding the culture of the target language because it is more contextual, if learning a language is accompanied by learning the culture, it becomes more authentic according to them.”

(INT/TH5-MTCE-T7-PU-030)

The teacher points out a vital connection: the inseparability of language and culture. Students perceive language as more than just grammar and vocabulary but it's a representation of a way of life. This realization makes learning more meaningful. As Doghonadze (2011) emphasized, authenticity and contextual relevance are essential to keeping learners engaged, especially when the language is taught as a foreign tongue.

The emphasis on authenticity also echoes the work of Mashudi et al. (2022), who argued that contextual learning leads to more robust language skills. This teacher's insight shows that students not only value but also expect cultural relevance in their lessons. Integrating such elements helps them connect what they learn in the classroom with how language functions in society.

Teacher 8 emphasized student resistance to decontextualized instruction:

“My children don't even want to learn only from the textbook. Learning without inserting cultural context, without us inserting authentic material from western culture, makes them not interested. Because English is definitely different from our language. As it is also another language, the content and culture must be different, that's what they are looking for from learning the language.”

(INT/TH5-MTCE-T8-PU-017)

This quote reinforces the idea that purely textbook-based learning often falls short in sustaining motivation. Students, especially in today's globalized context, expect language lessons to offer cultural depth. The teacher observes that authenticity is what truly engages them, a reflection of

Doghonadze's (2011) findings that language learning should not be decontextualized from the sociocultural realities it represents.

Mashudi et al. (2022) also support this perspective, noting that culturally rich content can reframe English learning as a gateway to understanding different lifestyles, ideologies, and communication patterns. Teacher 8's experience shows that when students are exposed to cultural realities, even through small elements like videos, customs, or celebrations, they become more attentive and willing to participate. This shift from passive to active learning is crucial in foreign language contexts.

Teacher 9 reflected on how even minimal exposure to cultural content can generate student interest:

“As I teach in a small city, English is quite foreign for them. However, after we tell them what the culture of westerners is like, they are more motivated too because they are curious, so yes they want to find out about that too.”

(INT/TH5-MTCE-T9-PU-010)

This quote highlights how curiosity acts as a motivational spark even in less privileged or resource-limited educational environments. Although students in smaller cities may initially view English as remote or irrelevant, cultural content serves as a bridge that transforms abstract language into meaningful, tangible realities. As Doghonadze (2011) notes, even minimal exposure to foreign cultural norms can stimulate interest and give learners a reason to engage with the language beyond academic requirements.

The teacher's observation also aligns with Mashudi et al. (2022), who stressed that cultural elements, even when introduced through indirect means like storytelling or classroom discussions, can provide learners with the context they need to see the value of language learning. When students discover that English opens a window to new ways of life, their motivation grows from extrinsic (passing exams) to intrinsic (personal exploration and growth), which is essential for long-term language acquisition.

Lastly, Teacher 10 reflected on teaching in a remote setting:

“Because I teach in a remote area, there are not many people who can speak English here, not many people who can speak foreign languages, so they think English is really cool. Every time there is an English lesson they are excited, they say they want to be like me who can speak foreign languages other than Indonesian. Especially if I insert cultural content in class lessons, the children will know what natives are like, what their daily lives are like, they are very interested, and more motivated to learn English.”

(INT/TH5-MTCE-T10-PU-009)

This response underscores the powerful role of teacher modeling and aspiration in motivating students. In remote contexts where exposure to English speakers is minimal, teachers become the primary ambassadors of not only the language but also the culture it represents. The idea of “coolness” associated with English reflects a form of aspirational motivation, which Doghonadze (2011) identified as a critical factor in sustaining engagement in under-resourced contexts.

Additionally, the use of cultural content as a motivational tool aligns with Mashudi et al. (2022), who highlighted that when learners are shown real-life applications of English, their desire to emulate those experiences grows. This is especially effective when teachers share stories or insights into native-speaker lifestyles, creating a sense of connection that inspires learners to persist in their language journey, even without external resources.

In conclusion, this sub-theme confirms that cultural exposure is a powerful motivational tool across diverse educational settings. Private schools, with their access to more immersive experiences, offer varied avenues for cultural learning that consistently enhance motivation. Public schools, while more limited in exposure, still report that even basic cultural elements—songs, films, and discussions—generate meaningful student interest. These findings affirm the central claims by Mashudi et al. (2022) and Doghonadze (2011) that culturally contextualized instruction fosters deeper engagement, increased curiosity, and greater language retention.

4.3.5.2 Skill Development

Teacher 4 shared a structured approach to daily cultural exposure:

“There are several strategies that we apply, there is one program called ‘one idiom every morning,’ like English expressions, so we introduce new idioms such as ‘break a leg.’ We practice alternately every morning, so students are taught part of the English culture every day. If we don’t learn like that our English is limited, right? And students are also happy when they learn that way so they feel that their English has improved.”

(INT/TH5-SD-T4-PR-022)

This example highlights the role of consistency and cultural immersion in developing students’ linguistic range, particularly in informal and idiomatic usage. The practice of introducing “one idiom every morning” is a concrete pedagogical technique that reflects both cultural learning and vocabulary expansion. Çakır (2010), in his analysis of ELT coursebooks used in Turkish elementary schools, found that the inclusion of culture-specific elements such as idiomatic expressions in ELT materials plays a vital role in fostering students’ language acquisition and cultural awareness. Idioms, being deeply rooted in cultural context, are often difficult to grasp without meaningful exposure. Therefore, when students encounter them regularly through habitual classroom routines, they not only expand their linguistic repertoire but also gain insights into the social and cultural dimensions of language use, which in turn enhances their confidence and communicative competence in English.

Furthermore, the teacher’s reflection that without cultural content, “our English is limited” underscores Mashudi et al. 's (2022) argument that language learning devoid of culture risks becoming mechanical and unrelatable. By including cultural idioms, students move beyond textbook grammar and engage with how English is actually spoken in real-life contexts. This kind of instruction does not just increase vocabulary but also improves pragmatics which is central to communicative competence. The enjoyment students express, as noted by the teacher, is a sign of intrinsic motivation, which further reinforces retention and application.

Teacher 5 addressed the skill development that comes from culturally contextualized tasks, although with a distinction between formal and informal assessment contexts:

“To give the context, yeah it will, it will increase the skill development of the students. But for the formal standard, standardized tasks, it’s not really affecting. In standardized exams, we have

the exact languages, and it is not very casual. But for informal tasks, for example, when they have the speaking test, yeah, they really develop on that skill. Because they know the idioms, they know about the slang, they know about the culture itself”

(INT/TH5-SD-T5-PR-056)

This teacher highlights an important dichotomy between standardized testing and real-world communicative competence. While cultural content may not directly prepare students for rigid, formal assessments, which tend to favor controlled language and grammar rules, it does contribute significantly to performance in informal or task-based evaluations such as speaking tests. This aligns with Doghonadze (2011), who emphasized that authentic cultural exposure improves students' fluency and situational appropriateness, particularly in oral communication.

The emphasis on students knowing “idioms, slang, and culture” further supports Mashudi et al.’s (2022) findings that culturally embedded instruction is key to building flexible language use. These elements are often omitted in exam syllabi but are crucial for meaningful interaction in real-life settings. Teacher 5’s insight reflects the reality that while curriculum demands may prioritize accuracy over fluency, classroom practices that incorporate culture help develop the broader communicative competencies that exams often fail to measure. This gap between what is assessed and what is practically useful underscores the value of culturally rich instruction, particularly in developing speaking skills, listening comprehension, and pragmatic awareness.

In conclusion, although this sub-theme on skill development is supported by literature and logically follows from the first sub-theme on student motivation, it was the least mentioned theme across the teacher interviews. There are two possible interpretations for this. First, it is plausible that teachers implicitly assumed that an increase in student motivation would naturally lead to skill development, and therefore did not feel the need to state it explicitly during the interviews. Second, it may be a limitation in the data collection process, where the interview questions did not sufficiently probe or prompt participants to elaborate on how cultural integration impacts specific language skills.

Regardless of the reason, the minimal mention of this theme suggests a missed opportunity to document the full pedagogical impact of cultural integration. As both Doghonadze (2011) and

Mashudi et al. (2022) stress, the connection between motivation and skill acquisition is not only theoretical but observable in classroom outcomes. Thus, future research or classroom observations should more intentionally explore this connection to better inform curriculum design and teacher training in culturally responsive pedagogy.

4.3.6 Theme 6: Equity and Resource Disparities

The data also revealed stark disparities in access to cultural materials and support between public and private institutions. Public school teachers reported a lack of funding for cultural resources such as books, films, and music. As a result, they often relied on freely available digital content (e.g., YouTube), which was inconsistent in quality and cultural depth. These resource limitations, compounded by large class sizes and limited instructional time, constrained their ability to consistently incorporate culture into their teaching. In contrast, private school teachers described a more resource-rich environment. Private schools benefited from structured immersion programs, supplemental material designed by the institution, English-only zones, and regular international events that promoted cultural awareness. These schools also responded to parental expectations by investing in cultural integration as part of their educational branding. This aligns with Aydemir (2013) and Ariawan (2020), who highlight how socioeconomic factors shape educational access and outcomes, particularly in relation to global competencies. However, the constraints faced by private schools are primarily related to their inability to reconcile their institution's curriculum with the criteria established by the ministry of education. Furthermore, the chance to provide students with additional practice and concentrate on productive abilities is surprisingly not entirely helpful, as it may affect their lack of grasp of student writing techniques.

4.3.6.1 Public vs Private School Limitations

Teacher 1, from a private school, emphasized the mismatch between parental expectations and actual classroom conditions:

“Sometimes what is difficult at school is because of the full day program, parents expect their children to be good at English. While in my opinion, as a teacher, parents cannot rely on teachers in full. If at school their children use English but at home they are not supported, then their English skills will not have significant improvement. Moreover, my school still uses mixed

language, not fully English. if the school uses full English, indeed it is easier for children to adapt so that they are more fluent in English and it is natural for parents to expect that. But we are not using full English every day. We only use it on certain days. If in one semester (after semester assessment) parents expect their children to be fluent in English, it is quite difficult.”

(INT/TH6-SL-T1-PR-034)

This statement sheds light on the sociocultural expectations often associated with private schools, where parents anticipate rapid and visible language progress, especially in English fluency. However, as Teacher 1 notes, these expectations often overlook the environmental support required at home and the practical limitations within the school itself, such as the use of mixed language instruction and limited days for English immersion. This resonates with Aydemir’s (2013) findings that even resource-rich schools face intangible challenges related to parental pressure, institutional identity, and inconsistent immersion policies.

Moreover, the teacher’s frustration over unrealistic timelines reflects a systemic misunderstanding of language acquisition as a process rather than a product. As Ariawan (2020) explains, educational branding in private schools often promotes language proficiency as a marketable skill, yet fails to align this vision with pedagogical realities. Without full immersion, consistent use, and reinforcement at home, students’ language development remains fragmented. This observation underscores how even well-funded schools are constrained by expectations and operational structures that undermine comprehensive cultural and linguistic integration.

Teacher 2 discussed how curriculum misalignment complicates teaching in private schools:

“The difficulty is because this is a private school, when there are mandatory exams from the government curriculum, we have to be like a marathon to catch up with the material. Because the material from the school curriculum is not in order, it's not in the same order as the material in the government curriculum, there are some that overlap but not all. Later in grade 9 the school will sort all the material again according to the government curriculum and that's a lot of work.”

(INT/TH6-SL-T2-PR-050)

This quote illustrates the logistical strain teachers face when reconciling the school's internal curriculum (often international or theme-based) with the national standardized curriculum. The term "marathon" metaphorically captures the intensive, time-compressed review sessions required to prepare students for government standardized exams, disrupting pedagogical continuity and impeding in-depth cultural exploration. As Aydemir (2013) observes, private schools often promote autonomy and creativity through alternative curricula, yet are still tethered to state-imposed assessments that do not accommodate such divergence.

The pressure to retrofit the school's thematic curriculum to the government standardized exam schedule particularly hinders culturally rich instruction, which often requires gradual, contextual learning. Instead, teachers are forced into test-oriented instruction, sacrificing intercultural engagement for exam preparedness. This tension mirrors Ariawan's (2020) argument that institutional hybridity, where schools must serve both international and local standards, can dilute the depth and coherence of global competence education, especially when cultural learning is not tested formally. Teacher 2 further elaborated with a concrete example:

"For example, the curriculum for international class, the social studies subject learns the curriculum literally from abroad, using the IMYC curriculum right. they don't learn the history of the Pasai oceans, Majapahit (Indonesian history) they didn't learn about that at all. but later in the exam (standardized test from the government) all of those materials that they haven't learned before comes out. That's why in grade 9 (final year of senior high school) there will be 3 months just to catch up on material that doesn't intersect. The difficulty is this case. So if my school were independent from the government (have their own standardized test using their curriculum) maybe it would be better."

(INT/TH6-SL-T2-PR-042)

This comment further supports the argument that curricular dualism places significant strain on teachers and students. International curricula like IMYC prioritize global perspectives and may intentionally de-emphasize local historical content. However, when government standardized exams mandate mastery of local content, such as Indonesian history, students are placed at a disadvantage. This reinforces Ariawan's (2020) findings that private schools often operate under dual accountability (global and national) and struggle to maintain curricular coherence.

The teacher's suggestion for assessment autonomy reflects a broader call for structural reform. If private institutions could develop their own standardized evaluations aligned with their educational philosophy, they could more fully realize their vision of culturally integrated, globally relevant education. As Aydemir (2013) points out, true educational innovation in private schools often remains limited unless systemic flexibility is granted by the educational authorities.

Teacher 3 added insight about private foundations' involvement in curriculum control:

“Actually, the current government's curriculum is more liberated and contextual learning. But because my school is on a certain foundation (private institutions that use the government's curriculum), the exams are still made by the foundation. but the foundation is still under the ministry of education, so the ministry submits the exams to the foundation and then the foundation submits it to the school. Therefore, the exam material is not incompatible with the school curriculum, where the exam material is adjusted by the foundation but the school curriculum is the curriculum of the government. If possible, it should be equalized, such as private schools fully using their school policies including the exam, public schools fully using government policies including the exam.”

(INT/TH6-SL-T3-PR-041)

This comment illustrates a layered bureaucracy that further complicates private schools' curriculum delivery. Although the national “Merdeka” curriculum encourages contextual and differentiated learning, these ideals are undermined when schools cannot implement their own assessments. As Teacher 3 explains, the foundation acts as an intermediary, which may introduce additional discrepancies between what is taught and what is tested. This aligns with Aydemir's (2013) critique of centralized education systems where policy ideals are not always supported by implementation practices, particularly in private contexts.

Furthermore, Teacher 3's proposal to “equalize” policy applications between private and public schools suggests a need for clear policy delineation. As long as private schools are subject to state and foundation-level mandates, they remain constrained in innovating curricula or assessment models that would better support cultural integration. This echoes Ariawan's (2020) emphasis on structural autonomy as key to achieving meaningful educational reform.

Teacher 4 echoed similar sentiments and emphasized the contradiction in the ministry's expectations:

“As our school also experienced the imbalance or difficulty of balancing between the government's standardized test and our institution's curriculum, maybe it can be mediated to the ministry so that they can make exam questions that are specific to their own curriculum for the international school curriculum itself. because actually in the current curriculum or the merdeka curriculum (government curriculum) they are aggressively promoting differentiating. Training to teachers so that teachers make their own questions according to the abilities and levels of students, so the ministry tells teachers to make several levels of questions in one exam. Questions for upper, middle, lower or somewhat less students who need help or are non-academic talents. If the ministry asks teachers to be like that, the ministry should also be able to give the same thing to schools with different needs.”

(INT/TH6-SL-T4-PR-030)

Teacher 4's insight points to a mismatch between policy rhetoric and actual institutional flexibility. While the “Merdeka Curriculum” encourages teachers to tailor instruction and assessments to student needs, institutional policies often do not allow the same adaptability for school-wide assessments. This contradiction is particularly problematic for international schools, which already operate with different curricular frameworks. According to Aydemir (2013), policy coherence is essential if educational innovation is to take root, especially in multilingual, multicultural settings.

By highlighting this policy disconnect, Teacher 4 calls for reciprocal support from the ministry. If teachers are expected to differentiate at the classroom level, then ministries should also accommodate institutional differentiation. This suggestion aligns with Ariawan's (2020) recommendation that systemic flexibility and recognition of contextual needs are critical for building global competencies through education.

Teacher 5 discussed a different yet related limitation, focusing on student proficiency gaps in writing:

“My kids like speaking the most and dislike writing the least. They like it when they are told to make a presentation because they like to talk. This is also a task for language teachers. Because

when writing, as we have learned at school, the written language and spoken language are different. If my students are given the task of writing an essay, they use the spoken language, which is not good. because what they are after is more conversational than how they can communicate using English correctly and appropriately. so the coherence of cohesion is less, because what they use in essays is spoken English.”

(INT/TH6-SL-T5-PR-030)

This quote introduces a pedagogical concern that arises from the prioritization of speaking activities which are often emphasized in private school cultural programs, at the expense of structured writing instruction. While students may become confident speakers due to oral presentations, their writing skills may suffer when they fail to recognize the formal conventions required in written discourse. This issue reflects Ariawan's (2020) argument that an overemphasis on communicative fluency, without balanced literacy development, can lead to fragmented competencies.

Moreover, this finding shows that resource-rich environments do not automatically guarantee balanced language acquisition. As Aydemir (2013) stresses, skill development must be deliberately scaffolded across modalities—speaking, writing, listening, and reading. Cultural activities must therefore be integrated with clear instructional goals that address both spoken and written registers to avoid such skill gaps.

Public schools teachers also note limitations that highlight mostly on the limited class hours or the lack of facility provided by the school. Starting with Teacher 6 who addresses both the creative flexibility and the practical barriers to using digital media in the classroom:

“In the Merdeka curriculum, teachers are really given freedom in teaching. So teachers really have to think creatively to find ideas so that children are really engaged. Well, there I use films to teach and the children are indeed more interested. I tell them to conclude from the results of the conversation in the film, and I ask for the results at the end. I often use Quizizz or online game quizzes for them. But it turns out that some children don't have cell phones, don't have quotas, so there are no facilities, it's still lacking to integrate ICT in the classroom.”

(INT/TH6-SL-T6-PU-005)

Teacher 6's response demonstrates the paradox of pedagogical autonomy in under-resourced contexts. The "Merdeka" curriculum promotes teacher creativity and differentiated instruction, allowing English teachers to use engaging, culturally rich media such as films and interactive quizzes. However, the lack of infrastructure such as devices and internet access limits the extent to which such strategies can be implemented equitably. Students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are disproportionately affected, as they cannot access or participate in ICT-based learning activities, thus widening the educational gap.

These observations align with Aydemir's (2013) findings, which highlight the role of socioeconomic factors in shaping students' access to quality education. While private schools often benefit from institutional investments in technology and media, public schools must navigate significant barriers to digital integration. Ariawan (2020) similarly notes that despite progressive curriculum mandates, material conditions in many Indonesian public schools lag behind, creating a mismatch between curriculum vision and classroom reality. Consequently, cultural integration through digital platforms as an effective and engaging strategy is inconsistently applied and often inaccessible to those who might benefit most.

Teacher 7 provided insight into how English is institutionally marginalized in public schools:

"English is not a main subject in the Indonesian curriculum, it is still local content. So it seems less important compared to other subjects. At first, the students had difficulty learning English because they had too few class hours. However, I think English is very important. I realized that at the beginning, then after greeting and praying, I started to ask the children to have a brainstorming chat using English, and because of repetition, their English became more fluent over time."

(INT/TH6-SL-T7-PU-020)

This quote highlights the structural undervaluation of English in public schools. Since it is still treated as a "local content" subject rather than a core discipline, English receives fewer instructional hours and is often deprioritized in the broader academic agenda. Teacher 7's improvisation, using class opening routines for English practice, demonstrates resilience and

pedagogical resourcefulness. By embedding English use in routine tasks, the teacher fosters natural exposure and communicative fluency despite institutional limitations.

However, as Ariawan (2020) emphasizes, such individual efforts, while admirable, are not a substitute for systemic reform. When English is not institutionalized as a priority subject, opportunities for cultural integration become incidental rather than embedded. Aydemir (2013) also notes that language learning outcomes are significantly influenced by institutional emphasis and time allocation. Therefore, without policy changes that elevate the status of English and provide dedicated time for its instruction, cultural content will continue to be marginalized in public school settings.

Teacher 8 addressed the limitations in instructional materials:

“If the curriculum does focus on productive skills such as speaking and writing, but because the activities in the book are less engaging, the teachers themselves have to provide the materials or learning media, and the school doesn't provide that either.”

(INT/TH6-SL-T8-PU-013)

This insight reveals how resource inadequacy affects both language skill development and cultural enrichment. While the curriculum emphasizes productive skills, such as speaking and writing, the prescribed textbooks and materials often lack the creativity and cultural relevance needed to engage students. As a result, teachers must create supplementary resources themselves, an additional burden in already under-supported environments. Without institutional provision of high-quality, culturally rich materials, even motivated teachers face significant constraints.

Aydemir (2013) discusses how disparities in instructional resources directly impact students' learning experiences, particularly in the public sector. Similarly, Ariawan (2020) stresses that cultural competence in language education requires exposure to diverse media—authentic texts, audiovisual content, and interactive activities—that cannot be delivered through outdated or uninspiring textbooks alone. In contexts where schools fail to invest in such materials, teachers are left to fill the gap with their own limited means, perpetuating inconsistency and inequity in the delivery of cultural content.

Teacher 9 described the pressures of time constraints and curriculum pacing:

“Yes, for the material, sometimes it's not finished in a day. Sometimes it's already time for the exam but the material hasn't been finished so I just speed up. And because they are like being chased, because the material must be finished in a limited time so the understanding of the students is lacking. Because they are still learning basic English but are told to chase the material so the output is not optimal.”

(INT/TH6-SL-T9-PU-024)

This comment highlights the significant challenge in public schools of rushed teaching due to rigid timetables. Teacher 9's description of students “being chased” by the material underscores how curriculum pacing demands often prioritize coverage over comprehension. This situation results in superficial learning, especially detrimental in foreign language education where foundational skills require time and repetition. Such conditions hinder not only linguistic development but also the integration of cultural content, which requires contextual exploration and reflective engagement, both of which are nearly impossible under time pressure.

Aydemir (2013) observed that systemic limitations, including strict timelines and large class sizes, disproportionately affect public schools and reduce the opportunities for quality instruction. Likewise, Ariawan (2020) argues that while pedagogical innovation is encouraged through curricular reforms like “Merdeka,” these innovations are stifled when teachers are overburdened with unrealistic coverage expectations. This disconnect between curriculum policy and school reality is especially damaging for EFL teachers trying to incorporate intercultural elements, which demand more than mechanical delivery of linguistic structures.

Similarly, Teacher 10 underscored the issue of extremely limited instructional time:

“In class because time is very limited and you have to teach a lot of material so you really have to rush, only 45 minutes every week is given for English. So it's really difficult for the teachers to teach and for the students to learn.”

(INT/TH6-SL-T10-PU-044)

This statement starkly illustrates the time poverty faced by English teachers in public schools. With only 45 minutes per week allocated for English instruction, teachers must compress lessons, reduce interaction, and prioritize exam content over communicative or cultural objectives. Such restricted schedules not only hinder meaningful language acquisition but also leave no room for integrating cultural dimensions, which typically require extended engagement and critical discussion.

These findings align closely with Aydemir's (2013) argument that instructional time is a core structural determinant of educational quality. Likewise, Ariawan (2020) emphasizes that without sufficient time allocation, even the most progressive curricula cannot be implemented effectively. When English is reduced to a weekly formality, the opportunity to nurture intercultural competence through language learning is significantly diminished, reinforcing systemic inequality between public and private educational sectors.

4.3.6.2 Public vs Private School Advantages

Teacher 1 highlighted a school-wide immersion initiative:

“We have an English day program every Wednesday, they are required to have full English from morning to evening and all subjects.”

(INT/TH6-SA-T1-PR-034)

This English Day initiative exemplifies a structural effort to simulate language immersion, which research has shown to be highly effective in both language acquisition and cultural awareness. The use of English across subjects helps students internalize the language in multiple contexts. Furthermore, it provides daily exposure to the kind of functional, content-integrated English use that is critical to developing intercultural competence. By making English a school-wide communicative norm, students are not only learning linguistic forms but are also engaging with language as a cultural and social practice.

Such immersive practices are rarely feasible in public school contexts, where rigid curricula and large class sizes impede flexible scheduling. Aydemir (2013) argues that immersion-type approaches, whether partial or full, are more easily adopted in socioeconomically advantaged

schools with administrative autonomy. Ariawan (2020) reinforces this view, noting that schools with greater resources and international outlooks often treat language learning as a gateway to global citizenship, thereby integrating it into the institutional ethos. Teacher 1's experience demonstrates how institutional planning can provide consistent exposure to cultural language use, which is often absent in underfunded public settings.

Teacher 2 expanded on the advantages of international streams in private schools:

“In my school, there are 2 types of classes, international and national. The international class is taught in English every day, so the children don't have any difficulty following English. Sometimes I feel like as a teacher I have to catch up, I have to be on par with them or surpass them in terms of English skills.”

(INT/TH6-SA-T2-PR-010)

The existence of international classes within the same school structure reflects a dual-track educational model that caters to both national curriculum demands and global competencies. In these EMI environments, students benefit from daily, subject-integrated exposure to English, which enhances not only their language proficiency but also their cultural fluency. Interestingly, the teacher's comment about having to “catch up” illustrates the reverse linguistic pressure sometimes experienced by educators in high-performing environments, where students' exposure surpasses conventional expectations.

These conditions point to the role of institutional design in enabling or limiting educational outcomes. Aydemir (2013) highlights that EMI environments not only accelerate language acquisition but also normalize the presence of global culture within the classroom. Ariawan (2020) similarly emphasizes that structured bilingual or multilingual programs foster deep engagement with the cultural dimensions of language. The high level of student competence described here is likely a direct outcome of sustained institutional commitment to internationalization—something that is typically inaccessible in public schools due to infrastructural and policy constraints.

Teacher 3 shared a similar observation regarding curriculum differentiation:

“In my school there are 2 types of classes, they are called Cordoba class and Madinah class. Cordoba class is the full EMI (English as a Medium Instruction) class while Madinah class is the national class (Indonesian language).”

(INT/TH6-SA-T3-PR-006)

This division between EMI and national classes illustrates how private schools cater to different educational needs and expectations, often in response to market demand from parents who seek globally oriented education for their children. The Cordoba class, operating in full English, likely embeds not only linguistic but also cultural content across subjects. In contrast, the Madinah class adheres to the national curriculum, offering a more conventional model. This flexible structuring allows for educational personalization that supports both national identity and international competence.

According to Ariawan (2020), such curricular differentiation is often a strategic response to parental expectations and institutional branding, with EMI programs marketed as pathways to global readiness. Aydemir (2013) notes that these programs are particularly effective when paired with culturally authentic materials and experiential learning—conditions more commonly met in private schools with the financial and human resources to implement them. This model reflects how institutional design in private settings facilitates the incorporation of target language culture as a core rather than supplementary component.

Teacher 4 described how the boarding school context intensifies language and cultural immersion:

“As this school is a boarding school, they also live in the school dormitory, so they are together 24 hours a day. So English is part of their life, because at school they are bilingual and mostly English, so of course in the dormitory they use English in their daily lives. Sometimes they are also studying Javanese books, or what is called a Yellow book (traditional set of Islamic texts used by the educational curriculum of the Islamic seminary in Indonesia). The writing of the book is Arabic, the description is in Javanese (one of the regional languages) then we explain or teach them using English, so three languages at the same time.”

(INT/TH6-SA-T4-PR-024)

The boarding school environment described here creates a linguistically rich ecosystem in which English is not limited to formal instruction but permeates students' daily interactions. The multilingual setting which integrates English, Arabic, Javanese, and Indonesian offers a uniquely layered cultural experience. This dynamic fosters not only multilingual proficiency but also intercultural negotiation skills, as students learn to move between languages and cultural frames. Importantly, the use of English to explain traditional texts introduces students to the idea that global and local knowledge systems can coexist, reinforcing pluralistic cultural identities.

This type of intensive, holistic immersion aligns with Aydemir's (2013) observation that language learning thrives in social environments that support constant and contextual use. Ariawan (2020) adds that when cultural learning is woven into daily routines, it leads to deeper internalization and personal meaning-making. The interplay of global (English), religious (Arabic), and regional (Javanese) elements in this school reflects an integrative model of education that is rarely achievable in public schools, where time, policy, and infrastructure are limiting factors.

Lastly, Teacher 5 described access to specialized programs and international partnerships:

"We have ESP classes for 12 grades and we also have the TOEFL class. And apparently we have a sister school in Australia, usually we have a student exchange program every year and it rotates. For example, this year they send students to study here for one semester, then next year it's our turn to send students there to study for one semester."

(INT/TH6-SA-T5-PR-075)

Teacher 5's account of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and TOEFL preparation, combined with active international exchange programs, highlights a high degree of institutional support for globally oriented language learning. These initiatives not only prepare students for academic and professional contexts but also expose them to cultural nuances through firsthand experience. The sister-school arrangement in Australia offers students direct immersion in English-speaking environments, a learning opportunity that significantly enhances both linguistic competence and intercultural sensitivity.

According to Ariawan (2020), such global partnerships are emblematic of elite private schools that view international collaboration as part of their mission. Aydemir (2013) notes that exchange

programs are a powerful means of cultivating global citizenship, especially when accompanied by structured reflection and academic integration. These experiences, which are rare in public schools due to funding and bureaucratic barriers, demonstrate how institutional wealth translates into broader cultural exposure and learning depth. In this context, language learning becomes a vehicle for navigating real-world cultural interactions, moving far beyond textbook English.

The findings under Theme 6 reveal significant disparities between public and private schools in terms of institutional support and structural challenges for integrating culture into English language teaching. Public school teachers reported a range of limitations including minimal instructional time, large class sizes, and the absence of adequate funding for cultural resources such as books, music, and films. These constraints often led to reliance on freely available, yet pedagogically inconsistent, digital materials. Teachers also noted that English, being treated as a non-core subject, receives less emphasis compared to other subjects. Consequently, cultural integration tends to be superficial, rushed, and disconnected from students' broader learning experiences. In contrast, private school teachers reported a more enabling environment that actively supports cultural integration. Structured programs such as English-only zones, EMI tracks, boarding school immersion, and international exchange initiatives were seen as key drivers of student engagement and intercultural competence. These schools were also characterized by smaller class sizes, flexible curricula, and strong institutional investment in language education, often in response to parental expectations and market-driven educational branding. These findings reinforce the arguments of Aydemir (2013) and Ariawan (2020), who highlight how educational inequities are often shaped by broader socioeconomic conditions that affect access to global competencies and quality instruction. Collectively, the data suggest that institutional infrastructure and resource availability are not just background conditions but pivotal determinants in how, and to what extent, English teachers can meaningfully integrate target language culture in their classrooms.

While private schools generally demonstrated a more resource-rich environment such as offering structured immersion programs, English-only zones, ESP and TOEFL classes, and even international exchange opportunities, they were not without challenges. A key institutional constraint faced by private schools lies in reconciling their internally designed curricula with the national standards mandated by the Ministry of Education. Teachers expressed difficulties in

managing the disconnect between international or institution-specific materials and the content required for school examinations or evaluation. This misalignment often results in a compressed curriculum toward the end of the academic cycle, where teachers must "catch up" on topics not previously covered. Additionally, although private schools have more time and freedom to emphasize productive skills like speaking and presentation, this sometimes comes at the expense of formal writing development. As noted by several teachers, students often use spoken English patterns in writing tasks, leading to poor cohesion, coherence, and academic tone. These findings underscore the complexity of teaching English in a system where pedagogical aspirations and bureaucratic standards are often at odds.

In summary, this theme illustrates that while private schools are structurally better positioned to integrate cultural content into English language teaching, they are not exempt from systemic constraints, particularly those related to curriculum alignment and skill balance. Conversely, public schools face more fundamental limitations related to time, resources, and institutional prioritization. The findings reinforce the need for policy-level reforms that address not only funding and infrastructure gaps in public education, but also provide curricular flexibility and coherent assessment frameworks for private institutions. Only then can equitable and culturally rich English language instruction be realized across school types in Indonesia.

4.4 Discussion

The purpose of this study is to explore the effects of integrating target culture on English language teaching in Indonesia's educational settings, especially in public and private schools. This study also attempts to investigate teacher perceptions towards integrating target culture in their teaching, as well as students' attitudes or motivation in learning English. In addition, this study explores the benefits and challenges of integrating target culture in the context of English language teaching in Indonesia, and what strategies are undertaken to address these issues.

This discussion section interprets the major findings in light of existing literature and addresses each research question through a detailed thematic analysis. The discussion draws comparisons between current findings and the literature reviewed earlier, highlighting areas of alignment or deviation. Each theme discussed in the findings is revisited here to deepen the

understanding of how they contribute to answering the research questions and to reflect on their theoretical and practical implications.

The Most Significant Finding: The Inseparability of Language and Culture

The most prominent and consistently discussed finding in this study is Theme 1 which is ‘Language-Culture Correlation’. It shows a perceived inseparability of language and culture in English language teaching. Teachers across both public and private school contexts agreed that teaching English cannot be limited to linguistic aspects such as grammar or vocabulary; rather, it must also involve the cultural dimensions of the language. Participants frequently referred to idiomatic expressions, cultural events, holidays, and sociolinguistic conventions as integral components of language instruction. Without culture, the meaning behind words, idioms, expressions, and even communication styles can be lost.

This finding is supported by Gao (2006), who argues that language and culture are symbiotic and should not be treated in isolation. Similarly, Byram (1997) emphasizes that cultural knowledge is essential to the development of intercultural communicative competence. Mohamed and Farahani (2023) further assert that teaching a language without its associated culture results in an incomplete learning experience. Teachers shared various examples of how they tried to incorporate culture into their lessons. One teacher mentioned introducing an English idiom each morning to familiarize students with everyday expressions used by native speakers. Others mentioned using cultural events, international holidays, and cross-cultural roleplay as part of their instruction. These practices helped students not only develop linguistic accuracy but also better understand the social and cultural appropriateness of using the language.

Given the frequency and depth with which this theme was addressed, it can be considered the most significant finding of the study. Since this theme was mentioned by nearly all teachers and was often supported with detailed examples, it forms the foundation for many of the other themes that followed. It sets the tone for how culture is perceived and taught and becomes the starting point for discussions on resources, materials, institutional support, and teacher preparation. In addition, it forms the foundation for understanding teachers’ beliefs, practices, and challenges in integrating cultural content within the EFL classroom in Indonesia.

A secondary but noteworthy finding relates to the role of culture in supporting language skill development (Theme 5). Although only two teachers mentioned this explicitly, they noted that integrating cultural materials improved students' speaking fluency and helped them use language more naturally. For example, one teacher described how students became comfortable using idiomatic expressions in authentic contexts after learning about the associated cultural background. This activity encouraged students to use language in context and made the learning process more meaningful.

While this subtheme was not widely discussed, it aligns with previous research suggesting that culturally rich materials foster communicative competence (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993). Despite its limited mention, it still holds value as it adds nuance to how culture supports language development beyond theoretical awareness. It shows that cultural integration is not just about raising awareness but can also be used as a strategy to improve students' fluency and communicative competence. Incorporating culture into classroom activities can encourage language learners to engage more meaningfully with the content, which in turn supports skill development. However, because only a small number of participants mentioned this connection directly, it is categorized as moderately significant.

At the beginning of the study, it was anticipated that teachers from different school types would exhibit markedly distinct approaches to cultural integration, particularly that private school teachers, with access to international programs, would rely more extensively on target culture content. This expectation was based on the widespread promotion of English as an international language and the assumption that teachers would prioritize global cultural exposure in their instruction (McKay, 2002). However, the findings revealed a more balanced and context-sensitive practice across both public and private institutions. Teachers from various backgrounds demonstrated an intentional effort to blend local and target cultures, tailoring their approach based on student needs, curriculum demands, and classroom dynamics. This aligns with Kramsch's (1993) concept of the "third place," where learners navigate between their native and target cultures. Thus, the actual findings revealed a more nuanced understanding. Rather than simply adopting foreign cultural norms, teachers aimed to create a balance that respects local values while fostering intercultural awareness. This outcome deviated from the researcher's initial assumption and offered a deeper insight into the professional adaptability of English teachers in Indonesia. It

highlights that pedagogical decisions around culture are often less about institutional category and more about teacher agency and contextual awareness.

A Unique Finding: Parents' Intentional Efforts to Reinforce Local Culture

One unique and unexpected finding came from a private school teacher who explained that some parents of bilingual children deliberately chose to place their children in national classes rather than international ones. These parents, often from mixed-nationalities families or with children who had lived abroad, sought to ensure that their children remained connected to local cultural values, Indonesian or especially Javanese culture. This was surprising because it reverses the typical narrative where parents often push for more global exposure.

This finding stands out because it contrasts with the common assumption that parents prefer globalized educational pathways for their children (Lauder, 2008). Instead, it reveals a deliberate effort to use the school system as a means of reintroducing local identity, even within a globally-oriented institution. This finding shows that culture in ELT is not only about bringing in the target language culture but also about helping students stay rooted in their local culture. The decision to balance global exposure with local cultural grounding adds a new layer to the discussion of intercultural competence. It highlights the role of families and schools in negotiating the tensions between globalization and cultural preservation.

A New and Unexpected Insight: Misalignment Between Private School Curricula and Standardized Exams

One of the most surprising findings in this study was the problem of curriculum misalignment faced by private schools. Several teachers from international private schools reported that their schools used global curricula, such as the Cambridge framework or the International Middle Years Curriculum (IMYC). However, their students were still required to take standardized exams created by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, based on the Merdeka curriculum (the national curriculum). Other than that, even though the national exam has long since been eliminated and replaced by the school final exam, the evaluation continues to adhere to the standards set by the Ministry of Education, which does not align with the curriculum employed by certain private institutions.

This misalignment creates a major challenge. Students are taught using one set of standards and materials but are tested using a completely different one. As a result, they often struggle to perform well in these exams because the content and format are unfamiliar. Several schools have responded by offering crash courses or intensive programs at the end of the semester to help students catch up with the courses focused on the national curriculum. Despite these efforts, participants noted that this dual curriculum structure was burdensome and often ineffective.

This finding challenges the assumption that international schools operate independently of national regulations. It exposes a structural issue in Indonesia's education system, where even globally-oriented schools must still comply with national standards that may not align with their pedagogical approach. This insight adds to the discussion on curriculum policy and raises questions about the fairness and feasibility of standardized assessments for students from diverse educational backgrounds.

4.4.1 Addressing Research Questions

Research Question 1: What are the effects of integrating target culture on English language teaching in Indonesia's educational settings?

The integration of culture into English language teaching has been shown to significantly enhance learners' communicative competence, as reflected in Theme 1. Teachers across both public and private schools recognized that culture is an inherent part of language. For instance, they noted that idiomatic expressions, greetings, and contextual appropriateness cannot be fully understood without a grasp of cultural references. These findings align closely with recent research. Lee et al. (2023) demonstrated that embedding intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in an online EFL curriculum significantly improved adolescent learners' motivation, language proficiency, and cultural awareness. Similarly, Liao et al. (2023) showed that culturally responsive teaching in oral English contexts enhances learners' openness, intercultural awareness, and critical meaning-making abilities. Moreover, Agustina and Kencana (2023) found that including cultural content such as traditions, literature, and arts in English classrooms boosts students' intercultural competence and supports effective cross-cultural communication. In the current study, teachers who included culture in their instruction observed improvements in students' linguistic awareness and cross-cultural understanding.

Further, Theme 5 revealed that students showed increased engagement and motivation when learning through culturally relevant materials and experiences. Activities such as international day celebrations, film screenings, and idiomatic expressions created a more meaningful learning environment. This supports the findings of Mashudi et al. (2022) and Doghonadze (2011), who reported that culturally rich content can trigger intrinsic motivation and foster more sustained engagement with the language. More recent research echoes these results. Kong et al. (2022) found that culturally responsive EFL teaching in rural China enhanced student engagement through emotionally and socially meaningful classroom interactions. Similarly, Rizvic et al. (2019) showed that integrating digital storytelling of cultural heritage led to deeper student involvement and connection with the learning materials. Furthermore, Çakır (2022) found that incorporating movies and TV series into English language instruction significantly enhanced pre-service teachers' intercultural communicative competence. His study showed that these media, when used intentionally to highlight cultural expressions such as idioms, proverbs, and superstitions, helped learners engage with the language more critically and reflectively. Participants reported that exposure to authentic cultural content through visual media not only made learning more enjoyable but also contributed to better retention of expressions and a deeper understanding of the target culture. Exposure to real-life language use and global cultural practices thus helps students develop not only vocabulary and grammar, but also intercultural communication skills, making them more prepared for global communication.

The linkage between motivation and language skill development was particularly prominent in private school settings, where resources and immersion opportunities were more readily available. While public school students often demonstrated curiosity, their access to these resources was more limited. Nonetheless, even basic cultural content like music or storytelling yielded noticeable benefits in comprehension and retention. Overall, these findings underscore the positive effects of culture integration on both motivation and language acquisition. In relation to Research Question 1, the integration of target culture enhances student engagement and linguistic competence, providing strong evidence of its impact in both public and private educational settings.

While the benefits of cultural integration are evident, the extent to which these benefits can be realized is highly dependent on contextual factors, particularly resource availability. Theme 6

highlighted stark differences between public and private schools in terms of their ability to support cultural integration. Public schools, often constrained by limited funding and rigid curriculums, struggled to access quality cultural materials. Teachers relied on free, yet inconsistent, digital content and had limited instructional time to delve into cultural topics. These constraints reflect the findings of Aydemir (2013) and Ariawan (2020), who argued that socioeconomic disparities directly influence access to global competencies, including cultural literacy.

Private schools, on the other hand, had greater curricular flexibility and funding, enabling them to implement structured immersion programs, organize international events, and maintain English-only zones. These institutions often cater to higher-income families, whose expectations drive investment in cultural and linguistic enrichment. However, private schools also faced challenges, particularly in reconciling their institution-specific curricula with the standards set by the Ministry of Education. This tension complicated efforts to align culturally rich teaching with standardized assessments, sometimes leading to student weaknesses in academic writing despite strong oral communication skills. These nuances illustrate that cultural integration, while beneficial, must be supported by coherent policy and assessment frameworks to be fully effective.

In summary, Theme 6 provides critical insight into how equity and resource disparities shape the effectiveness of cultural integration in English teaching. The findings directly address Research Question 1 by demonstrating that the impact of cultural integration varies significantly based on institutional context, with private schools enjoying more advantages but still facing curricular challenges.

Research Question 2: What are the benefits and the challenges of teaching culture in the context of English language teaching?

The benefits of integrating culture in language education extend beyond linguistic competence to include socioemotional and cognitive gains. Theme 2 revealed that cultural content fosters empathy, global awareness, and an appreciation of diversity. Teachers reported that students who were exposed to foreign customs, values, and lifestyles developed a more open mindset and were better equipped to navigate multicultural settings. This supports the conclusions of Sholihah et al. (2024) and Hidayati et al. (2017), who emphasized that cultural integration in

language classrooms enhances students' global readiness and promotes positive intercultural attitudes.

However, these benefits are often accompanied by significant challenges. Teachers noted that students sometimes experienced being overwhelmed or alienated by unfamiliar cultural references in the target language. Moreover, teachers themselves often lacked the training or confidence to address sensitive cultural topics effectively. Public school teachers, in particular, struggled to balance cultural enrichment with syllabus coverage and exam preparation. These difficulties highlight a persistent gap in teacher education and institutional support, which must be addressed to ensure the successful integration of culture in English language teaching.

Despite these barriers, many teachers implemented creative strategies to overcome limitations, such as using local analogies, incorporating culturally adapted materials, and fostering student-led cultural projects. These practices underscore the importance of teacher agency and contextual adaptability in delivering culturally responsive instruction. In conclusion, the findings for Theme 2 align with Research Question 2 by illustrating both the substantial benefits and inherent challenges of cultural integration, and by emphasizing the need for better teacher preparation and systemic support.

Theme 6 again plays a critical role in addressing the second research question by highlighting how resource disparities influence the realization of both benefits and challenges in cultural integration. In well-funded private schools, access to diverse resources enabled teachers to create immersive cultural experiences, such as international exchanges or ESP classes, that enhanced both language skills and intercultural competence. These advantages aligned with the expected benefits outlined in existing literature and allowed for the full spectrum of cultural learning outcomes to emerge.

In contrast, public school teachers faced systemic barriers that limited their ability to fully implement cultural integration. Without adequate materials or institutional support, even the most motivated teachers struggled to bring cultural content into their classrooms. The lack of access to culturally rich resources often meant that students received a more superficial or inconsistent exposure to the target culture, thereby diluting the potential benefits and exacerbating existing educational inequalities. These issues reinforce Aydemir's (2013) and Ariawan's (2020) argument

that the realization of global competencies is deeply intertwined with socioeconomic and institutional structures.

Taken together, the findings related to Theme 6 confirm that while cultural integration holds great promise, its success is highly contingent on context-specific factors. As such, Research Question 2 is addressed through a nuanced understanding of how resource availability and institutional priorities mediate both the advantages and obstacles of teaching culture in the Indonesian ELT context.

Research Question 3: How do public and private schools in Indonesia differ in integrating target culture into English teaching?

Theme 3 exposed key differences in the flexibility and structure of school curricula between public and private institutions. Private schools often adopted international curricula or had the autonomy to integrate cultural topics through school-designed materials and immersion programs. Teachers in these settings enjoyed greater freedom to explore culturally rich content and adapt their instruction to student interests. Zahara & Rusmawaty (2022) and Ariawan (2020) similarly noted that private schools, particularly those with international affiliations, tend to have more innovative and globally oriented curricula.

However, this flexibility was not without its limitations. Many private schools still had to adhere to government standardized exam requirements, leading to mismatches between their progressive teaching practices and standardized assessments. This disconnect often forced teachers to rush through unrelated government-mandated content, which diluted the effectiveness of their own school's curriculum. Despite these tensions, private schools maintained a relative advantage in terms of exposure to target culture due to better resources, smaller class sizes, and institutional support. Moreover, this study adds nuance to the conclusions of Aydemir (2013) and Ariawan (2020) by showing that while socioeconomic factors influence access to global competencies, even resource-rich institutions face challenges such as curriculum misalignment and pedagogical inconsistencies. For example, private school students who benefit from immersion programs may still lack proficiency in academic writing due to the overemphasis on spoken English. This complements rather than contradicts existing literature, suggesting that cultural integration must be aligned not only with language proficiency goals but also with broader academic expectations.

The inclusion of boarding school contexts and multilingual classroom practices (e.g., Javanese-Arabic-English) further expands the discourse on cultural hybridity in Indonesian classrooms, a dimension less explored in prior research.

In contrast, public schools operated under more rigid curricular structures with limited room for cultural adaptation. Teachers were often bound by strict timelines, making it difficult to incorporate supplementary cultural materials. Yet, some public school teachers demonstrated resourcefulness by integrating cultural elements through creative methods such as music, films, or contextual discussions. Overall, Theme 3 highlights how institutional autonomy and curriculum design influence the depth and breadth of cultural integration. These differences directly respond to Research Question 3 by illustrating how the institutional context dictates the nature and extent of cultural content in English teaching.

Theme 4 further illuminates the divergence between public and private schools by examining teacher preparedness and attitudes. Teachers in private schools often expressed confidence and enthusiasm in incorporating cultural content, citing professional development opportunities, international exposure, and peer collaboration as enablers. They were generally more familiar with Western norms and practices, and more willing to experiment with immersive techniques. This finding reflects Bat-Yondon (2021) and Byrd (2011), who found that well-prepared teachers are more likely to embrace and effectively teach cultural components.

In public schools, however, teachers frequently mentioned challenges such as lack of training, limited cultural knowledge, and uncertainty about appropriate teaching methods. This gap in preparedness hindered their ability to fully engage students with cultural topics. Nevertheless, many public school teachers demonstrated a positive attitude and willingness to learn, suggesting that with appropriate support, they could significantly enhance their cultural teaching practices. These findings emphasize the role of professional development and institutional investment in shaping teacher efficacy.

In conclusion, Theme 4 offers critical insights into the human factor behind cultural integration which is teacher preparedness and attitudes. When combined with the institutional analysis in Theme 3, it becomes evident that both systemic and individual capacities must be strengthened to achieve equitable and effective cultural integration across all schools. These

themes directly address Research Question 3 by clarifying the contextual differences in how target culture is integrated within public and private English classrooms in Indonesia.

4.4.2 A Comparison between Public and Private Schools in Integrating Culture in ELT

A closer examination of the data reveals several noteworthy differences between public and private school contexts in relation to cultural integration in English language teaching. These variations demonstrate how curricular policy, institutional environment, and resource availability affect how culture is taught and perceived in Indonesian ELT classrooms.

One of the most apparent contrasts lies in the flexibility and autonomy teachers have in incorporating cultural elements into their teaching. Teachers in private schools reported having greater freedom to adapt their materials and implement creative, culturally rich activities. Many private school teachers described incorporating international holidays, cultural simulations, and authentic media into their lessons. This flexibility is often supported by the use of international curricula (Cambridge or IMYC) or annual programs/events provided by the institution, which explicitly encourage cultural awareness and global competencies.

In contrast, public school teachers expressed more limitations in integrating culture due to the structure and content of government-issued textbooks. The national curriculum, while undergoing reform through the Merdeka Curriculum, still tends to emphasize standardized outcomes and linguistic skills over cultural content. As a result, public school teachers often rely only on textbooks and frequently have to actively seek out and facilitate their own learning resources, such as learning materials from the internet or learning media that they have created themselves. In contrast to teachers in private schools who are equipped with a full toolkit that includes a variety of student activities as well as sufficient learning materials and media.

Another difference is the availability of professional development and institutional support. Private school teachers frequently mentioned attending training sessions, workshops, or collaborating with native speakers, which contributed to their confidence in teaching cultural topics. Public school teachers, on the other hand, noted a lack of structured professional development focused on culture, and one teacher was the only participant to reference MGMP as a source of pedagogical support.

A further distinction was revealed through a unique challenge faced specifically by private schools, which is the misalignment between global curricula and the standardized exams. Teachers from private schools expressed concern that their students, who are taught using international frameworks, are still required to take standardized exams based on the national curriculum and national standard. This creates a tension between the content taught and the content assessed. To address this, several schools offer supplemental programs to help students bridge the gap before the exams. This issue was not mentioned in public school contexts, where the curriculum and assessments are aligned by default.

Another intriguing distinction lies in the perspective on balancing local and target culture. While teachers in both settings acknowledged the need to contextualize cultural content with local relevance, private school teachers often reported dealing with multicultural or internationally exposed students, leading them to integrate local culture more intentionally with the aim of educating their students to stay rooted. Public school teachers, by contrast, were more focused on using local context to aid student comprehension and motivation, rather than responding to multicultural backgrounds.

These differences suggest that the institutional context significantly shapes how English teachers in Indonesia approach culture in the classroom. While private schools tend to have greater curricular freedom and access to intercultural resources, they also face unique challenges related to assessment standards. Public schools operate within a more structured and uniform system, which can limit flexibility but also ensures alignment with national education goals. Understanding these distinctions is essential for tailoring policy, training, and curriculum development to the diverse realities of Indonesian ELT.

4.4.3 Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study highlight several pedagogical implications for English language teaching in Indonesia. First, the findings underscore the need for a more equitable distribution of resources across public and private institutions. Policymakers should prioritize funding for cultural materials, teacher training or professional development, and curriculum development in public schools to close the opportunity gap. Standardized curricula such as Merdeka Curriculum must also accommodate the inclusion of cultural components without overwhelming teachers or diluting

core competencies. This requires greater coordination between national education policies and institutional autonomy to ensure that both content and pedagogy are aligned with global competency goals.

For teacher training, the study highlights the urgent need for professional development programs that equip teachers with the knowledge, tools, and confidence to teach cultural content effectively. Such training should not only focus on cultural facts but also develop teachers' intercultural communicative competence and critical pedagogy. Training modules could include practical strategies for contextualizing cultural elements, managing cultural sensitivity, and integrating local-global comparisons to enhance relatability. Peer collaboration and international networking opportunities should also be encouraged to expose teachers to diverse perspectives and practices.

This discussion has interpreted the findings of the study in relation to the existing literature, highlighting how the integration of target culture in ELT contributes to learner motivation, intercultural competence, and communicative ability. However, these benefits are unequally distributed, with public schools constrained by systemic limitations and private schools challenged by curricular misalignment and skill imbalance. The study contributes to the understanding of how cultural integration functions in real classroom settings, providing nuanced insights into the socio-pedagogical realities of Indonesian ELT. By foregrounding both the opportunities and barriers of cultural integration, this research underscores the urgent need for inclusive policies, targeted teacher development, and equitable resource distribution to bridge the gap between aspiration and practice in English language teaching in Indonesia.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This study set out to explore the integration of target language culture within English Language Teaching in Indonesia, with a comparative focus on public and private school settings. The findings have highlighted that cultural elements are deeply embedded in the process of language acquisition. Cultural elements are beneficial to both teachers and students since they enhance not just language proficiency but also motivation, intercultural understanding, and successful communication. While the incorporation of culture in ELT is philosophically appreciated, its execution is determined by contextual and systemic elements, as seen by the six key themes that emerged, which ranged from the fundamental link between language and culture to institutional inequities and teacher readiness.

This study used a qualitative design, specifically thematic analysis, with data collected through semi-structured interviews involving ten English teachers from diverse regions in Indonesia. Five participants were from public schools and five from private or international schools. The study was guided by three research questions: (1) What are the effects of integrating target culture on English language teaching in Indonesia's educational settings? (2) What are the benefits and challenges of teaching culture in the context of English language teaching? and (3) How do public and private schools in Indonesia differ in integrating target culture into English teaching?

The data analysis resulted in the emergence of six key themes: (1) language–culture correlation, (2) sociocultural influences on learning, (3) institutional and curricular factors, (4) teacher preparedness and attitudes, (5) student outcomes and motivation, and (6) equity and resource disparities. These themes provided insight into the complex ways in which cultural knowledge interacts with language learning in Indonesian schools. The study emphasized the essential role that cultural integration plays in developing students' communicative competence, intercultural awareness, and motivation. It also revealed systemic challenges and contextual disparities that influence the success of cultural instruction in ELT classrooms.

The findings revealed that integrating culture into English language teaching is widely recognized by teachers as essential for developing communicative competence. Teachers consistently noted that students understand the use of English better when they are also exposed to the cultural practices, values, and worldviews of English-speaking societies. Through thematic analysis, it became evident that many teachers used cultural references such as idioms, global holidays, and social customs to improve students' engagement and comprehension. These efforts reflect a broader understanding among educators that language learning is not solely about vocabulary and grammar, but also about understanding the cultural norms and practices in which the language operates.

However, the study also revealed considerable variation in how cultural content is integrated across school types. Teachers in private schools often reported greater flexibility in their teaching approaches, more access to authentic materials, and institutional support that allowed them to explore intercultural themes in depth. In contrast, public school teachers, especially those in rural areas, cited challenges such as rigid curricula, limited access to resources, and time constraints that made cultural integration more difficult. This disparity draws attention to the need for more equitable resource distribution and curricular autonomy across school types. Additionally, the findings indicated that teachers' personal experiences, such as international exposure or participation in intercultural training, significantly shaped their ability and willingness to incorporate culture into their teaching. These findings highlight the importance of professional development and institutional support in enabling effective cultural instruction.

5.1 Implications of the Study

The study provides several implications for improving the integration of cultural content into English language instruction in Indonesia. First, there is a need to reconceptualize ELT curricula so that culture is treated not as an optional add-on, but as an integral component of language education. Curricula at the national and institutional levels should promote the development of both linguistic and intercultural competencies. Teachers should be given the autonomy to include cultural topics in their lessons, supported by clear guidelines and learning objectives that align with national education standards.

Furthermore, teacher education programs should prioritize the inclusion of intercultural competence and cultural literacy as core competencies. Teacher training must go beyond theoretical knowledge and offer practical strategies, such as using authentic materials, facilitating intercultural dialogue, and addressing cultural stereotypes. Schools must also ensure access to diverse cultural resources, such as realia, multimedia content, and literature from various English-speaking cultures. Institutional leaders and policymakers should be proactive in equipping teachers, especially in under-resourced public schools, with the tools and training necessary to implement culturally responsive teaching effectively. These changes would support a more equitable and contextually appropriate model of English instruction across different school settings in Indonesia.

5.2 Limitations of the Study

Although this study contributes important insights, it is necessary to acknowledge its limitations. One significant limitation lies in the selection of participants from public schools. All public school participants in this study were based in rural areas, which presented a potential imbalance when comparing them to the private school participants, most of whom were located in urban areas and affiliated with institutions that had greater access to global resources. This disparity may have resulted in an exaggerated contrast between public and private school contexts. Including public school teachers from major cities or top-ranking public institutions may have yielded a more balanced understanding of how cultural integration is practiced in public education settings.

Another limitation of this study was the lack of direct classroom observation. The findings relied exclusively on self-reported data from interviews, which, while insightful, may not fully capture the realities of classroom implementation. Without observational data, it is difficult to verify the extent to which reported practices align with actual teaching behaviors. Classroom observation would have added depth to the analysis and provided a richer understanding of how cultural content is taught in practice. Moreover, the study did not include student perspectives, which could have offered additional insight into how learners perceive and respond to cultural content in their language classrooms. Future studies should incorporate classroom-based

ethnographic methods or lesson analyses and explore student perspective to regulate findings and deepen understanding.

Building on the limitations mentioned, future studies should include a more diverse sample of participants, particularly from urban public schools or high-performing state schools. This would enable a more comprehensive comparison between school types and provide greater insight into how contextual factors influence cultural instruction. Future studies should also consider including both student and teacher perspectives to understand how cultural content is received, interpreted, and applied by learners, and to identify potential gaps between teaching practices and student experiences.

Additionally, incorporating classroom observation as a data collection method is highly recommended. Observational data would allow researchers to examine the dynamics of cultural instruction in real-time, offering a more nuanced and authentic picture of how cultural integration is enacted. Future studies may also explore the long-term effects of culturally rich instruction on students' language acquisition, motivation, and intercultural communicative competence. Comparative research across regions or educational levels could also provide valuable insights into how the integration of culture evolves across different stages of language education.

In conclusion, this study reinforces the significance of integrating target language culture into English language teaching as a means of enriching students' linguistic abilities, intercultural awareness, and communicative competence. While the integration of culture is widely supported in theory, its implementation varies substantially between public and private schools due to differences in curriculum design, teacher training, and access to resources. The study has revealed that without adequate institutional and professional support, particularly in public schools located in rural areas, efforts to incorporate culture into ELT may remain limited or superficial.

Furthermore, it is crucial for educational stakeholders in Indonesia to invest in culturally responsive pedagogy and reduce the disparity between school types. Teachers should be empowered through policy, training, and resources to make informed choices about how to integrate culture meaningfully into their lessons. By addressing structural inequalities and promoting inclusive practices, the Indonesian education system can move closer to providing all students with equitable and globally relevant language learning experiences. Ultimately, fostering

a deeper understanding of culture through language education not only enhances communication but also cultivates empathy, critical thinking, and intercultural respect among learners.



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Appendix 1

Interview Questions

1. What are your perceptions and ideas in being knowledgeable about “target culture” in teaching English as a foreign language learning/in EFL classes?
2. How do you perceive the role of culture in English language teaching in Indonesia?
3. How important is it to inform EFL students about the target culture?
4. How does integrating culture affect students' motivation in learning English?
5. What kind of activities/materials do you use in the class and what specific cultural elements should be integrated into English language teaching in Indonesia? (e.g. idioms, proverbs, etc)
6. What are the attitudes of students towards cultural integration in learning English?
7. How does the integration of culture impact the development of students' language skills? What skills do they perceive?
8. What resources are available for teachers to effectively integrate culture into their English language teaching? (schools’ curriculum, textbook) what resources do you provide?
9. What are the difficulties in teaching culture or the difficulties you may face/encounter in integrating a culturally loaded curriculum or syllabus?
10. What are your suggestions in integrating target language culture into teaching in the classroom?

Appendix 2

Ethics Approval

KARAR(ISSUE NUMBER): 25.04.2024/



T.C.
ANKARA SOSYAL BİLİMLER ÜNİVERSİTESİ REKTÖRLÜĞÜ
SOSYAL VE BEŞERİ BİLİMLER ARAŞTIRMALARI
VE
BİLİMSEL YAYIN ETİK KURULU
(SOCIAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY OF ANKARA
INSTITUTIONAL ETHICS COMMITTEE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND
HUMANITIES RESEARCH AND PUBLICATION)

ETİK ONAY BELGESİ
(CERTIFICATE OF ETHICS APPROVAL)

Araştırma Yöntemi (Research Method)	Mülakat
Araştırmanın Adı (Study Title)	Enhancing English Language Teaching in Indonesia: A Cultural Approach through Target Language Integration
Sorumlu Araştırmacının Adı Soyadı (Principal Researcher Name Surname)	SYIFANA ARUMAISSYA
Karar (Committee Decision)	UYGUN

e-imzalıdır

Prof. Dr. M. Hakan TÜRKÇAPAR
Başkan (Chair)

e-imzalıdır

Prof. Dr. Ejder OKUMUŞ
Üye(Member)

e-imzalıdır

Prof. Dr. Sutay YAVUZ
Üye(Member)

e-imzalıdır

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Emin BİLGE
Üye(Member)

e-imzalıdır

Prof. Dr. Aslı AKAY
Üye(Member)

e-imzalıdır

Prof. Dr. Mustafa ÇEVİK
Üye(Member)

e-imzalıdır

Prof. Dr. İsmail ÇAKIR
Üye(Member)

Belge Takip Adresi : <https://turkiye.gov.tr/ebd?ek=5451&eD=BSD48Z3L32&eS=113737>

Appendix 3

Informed Consent Form

RESEARCH VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION FORM

This study is a research study titled Enhancing English Language Teaching in Indonesia: A Cultural Approach through Target Language Integration. The study is carried out by SYIFANA ARUMAISSYA and its results. Light will be shed on the benefits and challenges of integrating target language culture in the context of English language teaching in Indonesia.

- Your participation in this study is on a voluntary basis.
- In line with the purpose of the study, data will be collected from you.
- You do not have to write your name or provide any information that will reveal your identity/the names of the participants in the research will be kept confidential.
- The data collected within the scope of the research will be used only for scientific purposes, will not be used for purposes other than the purpose of the research or in any other research, and if necessary, will not be shared with others without your (written) permission.
- You have the right to review the data collected from you if you wish.
- There will be no questions/requests that may cause discomfort to you during the data collection process(es). However, if you feel uncomfortable for any reason during your participation, you will be able to leave the study at any time. If you leave the study, the data collected from you will be removed from the study and destroyed.

Thank you for taking the time to read and evaluate the volunteer participation form. You can direct your questions about the study to ANKARA SOCIAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY English Language Education