# Cross-Cultural Awareness: EFL Learners' Barriers to Learning English

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**Abstract:** When one learns a certain language, he/she should also learn its culture. This is because languages and cultures are integrated. For example, to acquire meanings, language students need to understand the culture of the language they are learning. This study seeks to determine the challenges faced by English language learners in understanding Islamic beliefs and western cultures. This was a descriptive qualitative study that utilized semi-structured interviews to acquire data. Interviews were conducted with eight pupils from the Islamic boarding school Ar-Risalah in West Sumatra. The result of interviews showed that the majority of learners acknowledged that they experienced cross-cultural hurdles in English learning because of being culturally insensitive, misunderstanding of cultural contents in the language materials, and formal intervention regarding the textbook. Students are confused to differentiate cultures shared by Islamic values and Western cultures as those Islamic values are not vividly depicted in English textbooks. Therefore, students have difficulties understanding English. It is imperative that future research investigate this topic, since culture and language are inseparable, in which people learning a certain language are also required to learn its culture.

**Keywords:** english language materials, cross-culture awareness, Islamic values, western culture

## INTRODUCTION

The investigation begins with a focus on the teaching method at an Islamic boarding school in Indonesia. Once, an English instructor in Year 11 of an Islamic boarding school, for example, introduced a learning topic to a student who appeared to disagree with the subject matter. He appeared to claim that the classroom discussion topic was inappropriate. On that particular occasion, for example, classroom discussion focused on how to convey affection. In Islamic culture, it is uncommon for men and women to show love before marriage. This is because ways of expressing love are shown differently between Islamic principles and Western conceptions. According to Islamic belief, romantic relationships before marriage are unacceptable and hence appear immoral to students (Blackwood, 2007; Parker, 2014). This prompted us to investigate how EFL/ESL instruction aligns with the various ideals contained in Islamic education, particularly in the setting of Islamic boarding schools.

The Islamic boarding school is a system of Islamic education in Indonesia that requires students to reside in the institution's dorms. This form of education attempts to produce pupils who are religiously and academically minded (Busyairi, 2017). In this system, all students spend the entire day studying a variety of subjects, including general and Islamic studies (Nilan, 2009). Students are separated from school buildings and dormitory areas based on their gender. It is also possible for teachers to reside on school grounds; they are provided with a place to live and dine. The teachers are grouped into two disciplines namely Islamic studies and General and Science Education.

Indonesian Boarding School curricula are different from other educational institutions (Busyairi, 2017). The curricula of Islamic boarding schools are blended into two discourses: the Qur'an and Sunni Islam. Modern cultures require Islamic tradition and moral values as well as foreign language abilities (Nilan, 2019). Islamic boarding schools integrate their curriculum because they embrace and incorporate three distinct curricula: Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Religion Affairs), and Boarding Schools or Pesantren (Bin-Tahir, 2017). These three curricula are used all at once on a certain day, according to a varied schedule, by different teachers (Bin-Tahir, 2017). The leaders of *Pesantren* employ this integrated curriculum to follow and support the government-designed educational system and to adapt Islamic studies to the school curriculum.

For the integration of curriculum, many Muslim communities in Indonesia support this type of school. For them, integrating Islamic ideas into education is regarded to be the best approach to help future generations adapt to global and secular societies (Halik, 2016; Zuhdi, 2006). Muslims in Indonesia share the view that preserving Islamic cultures, values, and rules is of utmost important, but they reject Western ways of life. There has been a growth in the popularity of this type of school, whose reach has expanded. Most parents of all

socioeconomic backgrounds enroll their children in Islamic boarding schools. The school integrates the teaching of Islamic knowledge and world languages, such as Arabic and English, which contributes to its popularity.

However, integrating these two areas is not without impediments and difficulties. On the one hand, the Islamic principles outlined in Islamic teaching and implemented by the boarding school necessitate that students adhere strictly to Islamic regulations, norms, and cultural values (Davis & Robinson, 2006). In addition, students are directed to learn high technology and skills which are important in modern life. To improve their skills, students must study English more diligently than their peers in other institutions or public schools. However, the substance of English language resources extended beyond the language used to include western civilizations. In many instances, the differences between the two were greater than their similarities, generating false imagination and difficulty in the process of language acquisition.

English constitutes numerous disparities between ideal Muslims and Western civilizations. To mention a few, the common language usage and social and daily activities. First, Islamic standards guided students to respect their seniors by using "Pak, Bu, Kakak, Abang," before saying their names. However, people in the West are quite liberal in that they call their elders by their first names. Second, Muslims feel that they belong to the community, whereas Western culture fosters individualism. Muslims are required to appreciate and care for their family and community of origin. In contrast, westerners promote freedom to live in solitude and individualism. Moreover, in Western nations where the majority of people are Christians, Christmas is celebrated with joy and reverence. "Merry Christmas" and "Happy New Year" are customary greetings in the community. These ideals are frequently included in the majority of English textbooks in Indonesia. However, pupils in boarding institutions are aware that such behavior is inappropriate. Learners are prohibited from using these phrases, but they are taught to respect others who observe Christmas.

Despite considerable contrasts, Western and Islamic civilizations share characteristics and values that are compatible. Islamic boarding schools manage the process of teaching and learning with regularity. The leaders encourage the students to complete all activities on time. Many school activities and school buildings reflect the discipline-promoting value of sage advice. Teachers encourage students to avoid wasting time. They must attentively and successfully complete the activities outlined in the timetable. In the boarding school, it can be observed that the students walk quickly and execute other tasks quickly. The punishment would be administered to individuals who are tardy, particularly those who missed the prayer service. Although punctuality can also be found in Islamic texts, the references utilized to encourage English language learners in boarding schools are rooted in western culture.

In addition, one of the most notable distinctions between Islamic culture and Western cultural values relates to sexuality. According to Muslim theology, sex is the world's ultimate pleasure and therefore, it can only be done through legal marriage (Nilan, 2009; Richardson, 2000). Sexuality is regarded as a normal topic for eleventh-grade students. Boarding schools prohibit sexual activities at school and strongly discourage any behavior that could lead to students engaging in sexual activities (Dalimunte & Hutagalung, 2021; Mureithi, et al., 2021; Nilan, 2009). The students are not permitted to converse with the opposite gender within and outside of the school grounds, nor to develop romantic relationships between boys or girls. However, the English content depicts conversation and relationships amongst friends of mixed gender. The English resources used in the classroom are sourced from the government and are comparable to those used in public schools (in which there is no gender segregation). Both the language use and the culture of English are covered in this literature. Thus, this causes confusion among students, making it difficult for lecturers who are not fundamentally trained in Islamic studies to teach English. To grasp these challenges, the following research question serves as a guide: what are the cross-cultural barriers to English learning for learners? Studies on similar issues have been conducted by several scholars, such as Yilmaz and Özkan (2016) researching the need to develop intercultural awareness among language learners through textbooks; Özkan (2017) investigating non-native teachers' perception of the emerging themes in teaching materials; Durham (2018) conducting ethnographic research depicting a particular teacher's strategies in communicating cross-cultural boundaries with her students; Meihami and Rashidi (2020) exploring to what extent English teachers construct their cultural identity upon teaching English for a certain amount of time; and Lin and Zhang (2021) exploring the extent English education in China shapes Chinese students' intercultural communication in Australia. While all these previous studies believe that cultures in many instances shape language learners' attitudes, this current study explores barriers and challenges of Islamic boarding school students in compromising Western cultures illustrated in English textbooks.

## METHODS

In this study, qualitative research employing a phenomenology technique was utilized (Creswell & Creswell 2018). The focus of the research is on data investigations pertaining to the cultural hurdles faced by English language learners. This investigation was done for three months at boarding schools in Ar-Risalah. Kota

Tangah Padang, West Sumatra, Indonesia, is the location of one of the greatest boarding schools in West Sumatra. The students came from various places within and beyond West Sumatra. The subjects of the study were students enrolled in boarding schools who utilized a deliberate strategy. This study involved eight students in the second year of boarding school. They were chosen as the research participants because they had studied English for two semesters in a boarding school and had engaged with English-language materials in spoken and written form.

The data were gathered using a semi-structured interview in which research-related question items were developed based on three indicators (culturally insensitive, misunderstanding of cultural contents in the language materials, and formal intervention regarding the textbook) proposed by Kramsch (2019); Liu (2017); Sun (2017). We also asked individuals impromptu questions for further information. Eight students were interviewed, and data collection took two weeks. The interview questions are pre-designed and they were shifted following the course of the interview. Due to the COVID-19 difficulties, each interviewee will be asked questions online for 20 to 30 minutes. Due to the regulations of Large-Scale Social Distancing, it is highly improbable that interviewees will meet face-to-face. During interviews, the researcher collected notes and used phone records in video or voice records to document the conversation. All of the records were based on participant consent. We used the WhatsApp application to contact the students and solicit their participation in the study. Students responded to the interview questions in the manner that was most convenient for them. They could leave a voice or text message on WhatsApp. The interview results were then recorded and analyzed. The data is then evaluated using the theory of Taylor, Bogdan, and DeVault (2016), namely by gathering data through interviews, decreasing the data acquired to be picked based on the study data's applicability, presenting the data, and drawing conclusions. In this work, a previously obscure social scenario was uncovered by the application of theme analysis to existing domains.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study were organized through themes. These themes were generated from interviews with the participants.

### The Subject matters and time allocation

Multiple subjects are covered in both school and boarding programs at Ar-Risalah boarding school, according to information gleaned from interviews. Based on the 2013 curriculum, students spend only seven hours every day in school and four hours in a week for English instruction. Weekly English lesson is limited to four hours and forty-five minutes. This allotted schedule is usually spent preparing all of the materials outlined in the lesson plans. Students spend the remainder of their time in school and outside of school learning Islamic studies. They have more time to devote to Islamic studies, which strengthens their sense of belonging to the Islamic culture. In this case, it is difficult for the students to comprehend the English materials due to the cultural differences between the resources and their Islamic upbringing. In addition, teachers face the challenge of facilitating English instruction that meets the needs of all students.

To comprehend the nature of the interaction between English language instruction, teachers' difficulties, and students' dilemmas, as well as the contributing elements, the relevant literature is analyzed critically. We believe that there are some themes that need to be explored to comprehend the learner's dilemma as well as cross-cultural difficulties in English learning. First, it is necessary to comprehend the nature of language learning, the cultures tied to the materials, or their relationship to English teaching's customs and identity. Language and culture played a crucial role in defining individuals' identities. Language represents a culture and bears its worth (Liu, 2017; Sun, 2013). Not only does language play an important part in culture evolution (Wang, 2011), but it has also a symbol (Kramsch, 2019) and a tool for representing cultural worth in people's minds (Wang, 2011; Kramsch, 2019; Kuo & Lai, 2006). Kramsch (2019) and Markus and Kitayama (2003) emphasize that culture is connected to how individuals think, feel, and act in their daily lives. Identity is formed through how people portray their culture and significance (Woodward, 2020). Byram and Wagner (2018) and Risager (2007), on the other hand, contend that there are distinctions between language and culture concerning numerous identifiers of people's identities. He uses the choice of clothing as an illustration, noting that it can serve two purposes: expressing cultural identity and providing warmth (Byram & Wagner, 2018). He acknowledged that anyone who incorporates meanings in his or her culture and that language largely contributes to this phenomenon (Byram and Wagner, 2018). Thus, language and culture influence and are influenced by individuals' identities.

Without an understanding of cultural variations, communication cannot be effective (Sun, 2013). As people become more conscious of cross-cultural differences, they will enhance their intercultural communication skills. Bryam (2020) and Sharifian and Jamarani (2013) define intercultural communication as the capacity to converse with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Similarly, Leung et al. (2014), underline that intercultural competence relates to a person's ability to work well with individuals from different cultures. It can

be shown that cultural awareness and intercultural competence are the most important part of teaching a foreign language (Byram 2014; Sun, 2013).

In addition, foreign language instruction should include the ability to accept "otherness" among learners of another language (Hermessi, 2017). As cultural differences build intercultural communication skills, we begin to embrace the unfamiliar. Welsh (2014), proposes the term "polymorphic" culture to describe a society in which individuals must accept the otherness of others and eliminate the space between themselves and others. She adds further that individuals should view the strangeness of others as a part of themselves Welsh (2014). Additionally, cultural awareness enables individuals to study and acquire an appreciation of differences and similarities Broady (2004). Welsh (2014) suggests cosmopolitanism in embracing and fostering respect for an outsider. The purpose of teaching a foreign language is not just to teach language skills, but also to train students to recognize, comprehend, and accept people, no matter how unusual or different they may appear. However, classroom instruction has not considerably helped children comprehend cultural differences. According to the interview, students prefer to disregard cultural elements that they perceive to be distinct.

Second, the role of the teacher must also be thoroughly evaluated to comprehend its contribution to the situation. In addition, it is important to comprehend the concerns surrounding English in Indonesia, such as the aim of English study, the influence of western cultures, and the materials and textbooks employed. As the objective of teaching a foreign language is to impart communication skills related to intercultural competence, teachers must address cultural instruction (Sun, 2013). Byram (2014) claimed that the purpose of foreign language learning is to expose students to multiple cultures so that they can acquire various coping mechanisms for their experiences. Learners can acquire these skills through their language's intricate norms (Byram 1988). Also, while communication competence refers to the attainment of communicative aims using linguistics or non-linguistic means (Byram, 2014), an increasing number of English teachers understand the role of culture in foreign language instruction (Liu, 2017). Teachers have a vital role in fostering students' critical thinking as they investigate the culture (Welsh, 2014). Therefore, cultural education cannot be undervalued, and teachers' roles should be highlighted.

Teachers of foreign languages do not only have to have an appropriate understanding of the target language but also acquire knowledge of other fields to perform their duties (Byram, 1988). Teachers are the first cadres to expose students to advanced and moving worldviews (Welsh, 2014). Sclater (2017) maintains that cultural aspects include 'conventions, psychology, and historical' context. Teaching about the culture is difficult because it requires language proficiency. In addition to other subjects, such as psychology, social science, linguistics, and cultural anthropology, one needs to comprehend the hidden meaning of culture (Brown, 2009; Byram, 1988). Moreover, teachers must teach students to accept and understand other cultures (Welsh, 2014). They should be able to demonstrate to students that appraisal is the right response to others, regardless of how unusual they may seem (Welsh, 2014). To facilitate effective teaching and learning, teachers of foreign languages must acquire knowledge of various academic fields.

Although offering multiple cultures in the classroom is not a simple undertaking, such dialogism cannot be ignored and should be supported via respect in the learning process (Welsh, 2014). Sun (2013) proposes ways for coping with social instruction and negotiating cultural distinctions. First, in a social setting, instructors are required to gradually progress from simple to complicated materials (Sun, 2013). Second, to foster the main cultural values, the exact proportion of language and culture must be appropriated in the classroom Pourkalhor and Esfandiari (2017). As culture is tied to the whole course such as art, history, etc., instructors are required to judge the quality and values of the cultural aspects to teach (Sun, 2013). It is difficult for educators to cover all areas of culture, particularly if they believe they must acquire new information (Byram, 1988). Nonetheless, a competent educator should set aside such egotism to motivate learning and foster awareness of differences.

Students' identity concerning English learning is also examined (Sa'd, 2017). In other words, the foreign language learning experience of students should encompass their entire physical, cognitive, and emotional selves. The learner must use their physical abilities such as emotions and cognitive abilities to acquire the target language. According to Ellis (2006), the grammar and linguistic form of the target language are not difficult to master. However, students encounter difficulty in learning the cultural differences of the foreign language (Chen & Yang, 2014). Therefore, language learners must acquire a deeper understanding of the new perspective of the target language's culture. It can be accomplished by continually learning with the complete self in mind.

Moreover, Park (2016) asserts that language plays a crucial role in shaping the individual's cognition, condition, identity, and self-development. Since identity is tied to the homogeneity and heterogeneity of individuals, learners tend to define themselves based on what they found similar and/or dissimilar (Sa'd, 2017). 'Identity' can also be recreated through language (Sa'd, 2017). However, Nall (2004) emphasizes that there is no simple way to understand identity. Csizér and Kormos (2009) concurred with this idea by stating that 'learners' experiences fluctuate concerning identifying themselves as the speaker of their native language and their awareness of foreign language learners'. Thus, the process of determining one's identity is anything from simple; it is intricate and encompasses the learner's extensive journey. Through intercultural dialogue, the act

of acquiring a foreign language also facilitates the changing of ways of thinking and communicating (Ting-Toomey & Chung 2005). The impacts of the target culture might be harmful if the response is not guided by wisdom. This has occurred in Indonesia, where western culture is increasingly influencing young people (Lie, 2017). The rise of English as a result of globalization has negatively affected the cultural identity of its users (Jensen et al., 2011). One of the most major influences is how young Indonesians disregard their own culture in favor of the contemporary and privileged western society. The western culture portrayed in English is not necessarily compatible with the culture of Indonesia.

Kasaian (2011) discovered that Iranian parents avoid exposing their children to incompatible aspects of Western culture and lifestyle. Many young learners follow the trend of parties, mixed-gender partnerships, and girls wearing revealing clothing (Connolly et al., 2004). It pertains to the situation in Indonesia. Numerous young students have engaged in improper relationships and worn miniskirts to display their bodies. Most social institutions were worried about these challenges to the local culture, norms, values, and habits of Indonesia (Lie, 2017).

### Learners' Perspectives on Cross-Cultural Hurdles in English Learning

Before examining the learners' perspectives on cross-cultural barriers in English learning, it is preferable to revisit the objectives of English language teaching in the country. English is one of the foreign languages and serves as the mandatory subject that must be taught in Indonesian secondary schools. According to Yusny (2013) and Zein (2012), this is attributable to the increasing influence of English on Indonesian language policy. Indonesian students are studying English as a contemporary means of communication (Lie, 2017). This issue may also be a result of the status of the English language in Indonesia. As a foreign language, there is no place in which English skills can be utilized. According to Graves (2008), the target Language Removed 'context is the context in which English is viewed as a foreign language'. In addition, learning English in this environment has a variety of purposes, such as 'communication, economic development, expanding perspectives, becoming a global citizen, etc' (Graves, 2008). Consequently, the reasons for studying English can vary. On the other hand, given the existing situation, it is clear that the purpose of learning English is to acquire a body of information that affords greater prospects for future growth.

### Culturally irresponsible

According to the interview, seven out of eight pupils acknowledge that they find the English materials to be perplexing in terms of culture. These pupils show their discomfort with the assigned information in a variety of ways. One kid expressed confusion about the instruction. Three kids reported feeling ashamed. Three pupils reported feeling repulsed when studying the materials. However, one student stated that she found it acceptable. The materials appear to be contradictory to the Islamic value lessons students learned in school and boarding school. Therefore, the purpose of teaching English is not just to teach language skills, but also to train students to recognize, comprehend, and accept people, no matter how unusual or different they may appear. However, classroom instruction has not considerably helped children comprehend cultural differences. According to the interview, students prefer to disregard cultural elements that they perceive to be distinct.

Without awareness of cultural variations, oral or written communication cannot be successful, according to Cortazzi and Jin (2002). As students increase their awareness of cross-cultural differences, they will enhance their intercultural communication skills. Sinicrope (2007) defines intercultural communication as the capacity to converse with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Similarly, Leung et al. (2014), underline that intercultural competence relates to a person's ability to work well with individuals from different cultures. It can be shown that cultural awareness and intercultural competence are the most important part of teaching English (Byram 1988; Byram 2014; Sun, 2013).

Because language and culture are inseparable factors in EFL learning, the teaching of language will also involve a cultural transfer. According to Liu (2017) and Sun (2013), language and culture play a crucial role in defining an individual's identity. Culture is reflected and carried by language. Not only does language play an important part in cultural evolution (Wang, 2011), but it has also become a symbol (Kramsch, 2019) and a tool for representing cultural worth in people's minds (Wang, 2011; Kramsch, 2019; Kuo & Lai, 2006). Kramsch (2019) emphasizes that culture is connected to how individuals think, feel, and act in their daily lives. Identity is formed through how people 'portray their culture' and significance (Woodward, 2020). Byram (2020), on the other hand, there are distinctions between language and culture concerning numerous identifiers of people's identities. He uses the choice of clothing as an illustration, noting that it can serve two purposes: expressing cultural identity and providing warmth (Byram & Wagner, 2018). However, he acknowledged that people incorporate meanings in their culture and that language largely contributes to this phenomenon (Byram & Wagner, 2018). Thus, it cannot be denied that language and culture influence and are influenced by individuals' identities.

The crucial link between language and culture (Kang-Young, 2019) was clear as shown in the

formulation of the learning purpose namely 'to communicate, comprehend the customs and traditions of the target language's community, and encourage people to work and study'. In addition, Savignon (2008) asserts that learning a foreign language 'helps students to uncover fresh insights and perspectives by allowing them to venture beyond their home country and culture'. Moreover, he thinks that learning a foreign language enables students to perceive another society, a different rationale, and different behaviors (Savignon, 2008). Learning the culture of the target language will lead to cross-cultural awareness Cakir (2006) and intercultural communicative competence, which are essential for connecting with the global community Patel (2011). According to Morita (2004), teaching a foreign language 'makes students recognize the strengths and weaknesses of their own culture because they can view it from a different perspective'. Also, Derakhshan and Hasanabbasi (2015) assert that studying a foreign language provides the opportunity 'to communicate the native culture with other foreign cultures. A superficial comprehension of the culture behind a foreign language will result in miscommunication (Liu, 2017).

In addition, foreign language instruction should include the ability to accept otherness from the perspective of another language (Aguilar, 2008; Hermessi, 2017). When we study cultural differences and build 'intercultural communication skills', we begin to embrace the unfamiliar. Welsh (2014), proposes the term "polymorphic" culture to describe a society in which individuals must accept the otherness of others and eliminate the space between themselves and others. He adds further that individuals should view the strangeness of others as a part of themselves Welsh (2014). Additionally, cultural awareness enables individuals to study and acquire an appreciation of differences and similarities (Broady, 2004). Also, Welsh (2014), suggests cosmopolitanism in which we embrace and foster respect for the outsider.

### *Misunderstanding of cultural contents in the language materials*

Regarding the issue of the matter of misunderstanding of cultural contents in the EFL language materials, students have different experiences in Ar-Risalah boarding school. Based on the result of semi-structured interviews, it was found that one learner tends to ignore the pictures or the materials. She thinks the materials were not appropriate and that not all students can filter them. She was wondering why the materials appear in the Islamic school English textbook. Three learners took it as a joke with friends. Furthermore, three other students tried to behave very well and reminded their friends that they should select the lesson. However, there was one learner who can understand that the materials as only from western cultures, thus, she focused on learning the language. it seems that she did not care about the culture behind the language she studied. Therefore, most students thought the materials are difficult for them.

Pfenninger and Polz (2018) state that students' experience in a foreign language constitutes their whole 'physical, cognitive, and emotional'. The students need to utilize their physical abilities such as 'movements', and cognitive function to understand the meaning and 'emotion', to feel the language they are learning, and to acquire the target language. According to Sun (2013), students find it is not difficult to learn grammar or the linguistic form of the target language. However, they face the challenge to learn the difference in cultural views of the foreign language (Sun, 2013). Moreover, students need to learn more about the new perspective from the culture of the target language. It can be done by consistently including the whole person of the self in studying.

According to Gao and Lv (2018), language is critical to be involved in people's cognition, condition, identity, and self-development. Students would identify themselves to 'what they found similar or different'. By language, a student's identity can also be reconstructed (Kaya & Dikilitaş, 2019; Sa'd, 2017). However, Nall (2004) put forward that there is no shortcut. Sa'd (2017) shares and mentions that 'learners experience fluctuation in determining themselves as the speaker of their native language and their awareness of the foreign language learners'. It can be understood that the process of defining identity is far from simple, 'it is complicated that covers a lengthy process' that the students have to undergo.

Moreover, the instructional activities of a foreign language will enable the movement of ways of thinking and expressing through intercultural communication (Sun, 2013). The changes in the target culture sometimes are hurdled without wise views on the responses. As already existed in the country, more and more young Indonesian are addicted to foreign culture (Lie, 2017). Lie (2017) believes that the development of English through globalization has brought a negative impact on the cultural identity of the users. One of the significant influences is the 'way young Indonesian neglect the local culture and regard western culture as modern and privileged'. The culture of western that is reflected in the English language is not always compatible with Indonesian culture.

Kasaian (2011) resists their children being exposed to the incompatible aspect of Western Culture and lifestyle and states that 'young learners follow the trend of parties, mixed-gender relationships, and girls in revealing clothes'. Related to the case of Indonesia, many young learners have inappropriate relationships and use mini dresses revealing their bodies. Some individuals and institutions have been concerned about these threats to Indonesian culture, values, and behaviors (Bjork, 2003; Lie, 2017), but still, however, the problem

continues to exist.

### *Intervention formalizing the book*

The majority of participants stated that some provide unique perspectives to address the official intervention over the book. However, the majority of their opinions share similar ideas. Two students mention dismissing the reading text section on love. Four students believe that the teacher should seek out alternative materials. They claim that the materials can be altered to include more eastern cultural content. They make references to Islamic songs and films that are played in the English language. One student even mentioned that she wanted to file a complaint with the textbook's author. In contrast, one student argues that the instructor can clarify the distinction between the cultural material of the textbook and Islamic beliefs. She believes that teacher assistance in assisting children to comprehend cultural concerns is essential. Although one student mentioned that only new teachers used this material in the classroom, this was not the case. Such resources were no longer used in the classroom by seasoned and seasoned teachers. Additionally, one student states that the topic of "expressing love" is no longer taught due to numerous complaints. The issue cannot be resolved with a single measure. Thus, the majority of students argue adversely regarding the textbook's cultural content.

The study also showed that six pupils have negative reactions to the cultural material in reading texts. They are confused by the western culture material in the textbook. They believe that boarding schools should not utilize such textbooks since they contradict Islamic principles. The majority of students said that the textbook learning process is troublesome, even though they employ a variety of methods to solve the issue. In addition, the majority of students wanted their teachers to consider the materials in the classroom. One student even mentions that they do not know where to complain about the textbook's cultural content. She believed that such a textbook should not be used in the classroom. Thus, teachers assess the discrepancy between their own cultural values and the foreign language culture associated with the supplied information (Chamot, 2004; Sun, 2013). In the context of an Islamic boarding school, we believe this to be the most crucial factor. Learners must comprehend the parallel between English-taught culture and Islamic values. The learners would comprehend that they are acquiring knowledge of the world upon understanding the distinction. They are not required to practice or embrace western cultural values that are incompatible with their own. They must just be aware that it exists, regardless of how weird it may appear. According to Welsh (2014), individuals should appreciate otherness. Further, he thinks that students should examine and connect with cultural others without denying or dismissing themselves (Welsh, 2014). Therefore, understanding the contrast between native and foreign cultures can help language learners acquire the language more effectively and foster respect.

Language and culture are inseparable in the context of foreign language learning. According to Sun (2013), the purpose of learning a foreign language is to communicate, comprehend the customs and traditions of the target language's community, and encourage people to work and study. In addition, Byram and Wagner (2018) asserts that learning a foreign language will assist students to uncover fresh insights and perspectives by allowing them to venture beyond their home country and culture. Moreover, he thinks that learning a foreign language enables students to perceive another society, a different rationale, and different behaviors (Byram & Wagner, 2018). Therefore, the transfer of cultural knowledge must be incorporated into the instruction of the foreign language; it cannot be overlooked. Learning the culture of the target language will lead to cross-cultural awareness (Gao, 2013; Hidayati et al., 2017) and intercultural communicative competence certainly supports communication in the global world (Liu, 2017; Sun, 2013). Durocher Jr (2007) believes that teaching a foreign language will help students to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of their own culture because they can view it from a different perspective. Also, Cakir (2006) and Chen and Yang (2014) assert that studying a foreign language provides students with the opportunity to communicate their native culture with other foreign cultures. A superficial comprehension of the culture behind a foreign language will result in miscommunication (Liu, 2017).

The Ministry of Education in Indonesia developed the English language curriculum in Indonesian boarding and secondary schools. The teachers were given the curriculum outlining the subjects and the textbook and other resources are also prescribed. However, the instructors may also examine other options. The textbook given by educational book publishers can serve as a guide for language instruction in the classroom. In addition, the local teachers' association provided the learners with a textbook covering the necessary material to pass the exam. The textbooks used in both types of schooling are virtually identical. Although local teachers write books, the cultural content of the books is still heavily influenced by western society.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion is that the causes that lead to students' difficulties in learning English are complex for various reasons. First, the analysis emphasizes the significance of teaching both English and culture as interrelated subjects. To meet the objectives of English instruction, culture cannot be ignored. In the context of

an Islamic boarding school, however, some English cultural values disapproved of the importance of Islamic studies. This difficulty is exacerbated by the dearth of English-language resources that reflect the principles of Islamic culture. In addition, the process of learning English alters the cultural identity of the student. The influence of western culture on Indonesian youngsters can pose a threat to Indonesian national identity. This circumstance concerns Islamic teaching in boarding schools. The unmatched cultures may probably discourage students from adopting incompatible western cultures and lifestyles. Therefore, teachers may less focus on the development of English language instruction than they do on Islamic studies. In this case, the learners' misunderstanding over the disagreement around the cultural worth of English persists and places them in a bind. On the one hand, kids are encouraged to learn and use English fluently. Since English is a required subject, they must prepare for the exam to pass. On the other hand, there are few resources for learners to completely comprehend English with its values and culture. There is a loss of cultural identity as a result of exposure to western cultures, but little focus is paid to resolving the problems. The learners are to be expected to be proficient in English and successfully function in the global environment yet the varied subjects and Islamic culture, restrict them from accepting cultural notions. Although the elements creating the issue are complicated, the action to make some adjustments should never stop. We believe that several recommendations can be made about the English language teaching practices of Islamic boarding schools. Teachers have a big impact on student progress, so English teachers should evaluate their teaching abilities. Teachers must acquire knowledge of language competency components that reflect the culture of the target language, such as everyday language, idioms, and proverbs. The teachers' proper understanding of the linguistic and cultural worth of the foreign language would enable them to assist students in comprehending not only the structure of the language but also in enhancing their cultural awareness. In addition, when describing the linguistic form, teachers must investigate its cultural context. Through numerous methods, instructors can demonstrate to students that differences exist in the real world. The students must discover other cultures because they will be living in a globalized society after graduation. They must know that Islamic studies and the culture they have learned and accepted are not the only civilizations in the globe there are numerous other cultures outside. Thirdly, it must be acknowledged that the conundrum confronted by students is a serious obstacle posed by the existence of an Islamic boarding school. Islamic boarding schools have already spread in Indonesia even before the day of independence, Thus, the challenge is expanding and getting more problematic as the world is getting more dynamic and progressive. Although our proposals are limited to English language instruction in Islamic boarding school classrooms, we expect that their adoption will result in a more proficient use of English in the daily activities of Islamic boarding life. As stated, globalization is well underway, and Islamic students cannot ignore its impact on their social life and sense of self. We feel that we do not need to reject it, but that it would be peaceful to accept its appropriate interpretation.

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