



# The Role of Transcultural Education in High School Settings: Language Classroom

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**Abstract.** The prevalence of globalization has facilitated the emergence of a generation of students who are inherently interconnected and exposed to diverse cultures. However, the mere exposure to online cultural content does not necessarily guarantee an enhanced awareness of cultural differences. This research aimed to investigate the perspectives of Islamic Senior High School students in Bangkalan, Madura, who have experienced online cultural exposure in the context of English language pedagogy by following qualitative descriptive research. Data were collected through observations and interviews to 20 students. These questions asked about students' opinion of local cultural exposure material in English learning and online media platform effect to their cultural understanding. Then, the data from observation was secondary data and used to examine the students response. The data from the field revealed that the students primarily rely on government-issued e-books and teacher-provided materials for their learning, while also engaging with various cultural content on online platforms. Those were analyzed using the qualitative descriptive method. The findings suggest a limited cultural awareness among students, indicating a preference for localized cultural content over a blend of diverse cultural influences. The research underscores the need for a more integrated approach to language and cultural education, as the students demonstrate a hesitation towards embracing a holistic integration of culture and language within the educational context.

**Keywords:** transcultural, culture, language.

## 1 Introduction

In the era of unprecedented globalization and interconnectedness, the dissipation of physical and cultural boundaries has paved the way for an array of complex repercussions. It ranges from fostering mutual understanding and cultural empathy to potentially exacerbating societal divisions and cultural misconceptions. As this contemporary landscape continues to unfold, the significance of nurturing a sense of global citizenship among high school students has emerged as a paramount concern. The attention to their cultural awareness is increasingly apparent. It refers to their knowledge of other cultures whom are interacted with. The embracing of cultural diversity is no longer words; moreover, it is becoming an actual act.

With limited exposure to diverse cultures and experiences, adolescents often grapple with developing a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted world. To overcome it, the role of educators is crucial. To effectively navigate this complex terrain, they must possess a comprehensive understanding of cultural nuances, global trends, and contemporary issues shaping the experiences of today's youth [1]. Hence, the teaching materials have to follow the experts and government's ideal guidance as well as the global trend.

The mandate to deliver cultural values to the students is embedded in the language teachers and cannot be separated in their teaching [2]–[6]. These materials serve as a conduit for students to engage with various cultural contexts, thereby fostering an environment conducive to cultivating global citizenship and cultural appreciation [7]. Therefore, the book accompanying them must contain cultural materials [8], [9]. The teachers can improve the teaching materials based on their needs and take any source.

The cultural heterogenous students will be followed by the ideal transcultural classroom setting. The conventional interaction from different cultural background affects to the cross-cultural understanding [10]. There is the emergence of intercultural communication competence as the development of cultural critical awareness [11]. The ideal situation for students is to have experience in the field of transcultural. Nevertheless, the opposite environment happened within the context of Bangkalan, Madura Indonesia, there are some Islamic students who are grouped with homogenous ethnicity in a classroom. It leads to a distinct lack of exposure to the rich diversity of global cultures.

Despite their engagement in online interactions across various digital platforms, the authentic experiences of firsthand cultural immersion and meaningful cross-cultural dialogue remain elusive. This poses a critical impediment to the holistic development of cultural awareness and global citizenship. The students have the portion to be known about their needs as learners and global citizenship. Moreover, their perspectives on this issue could be underlined as one of the indicators on developing cultural materials.

Therefore, due to the gap above, this research delves into the critical role of transcultural education in high school settings, aiming to unravel the intricate relationship between limited cultural exposure and the cultivation of students' cultural awareness and global citizenship. By examining the implications of this dynamic interplay, this study seeks to illuminate effective strategies for educators and policymakers to promote a more comprehensive and inclusive educational environment, fostering a generation of culturally competent and globally conscious individuals poised to navigate the complexities of an interconnected world.

## 2 Method

The research followed a descriptive study held from October to December. This study belonged to the qualitative method that was addressed in following the purpose of the research. Qualitative descriptive research tends to take a naturalistic approach, which commits to its natural state within the context of the research arena. Thus, there is no pre-selection of research variables, no manipulation of variables, and no prior commitment to a single theoretical view of a target phenomenon [12].

Researchers highlighted previously, that perspectives investigation in online experience of cultural exposure in the context of language pedagogy was the aim of this research. There were 20 Islamic Senior High School students in Bangkalan, Madura, who followed the study. They all were from Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) Bangkalan and asked several questions about their opinion of the exposure to local cultural material in English language learning and the online media platform's effect on their cultural understanding. They have never found themselves in a situation where they engaged in traditional face-to-face interactions with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.

The analysis was conducted by coding, validating, and narrating. First was coding process, interview data was coded systematically into categories, facilitating structured organization of information. Several similar data had the similar code. The example of R1O or R1M code means, "R" for Respondent, "1" for number of respondents, "O" for the theme of opinion, and "M" for the theme of media.

Then, the next was validation by using triangulation. To ensure the credibility of the data, a triangulation process was carried out. All data provided undergoes cross-verification with observation records, thereby increasing the reliability of the findings.

The last, after the coding and validation stages, the analyzed data was clearly explained in the study, providing a comprehensive and detailed explanation of the research findings.

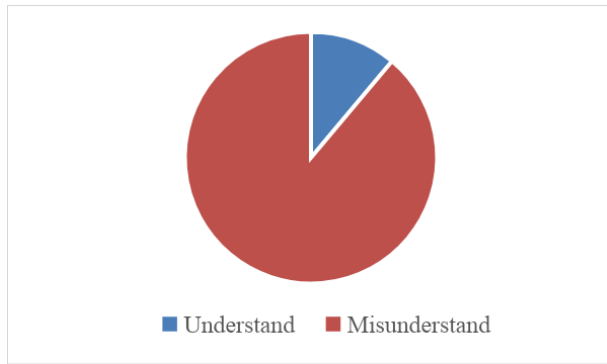
### 3 Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Results

The empirical data obtained from the study provided compelling insights into the cultural dynamics prevalent among the cohort of 15 to 19-year-old students. They shared the same unique experience of being confined to a classroom environment characterized by homogeneity, both in terms of their ethnic background and their limited exposure to diverse cultural perspectives. However, as the origin of Madura, they struggled to recollect the legends and prominent folk figures emblematic of Bangkalan, Madura.

Therefore, to dig deep into their perspective on culture, they were probed with a series of thought-provoking inquiries. Those, how was their view on the local cultural materials implemented in the learning process? What resources did you have to know cultures? Please explain the effects of using social media on your cultural understanding! Do you think you are not getting exposed to the various cultures, and what do you want related to cultural experiences?

Some students responded that they did not understand that while learning the language, they also learned about cultures. Even previous research claimed that students taught learning language did not need to be integrated with culture. They think that culture and language were different things [13].



**Fig. 1.** Students' Awareness of Cultural Content in Language Learning

They articulated a belief in the separation of cultural and linguistic education. Then, during their English lesson, they claimed that the teacher never gave them material related to Madura culture and only based on the e-government book. Even though, sometimes, the teacher gave the analogy using the Madura culture while explaining about other cultures.

The excitement was in their eyes when they first experienced the learning process using Madura culture materials. They tended to ask numerous questions to the teacher actively. Many had never heard the story before and were curious to know more about it. One of the respondents (R10 and R20) said,

*"We were happy to learn English using our own culture. I know a little bit about the story about Potre Koneng, but I forgot. Then, when I read again and discussed it was really called my old memory." (R10)*

*"I feel drawn to folklore, especially from Madura. Previously, I didn't like English because it was challenging, but since it's a compulsory subject for me, using cultural materials that are close to us seems like it can help me understand better." (R20)*

There are 12 out of 20 (60%) students felt a heightened understanding and confidence in their lessons when incorporating local Madurese culture. They found it more accessible as they perceived the material taught from their region and developed an affinity for their regional history.

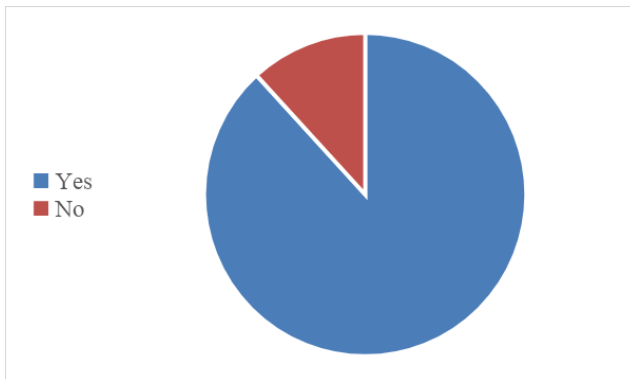
Regarding to this, it is imperative for educators to pivot towards a more dynamic and inclusive approach to curriculum development and not only rely on the e-government book. The young generation must be acknowledged for their culture to make it sustainable. Moreover, in their age and this era, students admire foreign cultures and follow the trends. This gradually loses interest in knowing and preserving their cultures [14].

All of the students have social media accounts, and many of them have e-sport accounts. Related to this, R3 mentioned the benefit of it,

*“When I am on social media, I can see many people around the world. I can follow the trends and know the habit.” (R3M)*

They were also updated themselves by the movies or K-dramas, and they knew different daily life and cultures. Not only that, R4 said that she was experienced in Duolingo to enhance her English skills. She realized that her capability in English was low, then tried this app and said it worked for her. As known that, Duolingo is a language learning platform that can be used for micro language skill learning [15]. The students had never experienced a real situation with foreigners and different cultures. They only knew the various cultures through virtual situations. Then, one of the male students (R5) mentioned that if they engage in e-sports and find that some English vocabulary can be remembered and used to substitute words in Indonesia, albeit in a crude manner.

Related to their English skills, the questionnaire shows that 88,2% of students agreed that their activity using education and entertainment apps or social media improved their ability. More than what they experienced online, they still aimed to get it directly. If it is difficult to get, they want the teacher to give them cultural content as the materials.



**Fig. 2.** Students' Perception on the Positive Effect of the App or Social Media Usage

They were also fine if it was related to local materials since there was a huge amount of information that they still did not know. It is in line with what the experts said about the presence of cultural materials in the classroom [4]. There are three cultural materials: local culture, target culture, and international culture.

The students seemed to lack cultural awareness, as evidenced by their inquiries to the teacher. They were curious about the cultural intricacies surrounding sensitive topics, such as marriage, age, religion, and others, in interactions with individuals from foreign cultural backgrounds. There was also the legend about the snake from Jambi. Surprisingly, some of them found it hard to understand the story, but they were easily related when the teacher gave them the analogy of beauty and the beast.

### 3.2 Discussion

Learning language and culture are embodied, meaning learners will consciously or unconsciously learn it. However, its role has always been debate in language learning, which also being a challenging issue for language teacher [16]. Moreover, it is mentioned that learning a language means learning three cultural domains, namely the target, local, and international [4]. However, the findings in this study indicate that students in Indonesia are unaware of this. Indeed, sometimes in reality, cultural content in language is not explicitly stated. However, that is the reality: learning a language means learning a culture. For example, in the sentence below,

*"my aunty married my uncle last week."*

In Western culture, marriage is not always initiated by the male, which is different from most cultures in Indonesia. Where, it is the man who marries the woman.

The younger generation needs to be introduced to culture. Student with more exposed to the certain culture increase the willingness to learn the language of that culture [17]. Especially local culture, the introduction for students can maintain its existence. It should be noted that currently, many young people do not know their regional culture [18], [19]. Including an additional finding in this research is that many students do not know the origin stories of Madura. This is feared to make them lose their love for their local culture. Even more, understanding the culture make easier for the students to understand Indonesian as a foreign language [20].

## 4 Conclusion

Language and culture are inseparable. However, this study revealed that some Islamic Senior High School students in Bangkalan, Madura, were unaware that language learning was also about cultures. In language learning, students will experience three cultural materials: local, target, and international. Therefore, the emergence to include all cultures cannot be ignored. Through this research, there is an implication to shape the future landscape of teaching by ensuring that cultural diversity remains an integral part of educational activities. The goal is to create an inclusive learning environment where students have the opportunity to engage with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, fostering meaningful connections both in traditional face-to-face settings and through online platforms. This commitment seeks to cultivate a global perspective, encouraging open-mindedness, empathy, and a rich appreciation for the richness and uniqueness of various cultures. Ultimately, our aim is to equip students with the skills and understanding necessary to thrive in an interconnected world, promoting a more inclusive and harmonious society. To extend transcultural education, the suggestion is that the stakeholders need to nationalize and internationalize the learning environment. So that students experience socialization with diverse cultures and be wiser as global citizenship.

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