



## Understanding Indonesian Language Learners from their Cultures of Learning

**Priscilla Maria Assis Hornay**  
Universitas Katolik Widya Mandira, Indonesia  
e-mail : [priscillaassishornay@unwira.ac.id](mailto:priscillaassishornay@unwira.ac.id)

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi budaya belajar siswa Bahasa Inggris di dua universitas di Indonesia yang berasal dari latar belakang budaya dan pendidikan yang beragam. Penelitian ini merupakan studi kasus yang melibatkan 127 mahasiswa dari dua universitas di Indonesia. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner yang terdiri dari pertanyaan-pertanyaan tentang makna belajar dan pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, guru yang baik, siswa yang baik, hubungan antara siswa dan guru, tentang mengajukan pertanyaan di kelas, dan penggunaan buku ajar. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa Indonesia memilih belajar dalam situasi informal ketika berlatih bahasa, seperti dengan mendengarkan lagu, berbicara dengan orang lain, membaca karya sastra, dan menulis buku harian atau cerita pendek. Mereka lebih memilih belajar bahasa dengan menggunakan media pengajaran dan melalui diskusi kelas, meskipun beberapa mahasiswa memilih untuk belajar menggunakan praktik lama, seperti memanfaatkan buku ajar untuk belajar tata bahasa, dan belajar pengucapan dari guru. Selain itu, mereka mengkategorikan hubungan mereka dengan guru sebagai tipe pendidik-pelajar dan sangat peduli dengan kehilangan muka. Budaya belajar siswa Indonesia memberikan gambaran tentang bagaimana pembelajaran siswa ini sejatinya tidak terhubung dengan budaya sosial mereka tetapi lebih pada paparan mereka terhadap pembelajaran bahasa Inggris di Indonesia.

**Kata Kunci:** budaya belajar, TESOL, mahasiswa Indonesia.

### Abstract

*This study aims to identify the cultures of learning of English students in two universities in Indonesia who came from diverse cultural and educational backgrounds. This research is a case study involving 127 students majoring in English. Data was collected through questionnaires consisting of questions about the meaning of learning and learning English, good teachers, good students, the relationship between students and teachers, about asking questions in class, and the use of textbooks. The results of this study show that Indonesian students prefer to study in a relaxed situations when practicing languages, such as by listening to songs, talking to others, reading literary works, and writing diaries or short stories. They prefer to learn languages using teaching media and through class discussions, although some students choose to learn using old practices, such as using textbooks to learn grammar, and learning pronunciation from teachers. In addition, they categorize their relationship with the teachers as educator-learner types of relationship and are particularly concerned with losing face. The learning culture of Indonesian students provides an idea of how these students' learning is actually not connected to their social culture but rather to their exposure to English learning in Indonesia.*

**Keywords:** cultures of learning, TESOL, Indonesian students

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✉ Corresponding author :

Email : [priscillaassishornay@unwira.ac.id](mailto:priscillaassishornay@unwira.ac.id)

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## INTRODUCTION

Learners have different views, beliefs, expectations and approaches when it comes to language learning. Researchers believed that these views have cultural origin. (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996a) described learning culture as “taken for granted expectations, beliefs about what constitutes good learning, about how to teach or learn, whether and how to ask questions, what textbooks are for, and how language teaching relates to broader issues of the nature and purpose of education” (p.169). When students come from different backgrounds, often this may influence their ways of learning because cultures of learning are commonly influenced by social and “practical constraint factors such as age, ability, gender, language syllabus, exams, materials, and immediate classroom context etc” (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996b).

Indonesian higher education is obligated to implement what is known as the *Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) where teachers at the same time are expected to be responsible for setting the content, methods and assessment of teaching and learning to achieve the national educational goals. The responsibility is also challenging English education teachers to change the teaching from teacher-centred to the student-centred learning. This indicates that ‘a lot of credibility is being given to need based courses in ESL program’ (Fatihi, 2003). Teachers then need to think and design necessary procedures in order to accomplish the expected outcomes especially in involving students' needs in the process. However, there has never been a clear definition of ‘needs’ especially in the context of language education. Therefore, the insights on cultures of learning may give a set of understandings on what to classify as learners’ needs.

Culture of learning deals with the questions that rises about how a teaching and learning should be, teacher and student quality and the ideology of learning (Shi, 2006, p.123). ‘Culture of teaching and learning refers to the attitude of educators and learners towards teaching and learning and the spirit of dedication and commitment in a school which arises through the joint effort of school management, the input of educators, the personal characteristics of learners, factors in the family life of students, school-related factors as well as social factors’ (Zulu et al., 2004). Teachers and learners from different background community may have different preferences, expectations, interpretations, values and beliefs about how to learn or how to teach and these differences may affect the teaching and learning process within the classroom Learning is seen as cultural and therefore it is part of the process of transferring and acquiring knowledge. However, according to Yuan and Xie (2013, p.33) general assumptions on the attitudes and practices of individual Chinese learners which make it similar to the characteristics of Chinese ethnic culture may ignore the ‘individual agency’. ‘Students are remarkably diverse, and thus no one label can accurately capture their heterogeneity’ (Spack, 1997). ‘A possible consequence of the research done from the large culture perspective will be that teachers attribute all the students’ behaviours in the class to their background culture, which would minimize any efforts to improve classroom teaching because there is nothing teachers can do to change cultural heritage’ (Yuan & Xie, 2013, p. 33).

The advantage of knowing ones culture of learning is when the teacher and student can develop strategies that may assist them in recognizing, appreciating and valuing alternative approaches to learning (Cortazzi & Jin, 2013). Furthermore, ‘for students, this goes beyond ‘learning how to learn’: in collaboration with teachers and other students they may learn from, in, with, and through different ways of learning to increase their repertoires of learning strategies. Two important elements in cultures of learning is to know the learners’ expectations whether about teachers or how a student should be (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; 2006; 2013). ‘With mediation, cultures of learning are, thus, potential resources for learner development’ (Cortazzi and Jin, 2013, p. 2). Cultures of learning may encourage students to improve their classroom performance and solve certain behavioural issues since it offers an opportunity for the students to change from “nobody” to “somebody” in their learning community (Weeks, 2012) and ‘allow their voices to be heard’ (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996). However, Kumaravadivelu (2003) in his study about the problem of cultural stereotypes in TESOL

criticizes the fact that TESOL professionals tend to stereotype Asian students as being passive in class and lack of critical thinking and suggests professionals to have a critical awareness of those research in order to restrain the 'rush to stereotype the Other'. He added that studies by Cortazzi and Jin (1996) about Asian students who are passive in class is questionable since related study shows that the cause of passivity does not have direct relation to culture instead it is a product of students' anxiety and lack of self-confidence (Tsui, 1996). Students attitudes in learning is not an inherent disposition but it is a result of educational context such as the teaching material, understanding of the subject matter, student's motivation, anxiety and competence (Littlewood, 2000; Liu, 2001). In addition, 'applying a framework of the dichotomy of individualism versus collectivism tends to essentialize and polarize the 'western' culture and 'oriental' culture. This dichotomy 'tends to exclude the possibility that self-expression associated with individualism exists in cultures that are often viewed as collectivist' (Yuan & Xie, 2013). In Cortazzi and Jin's work on cultures of learning, they emphasize the fact that learners are diverse and it is risky to bring forth list of learners' characteristics (Cortazzi, 1993; Cortazzi & Jin, 1996a, (Cortazzi, 1993; Cortazzi & Jin, 1996a, 1996c, 2001, 2011, 2013). Therefore, they claim that they are presenting trends and that cultures of learning is a plural term and a 'co-shaping dynamic perspective' (Yuan & Xie, 2013).

Identifying students' cultures of learning is not about stereotyping or labelling students into certain cultures but to understand their learning preferences; what makes them comfortable in the classroom, what works better and what may not work in the classroom in improving students' language competency. The word "culture" itself indicates 'multiple and complex' (Atkinson 1999) social behaviours, however, it is also a knowledge that can be used to understand human; their thoughts and their world to create and adjust better quality of life. Therefore, the notion cultures of learning, could be used as a given knowledge for teachers to understand better their language learners learning characteristics and needs.

In recent years, academics especially TESOL professionals have investigated the cultures of learning of learners around the world including China, (Shi, 2006), East Africa (Abd-Kadir & Hardman, 2013), Hong Kong (Glenwright, 2000), Lebanon (Bacha & Bahous, 2013), Vietnam (Bao, 2013), Malaysia (Rahim & Manan, 2013), Kazakstan (Makhanova & Cortazzi, 2013b), Iran (Nemati & Kaivanpanah, 2013) and Japan (Falout et al., 2013). As one of the most populated country with estimation of 255 million population with 633 ethnic groups in 2016 (Sub-directorate of Statistical Compilation and Publication, 2016), Indonesia is among those countries which have students coming from different cultural and educational background. As a culturally diverse country in Asia, having a variety of ethnicities and cultures, Indonesia has been excluded from investigation. Although, the social psychologist Hofstede, in his work on cultural dimension (1986) has categorized Indonesia within Asian society being high on power distance and low on uncertainty avoidance, high on collectivism, and low on femininity, the research is left culturally questionable. Therefore, the current study seeks to identify the cultures of learning in Indonesia to better undertand students' needs and preferences in learning a language, and in turn giving them their voices.

## METHODS

There are two institutions, a private and state university, in Indonesia where the data were gathered. The two universities were chosen since they are located in different regions in Indonesia. The purpose of choosing two universities with different status and locations is to have a sufficient representation of Indonesian learners. Despite that this is a single case study, taking samples from two universities in Indonesia is not to compare or contrast the two universities, but it is only for the purpose of having a maximum variation (heterogeneity) sampling. Sample variation may strengthen the finding since it could describe common pattern of interest of a setting or phenomenon' (Patton, 2002).

The data was collected through questionnaire. The items consisted of questions on learning and learning English, good teacher, good student and their relationship, asking questions, and textbook (Cortazzi & Jin, 2013). The questionnaire was printed and distributed to 127 students under the permission of teacher collaborators. Once the questionnaires have been filled by the students, the data was analysed using a descriptive analysis 'that summarise patterns in the responses of cases in a sample' (Vaus, 2014). This study applied a tabular analysis (SPSS: Analyse → Descriptive Statistics → Frequencies) in which the students' cultures of learning was tabulated in a frequency table. A simple or low-level descriptive analysis (percentage) was used in order to identify the students' cultures of learning.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Overall there were 127 students who were involved in the questionnaire representing the overall students by gender, age, cultural and educational background. Despite there being two universities in two regions in Indonesia used as the sample for the study, the research data showed that there are no substantial differences of views between the two populations. A chi-square test was used to find the *p* value of the students' responses on learning because they were open questions and the responses had to be summarized and listed based on the items that are mostly mentioned by them. The items were labelled into *yes no* responses in the SPSS package. Meanwhile for other questions in the questionnaire that uses Likert scale responses, a t-test was used to find the mean, standards deviation, and *p* value of the students' responses in order to ascertained significant differences between the universities, and the items on their cultures of learning. The responses from the students in the two universities showed significant similarity, which the overall *p* value is  $\geq .05$  or not statistically significant.

### Findings

The following tables showed how culture have influenced students' approaches to learning which is categorized into their expectations, beliefs and views on learning English, good teacher, good student and their relationship, asking questions and the use of textbook.

#### *Learning English*

One of the most important aspects of cultures of learning is the view on learning itself. Traditionally, learning is a process of accumulating knowledge rather than using knowledge for immediate purpose (Shi, 2006). This shows that learners' views on learning may influence the way they learn in the classroom and their relationship with their teacher. Following is the frequencies of students' responses on learning.

**Table 1. Students Views in Learning**

Items	$\chi^2$	df	<i>p</i>
Practising English skills	.525	1	.469
Using media	4.923	1	.027
Using textbook or book	2.593	1	.107
Learning in the classroom	4.248	1	.039
Knowledge transferring	17.684	1	.000

Table 1 indicates the frequencies of 127 students' responses on their views on learning. The result of the Chi-Square test indicate statistically insignificant difference between the perceptions of the two groups of students on learning. The result suggests the existence of a common perception among the students from the two institutions. The most common view is that learning is a practical activity ( $\chi^2 = .525$ ;  $df = 1$ ;  $p = .469$ )

where students are able to practice their English skills such as speaking, listening, reading and writing. With regard to the students' view on learning as a knowledge transferring, there was a significant difference between the responses of the two groups ( $\chi^2 = 17.684$ ;  $df = 1$ ;  $p = .000$ ). The views that learning is practicing the English skills, and that it is about the use of media explains that learning is merely learning what to do rather than learning to learn.

Students views on learning influence the way they learn English, in which most of the students in their questionnaires reflect that the best way for them to improve their English competency is by using the language practically. Students' approaches to learning English become an essential part in the quest for a culture of learning since these preferences may guide teachers to understand the cultural influences on attitudes to knowledge (Ballard, 1996) and bring the most appropriate practices that meet the students' needs.

Interestingly, students' views on English learning are to some extent related to how they prefer to learn English in the classroom. The following table shows how students prefer to learn English in the classroom.

**Table 2. Learning Preferences**

Items	$\chi^2$	df	$p$
Using media	4.609	1	.032
Teacher explanation	.048	1	.826
English skill practices	.219	1	.640
Good relationship with the teacher	10.029	1	.002
Class group discussion	9.619	1	.002

Another indication of how students' ways of learning English might be influenced by their exposure to certain language teaching approaches was their preference for an interactive classroom tasks where they prefer to use media ( $\chi^2 = 4.609$ ;  $df = 1$ ;  $p = .032$ ) and practicing the language skills ( $\chi^2 = .219$ ;  $df = 1$ ;  $p = .640$ ). However, the students showed a statistically significant difference in their perception of the necessity of having a good relationship with the teacher ( $p = .002$ ), and having a classroom discussion ( $p = .002$ ). This might indicate the importance of teacher's pedagogical roles and students' preferred participation in the classroom.

Students were also asked what challenges they face in learning English in order to discover their views on the elements that hinder their learning. The table below shows the students' responses.

**Table 3. Challenges in Learning English**

Items	$\chi^2$	df	$p$
Writing and Reading in English	.997	1	.318
English Pronunciation and Vocabulary	16.809	1	.000
Speaking in English	8.049	1	.005
Grammar	21.564	1	.000
The Environment and Lack of Facilities	.014	1	.906

Table 3 shows that the two groups of students agree that the challenges that they face in learning English are the environment and lack of facilities ( $\chi^2 = .014$ ;  $df = 1$ ;  $p = .906$ ), and writing and reading in English ( $\chi^2 = .997$ ;  $df = 1$ ;  $p = .318$ ). However, there is statistically significant difference in pronunciation and vocabulary, speaking, and grammar. One of the groups might felt grammar, speaking, and pronunciation and vocabulary to be the most challenging aspect in learning English, while the other do not.

This result shows how the two groups of students are very much concerned with their environment and their writing and reading competency.

Students in any culture may have different approaches to learning that may be influenced by their current study behaviour, intellectual task, and the level of their study demand (Ballard, 1996). Therefore, the tables show a variety of preferences of approaches that students have when learning the English skills and subskills as can be seen in the following table.

**Table 4. Summary of Approaches to Learning English Skills**

Items	Mean		Std. Deviation		<i>p</i>
	U1	U5	U1	U5	
Listening to songs	3.78	3.78	.451	.502	1.000
Speaking with other people	3.68	3.56	.577	.572	.229
Reading literary works	3.53	3.74	.627	.483	.040
Writing diary or short stories	3.63	3.59	.615	.630	.773
Practice grammar from textbook exercises	3.72	3.72	.537	.492	1.000
Practice pronunciation with teacher	3.76	3.39	.428	.596	.000
Practicing vocabulary using word list	3.68	3.43	.526	.742	.034

The above table shows the result of the mean of the t-test that the students from U1 and U5 has a statistically significant similarities ( $p = 1.000$ ) in their approaches to learning English. They preferred to learn in a more relaxed situation, for instance, students learn best by listening to songs (U1 mean = 3.78; U5 mean = 3.78) and practicing their speaking with other people (U1 mean = 3.68; U5 mean = 3.56). Although there are still some who are more comfortable with old practices, as shown by students stating they are more comfortable learning grammar by doing textbook exercises (U1 mean = 3.72; U5 mean = 3.72). The result of the standard deviation also indicate that there is a slight difference of consistency between the two groups in the approaches. In terms of practice with the teacher, U1 has a higher mean (3.76) compared to U5 (3.39) having U1 students being slightly consistent in the responses (SD = .428).

Although the comparison of the mean, standard deviation, and *p-value* are to some extent showing statistical similarities between all the responses from the two groups of students, this shows that grammar is still rule-governed, while other approaches to learning speaking, reading, listening, writing, and practicing pronunciation, and vocabulary are more contextual. These practices of using authentic and contextual materials are normally related to the communicative language teaching methods, and the use of textbook and imitation or repetition are mostly the characteristics of the audiolingual method of teaching and learning English.

#### *Good Teacher*

Cultures of learning include students' views on how a good teacher should be. To know and appreciate students' perceptions of teachers is to understand part of a given culture of learning (G. Makhanova and Cortazzi, 2013). The following table indicated how students describe a good teacher.

**Table 5. Good Teacher**

Items	Mean		Std. Deviation		<i>p</i>
	U1	U5	U1	U5	
Masters subject area	3.68	3.56	.577	.572	.229
Caring and helpful	3.79	3.93	.409	.264	.037
Humorous	3.25	3.46	.707	.605	.078
Explains clearly	3.22	3.09	.826	.708	.356

Serious	3.18	3.04	.793	.643	.279
Creative	3.89	3.91	.316	.293	.738

Table 5 shows the result of the t-test indicating that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups of students. The majority of students describe a good teacher as one who is creative (U1 mean = 3.89; U5 mean = 3.91) and explains clearly in the class (U1 mean = 3.22; U5 mean = 3.09) with both items having U5 being more consistent in the responses as displaying smaller standard deviation values. This shows that only a few students nowadays view teachers as a source of knowledge who need to be serious in the process of teaching and learning. Students are more appreciative of teachers who can assist them as an individual or human being in the classroom and create a comfortable atmosphere by simply giving clear explanation and bringing forth various enjoyable activities.

#### *Good Student*

Understanding cultures of learning is also a part of understanding students. It is necessary to know how students view the characteristics of a good student because there is often a mismatch between teachers' and students' views in this regard. Table 6 shows how students view the characteristics of a good student.

**Table 6. Good Student**

Items	Mean		Std. Deviation		<i>p</i>
	U1	U5	U1	U5	
Active in class	3.81	3.37	.399	.681	.000
Respects and obey teacher	3.76	3.67	.456	.583	.297
Sociable	3.74	3.76	.444	.512	.787
Studies independently	3.22	3.09	.826	.708	.356
High motivation	3.79	3.81	.529	.392	.787
Good character	3.69	3.61	.642	.492	.429

Table 6 reveals the result that most students from U1 and U2 view a good student as having high motivation (U1 mean = 3.79; U5 mean = 3.81) and is, to some extent, sociable (U1 mean = 3.74; U5 mean = 3.76). However, the two groups of students have a significant difference in the way they view a good student as being active ( $p = .000$ ). U1 seems to perceive an active participation as an indication of a good student (mean = 3.81) having their responses are mostly spread not out (SD = .339) compared to U5 (SD = .681). This difference might be influenced by the social and academic characteristics, and perhaps the status of the university, where U1 students are from rural and has higher ranking university compared to U5 students.

#### *Teacher and Student Relationship*

The teacher student relationship plays an important role in culture because Asians commonly consider that there should be a type of relationship that bonds a teacher and student in the classroom. The following table shows the views of students about their relationship with their teacher.

**Table 7. Teacher Student Relationship**

Items	Mean		Std. Deviation		<i>p</i>
	U1	U5	U1	U5	
Educator - Learner	3.65	3.33	.609	.727	.010
Parent - Child	3.54	3.22	.627	.839	.021
Friend - Friend	3.10	3.52	.937	.666	.006

Table 7 indicates that students from U1 and U5 of the current study have a slight similarity in the way they view their relationship with their teacher. There is not much evidence to show which type of relationship that they prefer more compared to the others. The educator-learner type of relationship can be seen is more preferable for students form U1 (mean = 3.65). There is an indication of a high-power distance relationship where the teacher takes the role of educator who outlines the paths for their students to follow, whether inside or outside the classroom. However, a considerable average number of students from U1 (mean 3.54) think that their relationship with a teacher should take the role of parent-child (60.7%). While U5 students were more into the friend-friend relationship type of relationship (mean = 3.52). These responses from the two group of students can be understood by the fact that most Asian students expect a harmonious and respectful relationship with their teacher, a common belief that has been inherited from generation to generation (Shi, 2006).

#### *Asking Questions*

To understand Indonesian students, it is important to understand why they tend to avoid asking questions in the classroom. Researchers have found that this is due to their passivity is the classroom and the importance of saving face when interacting with other people. The table below shows the students' reasons for not asking questions.

**Table 8. Not Asking Questions**

Items	Mean		Std. Deviation		<i>p</i>
	U1	U5	U1	U5	
To avoid being mocked	2.10	2.37	1.050	1.051	.152
To avoid interrupting teacher	2.47	2.56	.934	.965	.628
Not good in English	2.57	2.74	.976	.994	.337

The two groups of students who were given the questionnaire stated that the reason they do not ask questions is because they are scared to interrupt the teacher ( $p = .628$ ) with U5 having higher average of responses (mean = 2.56) and that their English is not good enough ( $p = .337$ ) with U5 having higher response (mean = 2.74). ) Moreover, a considerable number of students stated that they do not ask questions in class because they do not want to be mocked by their friends ( $p = .152$ ) where mostly are considered by U5 students (mean = 2.37). ). It is clear that these students actually do not want to lose 'face' in front of their teacher and peers. Another cultural difference can be seen when Asians consider 'face' as something important to protect when interacting with other people to avoid being ashamed or afraid of asking foolish questions (Cortazzi and Jin, 1996a).

In addition, I gathered information about what the students' views were about asking questions in order to avoid misconception that Asian students ask questions only as part of a formal interaction between student and teacher. Their responses are detailed in table 9 below.

**Table 9. Asking Questions**

Items	Mean		Std. Deviation		<i>p</i>
	U1	U5	U1	U5	
Clarify misunderstanding	3.76	3.76	.459	.547	.959
To get helpful answer	3.68	3.56	.577	.572	.229
To be active in class	3.36	2.93	.737	.866	.003
To impress the teacher	2.53	2.22	.993	.861	.073



Although the U1 and U5 students' responses in this study indicate a respect for social position, when asking questions they seem to understand that it helps them to learn, therefore they practice it to clarify misunderstanding ( $p = .959$ ) and to get helpful answer ( $p = .229$ ). Although U1 students agree more on the fact that asking questions is a part of an active participation in the classroom (mean = 3.36). Looking back earlier in Table 4.10, U5 students were mostly afraid of being mocked when they consider asking questions in the classroom therefore, as a consequence they seem to feel that there is no need to ask questions just to be active in the classroom. They only ask question when it is necessary.

#### Textbook

The use of the textbook is considered cultural, Asian teaching and learning is very closely related to the use of textbooks since learning is equated with reading books (Hu, 2002). The following table displays the students' views on the role of the textbook.

**Table 10. The Use of Textbook**

Items	Mean		Std. Deviation		<i>p</i>
	U1	U5	U1	U5	
Not Helpful	3.81	3.52	.521	.504	.002
Helpful	1.54	1.72	.749	.656	.161

As presented in previous responses regarding the approaches to learning English, textbook is still considered a helpful tool in their English learning. Although there is a significant difference in which U1 feel that textbook is not much of a help (mean = 3.81) compared to U5 students (mean = 3.52).

#### Discussion

As argued, cultures of learning refers to the ways of learning that have cultural origins, which consist of students' beliefs, views, and expectations about learning, good teacher, good student, teacher student relationship, textbook and asking question (Cortazzi and Jin, 1996a, 2013). The pattern of Indonesian cultures of learning showed an insight into the Indonesian students' ways of learning English that, to a certain extent, cannot be categorized or stereotyped (Cortazzi and Jin, 2017) into those of other Asian students such as China (Cortazzi and Jin, 1996b, 1996a, 2011; Wang, 2013), Japan (Kato, 2001; Falout *et al.*, 2013), Thailand (Huyen and Ha, 2013), Vietnam (Bao, 2013), and Hongkong (Glenwright, 2000). Students' attitudes towards learning indicated that students view learning as an active engagement where it is very much involved with practicing English skills using media such as listening to songs, conversations and reading literary works. These views explained that learning is merely learning what to do rather than learning to learn. On the other hand, although there are different interpretations, typical Asian Chinese learners as mostly see learning as a serious endeavour in the classroom and are teacher dominated (Cortazzi and Jin, 1996a; Confucius, 2000; Shi, 2006). The students in the current study also mentioned the importance of textbooks in helping their learning, which have become an important part of their cultures of learning.

Since religion is also a part of the students' cultural resources, the Islamic, Christian, and Hinduism views that most Indonesian students adhere to cannot be said to have affected the way the students view learning. Christian and Hinduism views emphasize that learning is about learning in a place of community (Miswanto, 2012; Wenas, 2017). Students described learning as learning in the classroom, however, this is considered relatively low compared to those that view learning as an active classroom engagement, and who use media as means of learning. Even so, the current study cannot provide any evidence regarding whether the views about learning of the students were affected by their religious beliefs. Also, the Islamic view that

learning is a serious devotion, which was not seen in how the students view learning, because most of them consider learning English as fun, engaging, and explorative.

Another important element of students' cultures of learning is the students' view of a good teacher and a good student. Their views on a good teacher showed how the students emphasized teachers' practical knowledge in the classroom. Students have come to consider several dimensions of a good teacher similar to the ones found by Ratih and Laurence (2015), which include the pedagogical knowledge dimension that describes teachers as being able to know how to best teach, personal and contextual knowledge, and sociological and social knowledge. Further, students' views of a good student highlighted an interesting finding that Indonesians have changed from being a weak uncertainty avoidance people (Hofstede, 1986) to being an active, aggressive, emotional and compulsive people, because the participants in this study described a good student as the one with high motivation. As Kumaravadivelu (2006) and Shi (2006) stated Asian students are gradually changing to become more independent, and on the other hand, teachers are becoming more open-minded in their classroom practices and interactions with the students.

Although Indonesian social culture merely focuses on the good characters of either the teachers or the students (Rizal, 2009; Miswanto, 2012; Wenas, 2017) in describing a good educator and learner, the shift can be argued to be due to the condition that, in current years, Indonesia has been opened to global education policies by encouraging educators to have the ability to compare and analyse different educational policies and practices and the need to maintain an open mind toward different practices while reflecting on one's own (DIKTI, 2014, 2016). Therefore, the students' views to some extent reflected what they see in the classroom, how teachers used variety of practices, and how students best respond to them.

Teacher-student relationships in Indonesian social culture evolve around respect and obedience (Rizal, 2009; Miswanto, 2012; Wenas, 2017). In the findings, there is no significant number of students who prefer a certain type of relationship with the teacher. As argued in this paper regarding the different expectations in interaction patterns between teachers' and students' relationships, but these are not necessarily the case in the current study because the variety of responses indicating that the educator – learner, parent – child, and friend – friend type of relationship were all applicable. Within a school community, where there are interactions involved, there would always be (1) respect from the students to their teacher as an educator, (2) a personal and intimate relation as a parent – child, and (3) friendliness between teacher and student. Therefore, as long as those elements revolve around the teacher and student relationship, there should not be any necessity to categorize the teacher – student relationship. However, a larger scale study needs to be carried out to find out which types are more important.

In terms of asking questions in the classroom, Hinduism (Miswanto, 2012), Islamic (Rizal, 2009), and Christian (Wenas, 2017) teachings explain how human beings must make an effort and to seek knowledge as long as they live, even in life hereafter. The students' learning culture, indicated that the students were not asking questions due to their lack of confidence in the mastery of their English skills, rather than because they want respect or did not want to criticize or interrupt the teacher (Hofstede, 1986; Cortazzi and Jin, 1996b; Kato, 2001; Shi, 2006). In addition, they ask questions to clarify misunderstanding not to impress the teachers. The lack of questions asked by Asian students, and also the students in the current context is to save "face". However, Western students also consider the risk of losing face, although this is not as powerful or common as the students with collectivist tendency. There is a slight difference in the perception of Asian and Western about losing face. Asians tend to avoid this situation because losing face in front of many people is the same as embarrassing not only themselves but also their family (Braje and Hall, 2016). However, it should also be taken into consideration what King (2013) pointed out the causes of silent behaviour in the classroom. Fear of embarrassment might not be the only cause of students being silent in the class, for they might also indicate boredom, a monotonous teacher-centred method, the non-verbal activities, and even confusion in the classroom. Thus, a further research should be implemented to identify further these causes.

The Indonesian students investigated in this study indicated a unique learning pattern where they view learning as an active engagement and expect teachers to be creative in the classroom. Nevertheless, they believed that learning is also using books and they are very much concerned about “losing face”. Indonesia’s social culture is shaped by other cultures and elements which is strongly influenced by economic values, religious values, art values, solidarity values, knowledge values, and power values. These values basically show a strong emphasis on a collectivist, power, structure and masculine way of life. However, throughout the findings chapter, it has been shown that the students have a variety of views and preferences in learning, which is mostly less influenced by their social culture and more towards their exposure to years of classroom learning experiences.

The findings showed how the students consider learning as something that cannot be separated from the teacher’s control or design and the use of media and their peers, which explains the cultural origin behind the students’ ways of learning. These learning habits were derived throughout years of the students’ education and presumably, the effects of globalisation, showing that their learning cultures did not necessarily originate from their early childhood or early years at school, age, social factors and other practical constraints (Cortazzi and Jin, 1996a, 2013). In the history of English Education in Indonesia, Indonesian students have been exposed to communicative approaches in teaching English since 1994 (Bachrudin, 2001) where learning is about using the language based on its function and context, and the emphasis is on student-centred learning.

It is argued that the different ways of learning are a product of interaction prior to school because teachers and students are raised and mentally programmed in their social transmitted beliefs and expectations (Hofstede, 1986; Cortazzi and Jin, 1996a, 2013; Jin and Cortazzi, 2006; Shi, 2006). However, it has been shown throughout the findings chapter that the students’ cultures of learning is mostly educational-transmitted experiences and values that learners have with them when learning in the classroom. The teachers themselves took an immense part in shaping the students’ beliefs, expectations and approaches to learning. The formulation of small culture as to how these students’ ways of learning were drawn into routines, rituals and reifications.

These students’ cultures of learning that are less influenced by their social cultures were affected by the fact that the learning of English in Indonesia emphasizes the communicative language teaching (CLT) (Marcellino, 2008; Larson, 2014). As an approach that focuses on communicative practices in the classroom where students have to use pragmatic, authentic and functional language in a productive and receptive way (Brown, 2007, p.243), students’ exposure to this approach may have shaped their understanding of what learning should be.

Although students in the current study still feel comfortable using book and or textbook in learning, it is not due to the traditional (Confucius, 2000) or religious views (Buddhism, Islamic, and Christianity emphasize the importance of using books in learning) but merely due to the English language education system in Indonesia that has made textbooks a main source of learning English since the students exposure to English in their primary education. The use of textbooks for teaching is evident way back during the Dutch colony in Indonesia where English was first taught in 1914 when junior high schools were established. English teaching books were buried after the occupation of Japan in Indonesia in order to demolish any British-related culture in Indonesia by the Japanese (Lauder, 2008). Therefore, the use of book/textbook in an education setting is not anything new in the current context.

The student participants from the two universities came from two different socially characteristic backgrounds that distinguish them in terms of their culture. The gap can be seen from the differences in the social system, religion and economy. These elements are a part of the students’ cultural resources that are influenced by their global position and politics, and personal trajectories (family, ancestry, and peers) (Holliday, 2010, 2013). Looking at the overall data findings, there is no indication of differences in students’ ways of learning from the two universities, despite the fact that they share totally different beliefs, traditions,

and customs. Therefore, the probable explanation is in the process of formatting a small culture; when students enter their learning community in schools, they might have bring with them their cultural resources, however, in the process of routinisation when these resources are embedded and shared in their new classroom community, the students might have unconsciously erased their cultural traits because of the strong influence of the teacher's pedagogical power and control over the students classroom endeavours.

In the current study, the students are in a phase where they have adapted to the small culture within their learning community that is mainly created and shaped by their teachers. Holliday (2013) explained that after the process of routinisation, individuals will experience the process of rituals, reification, and dualities where their routines become formal and normal practices (influenced by issues of hierarchies, obedience) that they might try to adapt or even resist. Studies on cultures of learning of students in their primary or secondary education (Cortazzi and Jin, 1996a; Glenwright, 2000; Kato, 2001; Shi, 2006; Falout *et al.*, 2013; Wang, 2013) have shown a strong influence of students' personal trajectories in learning a new language in the classroom - whereas adult learners as in the current study were already in the process of adapting to the years of their English learning experiences, therefore their beliefs and approaches to learning English are an accumulation of the education-transmitted cultures.

## CONCLUSION

Indonesian students being studied had a particular pattern of learning where they have a variety of preferences in learning English, their values for assessing a good teacher, a good student, teacher-student relationship, textbook, and asking questions. Indonesian students find it most comfortable to learn the language in a relaxed setting by engaging in activities like listening to songs, conversing with others, reading literature, and writing diaries or short stories. They generally favor learning with educational materials and through classroom interactions. However, some still opt for traditional methods like studying grammar from textbooks and receiving pronunciation guidance from teachers. Moreover, they view their relationship with teachers as that of educators and learners and are particularly mindful of maintaining their reputation or "face", where they avoid embarrassment out of respect when learning in the classroom with their peers and teachers. The Indonesian students' cultures of learning have given an overview of how these students' learning is less connected to their social culture but more to their exposure to the learning of English in Indonesia, which is being implemented with communicative language teaching..

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