

MEDIATING LOCAL WISDOM THROUGH STUDENTS' ENGLISH CULINARY TUTORIALS FOR GLOBAL AUDIENCES

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Abstract: *This study investigates how Indonesian university students mediate local wisdom and promote tolerance through English-language culinary tutorials on YouTube. Using multimodal discourse analysis and thematic analysis, the research examined five student-produced videos and reflective notes from thirteen participants. The findings reveal that students employed linguistic, visual, and paralinguistic strategies to communicate both procedural clarity and cultural meaning. They integrated religious and moral values, showcased regional diversity, and used English as a medium of intercultural storytelling. Through reflective engagement, learners demonstrated growth in intercultural communicative competence (ICC), including openness, empathy, and moral awareness. The study concludes that digital project-based learning enables students to act as cultural mediators—bridging local heritage with global audiences—while redefining English as an inclusive and ethical communicative tool rooted in Indonesian cultural identity.*

Keywords: *intercultural communicative competence, multimodal discourse analysis, local wisdom, English education, tolerance*

INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized era, English serves not only as an international lingua franca but also as a medium for intercultural communication and cultural representation. English language learning thus extends beyond grammatical mastery; it involves engaging with cultural meanings and expressing identity across contexts.¹ Learners who use English to share aspects of their local culture can develop intercultural communicative competence (ICC)—the ability to interact appropriately and effectively with people from other cultural backgrounds.² For students in multilingual and multicultural societies such as

¹ Michael Byram, *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*, Multilingual Matters (Multilingual Matters, 1997).

² Darla K. Deardorff, "Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization," *Journal of Studies in International Education* 10, no. 3 (2006): 241–66, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315306287002>.



Indonesia, English also becomes a tool for negotiating cultural hybridity while maintaining a sense of rootedness in local wisdom.³

Scholars have increasingly emphasized integrating local culture into English language education to prevent linguistic imperialism and foster students' cultural agency.⁴ In Indonesia, local wisdom includes traditional values, beliefs, and practices that shape identity and social harmony.⁵ Embedding these elements in English instruction promotes linguistic engagement and cultural pride while countering the marginalization of indigenous knowledge in global discourses.⁶ The integration of cultural content into EFL contexts also supports moral education and tolerance—two values central to Indonesian character education.⁷ However, English learning activities often remain limited to textual descriptions of culture rather than authentic intercultural communication tasks.⁸

Recent developments in digital and project-based learning have expanded opportunities for cultural expression through multimodal platforms.⁹ Tasks such as digital storytelling, vlog creation, and YouTube tutorials allow learners to engage global audiences while showcasing their local heritage.¹⁰ These tasks combine project-based learning (PjBL) principles—autonomy, creativity, and real-world application—with intercultural education goals.¹¹ Video-based tasks, in particular, enable learners to integrate linguistic, visual, and paralinguistic resources to construct culturally meaningful

³ Adrian Holliday, *Understanding Intercultural Communication: Negotiating a Grammar of Culture*, Second edition (Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351139526>.

⁴ Alastair Pennycook, *The Cultural Politics of English as an International Language*, Routledge Linguistics Classics (Routledge, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315225593>.

⁵ Muhammad Najib Al Adib, *LOCAL WISDOM-BASED CURRICULUM OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE: BRIDGING LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN INDONESIAN MADRASAH TSANAWIYAH*, 2025.

⁶ Ade Prasetyo, “Folklore in EFL: The Local Wisdom Implementation of Indonesian Curriculum,” *JER: Journal of ELT Research* 1, no. 2 (2016): 194–99.

⁷ Intan Zuhra et al., “INTEGRATING LOCAL WISDOM THROUGH PEUNAJOH-INDATU VIDEOS TO ENHANCE EFL STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS,” *Language Literacy: Journal of Linguistics, Literature, and Language Teaching* 8, no. 2 (2024): 701–10, <https://doi.org/10.30743/ll.v8i2.10200>.

⁸ Yenni Hasnah et al., “A Probe into Local Cultural Values in Locally Produced EFL Textbooks in Indonesia,” *Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Studies*, ahead of print, November 8, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.69598/hasss.24.3.268564>.

⁹ Yulianti Rasyid et al., “Enhancing Creative Narrative Writing Skills and Multimodal Communication Competence through a Digital Storytelling-Based Project-Based Learning Model,” *BAHA STRA* 45, no. 2 (2025): 232–40.

¹⁰ Yuslimu Ilmi et al., “Exploring Digital Multimodal Text in EFL Classroom: Transformed Practice in Multiliteracies Pedagogy,” *Linguistic, English Education and Art (LEEA) Journal* 4, no. 1 (2020): 99–108, <https://doi.org/10.31539/leea.v4i1.1416>.

¹¹ Wahyuni Wahyuni et al., “Improving Students' Speaking Skill Through Project-Based Learning (Digital Storytelling),” *English Education* 6, no. 2 (2018): 161, <https://doi.org/10.20961/eed.v6i2.35943>.



messages.¹² They also foster communicative reflection as learners consider how global viewers might interpret local symbols and practices.¹³

Previous studies have demonstrated the benefits of multimodal digital projects in enhancing language skills, motivation, and ICC.¹⁴ Yet, few investigations focus specifically on how students mediate local wisdom through culinary tutorials—a genre that naturally blends procedural explanation with cultural narration. Food, as a cultural artifact, reflects values of community, spirituality, and heritage.¹⁵ In Indonesia's diverse cultural context, traditional dishes often carry ritual or religious significance.¹⁶ Therefore, culinary tutorials in English not only serve as language practice but also function as intercultural mediation—students act as bridges translating cultural meanings for a global audience.

Despite the proliferation of EFL digital projects, empirical work examining this specific mediation process remains limited, particularly in Islamic-based Indonesian universities where cultural values strongly influence communication.¹⁷ Few studies combine discourse analysis of student-produced content with reflective data revealing learners' intercultural awareness. This dual-layered approach—analyzing both discourse and reflection—offers richer insight into how learners perform as cultural mediators. The present study addresses this gap by analyzing students' English-language culinary tutorials that introduce traditional Indonesian foods on YouTube, exploring how they express local wisdom, promote tolerance, and develop intercultural competence. Moreover, the study aims to (1) examine students' explanatory and linguistic strategies in English culinary tutorials; (2) identify how they embed cultural knowledge and values; and (3) analyze their reflections to reveal intercultural awareness and communicative intentions.

METHODS

This study used a qualitative research design by combining multimodal discourse analysis (MDA)¹⁸ and thematic analysis¹⁹ to examine how students mediate local wisdom through English culinary tutorials. MDA helped uncover meaning-making across linguistic,

¹² Ferry Hadriyan et al., "The Use of Multimodal Discourse Analysis to Study the Relationship Between Visual, Lingual, and Written Text of Artificial Intelligence in TED (Technology, Entertainment, and Design) Talks YouTube Channel," *English Education Journal* 12, no. 4 (2022): 638–54, <https://doi.org/10.15294/eej.v12i4.68908>.

¹³ Tri Asiati et al., "Intercultural Awareness Through Indonesian Gastronomy with European Flavours in The Midst of Plurilingualism Political Framework," *Jurnal Lingua Idea* 15, no. 1 (2024): 16, <https://doi.org/10.20884/1.jli.2024.15.1.9438>.

¹⁴ Rasyid et al., "Enhancing Creative Narrative Writing Skills and Multimodal Communication Competence through a Digital Storytelling-Based Project-Based Learning Model."

¹⁵ Safrina Arifiani Felayati et al., "Fostering Cultural Awareness through Gastronomy in UNSOED Student," *SPHOTA: Jurnal Linguistik Dan Sastra* 17, no. 1 (2025): 66–78, <https://doi.org/10.36733/sphota.v17i1.10235>.

¹⁶ Asiati et al., "Intercultural Awareness Through Indonesian Gastronomy with European Flavours in The Midst of Plurilingualism Political Framework."

¹⁷ Sari Dewi Noviyanti, "Intercultural Communicative Competence Based Learning Model For Teaching Efl In Islamic Higher Education In 21st Century," *Proceeding of Conference on English Language Teaching (CELTI)* 4 (June 2024): 108–21.

¹⁸ Gunther R. Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, *Multimodal Discourse: The Modes and Media of Contemporary Communication*, Reprinted (Bloomsbury Academic, 2017).

¹⁹ Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, *Thematic Analysis: A Practical Guide* (SAGE, 2022).



visual, and gestural modes; while thematic analysis identified recurring themes in students’ reflections. Together, these approaches provided a comprehensive understanding of both observable discourse strategies and students’ subjective experiences.

Thirteen undergraduate students from an English Education study program at a private university in Jember, East Java, Indonesia voluntarily joined the study. The participants created 3–5-minute English videos in groups consisting of two to three people. Through the videos, each group demonstrated how to make a traditional Indonesian food or beverage, namely *dadar gulung*, *es kopi cendol*, *es pisang ijo*, *bubur sumsum*, as well as *pisang goreng* and *tape goreng*. Then, while integrating cultural explanation with cooking instructions, the participants uploaded these videos on YouTube for global audiences.

Data sources included video transcriptions and participants’ written reflections. Each video was transcribed verbatim and annotated for visual and gestural modes following multimodal transcription guidelines. The analysis focused on explanatory patterns (e.g., sequencing verbs such as *add*, *mix*, *serve*), cultural contextualization (e.g., use of local terms, narratives about rituals or history), and linguistic choices (e.g., inclusive pronouns *we*, *our*) that position students as cultural mediators. Meanwhile, reflective notes were analyzed thematically using Braun and Clarke’s six-phase framework^[9] to identify perceptions of intercultural awareness, identity expression, and communicative strategies. Finally, the two data sets were compared and triangulated to ensure interpretive coherence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The analysis combined MDA of five student-produced video tutorials on YouTube and thematic analysis of thirteen students’ reflective notes. The results reveal that not only did the participants demonstrate procedural and linguistic competence in English; but they also developed ICC by integrating cultural explanation, translation strategies, and audience awareness.

Thematic Findings from Student Reflections

Analysis of the reflective notes produced four dominant themes: (1) cultural identity and heritage, (2) adaptation for global audiences, (3) intercultural awareness and tolerance, and (4) community and moral values. These themes capture how students perceived their learning and communicative experiences throughout the culinary tutorial project.

Cultural identity and heritage emerged as the most consistent theme, found in all thirteen reflections. Students expressed pride in their culinary heritage and viewed English as a medium for sharing it globally. One reflection stated, “*Dadar gulung represents not just a sweet snack but a reminder of our Indonesian heritage that we can proudly share in English.*” Another noted, “*Explaining bubur sumsum in English helped me see that our food is also our story.*” These reflections highlight how students



connected linguistic performance with cultural preservation, using English as a bridge between local identity and global communication.

The theme of adaptation for global audiences appeared in twelve reflections. Students reflected on modifying their language, providing analogies, and translating local terms to make their tutorials comprehensible to non-Indonesian viewers. For example, one participant wrote, *"We compared pandan to vanilla so international audiences could imagine the smell."* Another noted, *"We said 'tape goreng' means fried fermented cassava to help others understand the flavor."* These adaptive practices reveal early forms of intercultural mediation—students anticipated cultural differences and sought linguistic strategies to address them.

Intercultural awareness and tolerance appeared in all reflections and signaled personal and relational growth. Students recognized the value of learning about other cultures while expressing pride in their own. One student wrote, *"This project made me realize that every culture has special meaning, and we should share ours respectfully."* Another observed that *"explaining Indonesian food taught me to be open-minded because our culture is different but not less."* These comments align with Byram's concept of attitudes of curiosity and openness, key to ICC.²⁰

Finally, community and moral values emerged in four reflections. Students described traditional foods as carriers of social harmony and spirituality. One reflection explained, *"When we eat together, we practice tolerance and togetherness."* Another noted, *"We began the video with 'Assalamualaikum' to respect our culture, but everyone is welcome to watch."* These reflections reveal that for many students, language learning was inseparable from the moral and communal aspects of local wisdom.

In summary, students' reflections suggest that culinary tutorials facilitated cultural pride, audience awareness, and intercultural reflection. Learners demonstrated the ability to mediate meaning, respect diversity, and translate cultural values through English—core competencies of ICC.

Theme	Core Meaning	Illustrative Excerpts	Frequency (out of 13)
Cultural identity & heritage	Expressing pride and preserving traditional food culture through English use	"Sharing our traditional snacks in English made me feel proud."	13
Adaptation for global audiences	Translating, simplifying, and explaining local concepts for non-Indonesian viewers	"We compared pandan to vanilla so global viewers could imagine it."	12
Intercultural awareness & tolerance	Developing understanding and respect toward other cultures through self-representation	"All cultures have meaning, and we must respect each."	13

²⁰ Byram, *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*.



Theme	Core Meaning	Illustrative Excerpts	Frequency (out of 13)
Community & moral values	Emphasizing togetherness, faith, and hospitality through food-sharing narratives	“We said ‘Assalamualaikum’ to show respect but also invited everyone.”	4

Table I. Summary of Thematic Analysis from Student Reflections

Multimodal and Linguistic Patterns in the Video Tutorials

The multimodal discourse analysis of five student videos—*dadar gulung*, *es kopi cendol*, *es pisang ijo*, *bubur sumsum*, and *pisang/tape goreng*—revealed consistent strategies for mediating local wisdom. Each video combined visual, linguistic, and gestural resources to communicate both procedural clarity and cultural significance.

1. Instructional Sequencing and Audience Engagement

All tutorials followed a clear structure typical of instructional discourse: greetings, ingredient listing, procedural explanation, and closing remarks. Sequencing markers such as “*first*,” “*next*,” “*after that*,” and “*finally*” guided the viewers logically. In the *fried banana* video, for instance, one speaker narrated: “*The first step is peeling the bananas... Next, add enough water and mix... Finally, fry them until golden.*” Such structured sequencing ensured clarity and reflected awareness of global tutorial norms.

Every group greeted viewers directly, either with “*Hello everyone*” or “*Assalamualaikum*.” The latter was often followed by a translation or English equivalent, showing efforts to remain inclusive. These hybrid openings demonstrated the students’ dual role as local representatives and global communicators.

2. Cultural Contextualization and Translation Strategies

All videos retained local food names but combined them with English explanations—e.g., “*dadar gulung*, or coconut pancake roll,” and “*tape goreng*, fried fermented cassava.” This code-mixing served dual purposes: preserving cultural authenticity and ensuring international comprehensibility.

Three videos included explicit cultural commentary, such as when dishes were traditionally eaten or how they symbolized community. The *bubur sumsum* tutorial mentioned Ramadan gatherings; *es pisang ijo* was described as a festive dish; and *dadar gulung* was introduced as “a sweet snack popular across Java.” These small yet deliberate inclusions contextualized food as cultural expression rather than mere recipe.

3. Inclusive Language and Interpersonal Tone

Students consistently used inclusive and interpersonal expressions—“we usually,” “our culture,” “you can try”—to build rapport with viewers. Four of the five videos concluded with phrases like “*Enjoy your meal*” or “*See you next time*,” following global YouTube conventions while maintaining hospitality rooted in Indonesian politeness norms. Such engagement constructs what Kress and van



Leeuwen call “interpersonal meaning,” where multimodal signs (speech, gaze, gesture) foster solidarity.²¹

4. Gestures and Visual Semiotics

Visual and gestural elements enhanced meaning. Gestures—pointing, stirring, or demonstrating ingredients—reinforced verbal explanations. Students looked directly at the camera, smiled, and used rhythmic movement synchronized with narration. Visual design further highlighted local identity: several videos featured batik-patterned cloths, traditional bowls, and wooden utensils. The *es kopi cendol* video even displayed banana leaves and coconut shells, introducing visual ethnographic detail that reinforced authenticity.

Feature	Description	Occurrence (out of 5 videos)	Example
Sequencing markers	Use of “first,” “next,” “finally” to structure steps	5	“First, we prepare the pandan leaves...”
Greeting & closing	Hybrid cultural openings (Islamic or general) and global sign-offs	5	“Assalamualaikum... Hello everyone!” / “Enjoy your meal.”
Local term + translation	Combining Indonesian names with English glosses	5	“Tape goreng or fried fermented cassava”
Cultural contextualization	Mentioning origin, tradition, or event	3	“This dessert is usually served during Ramadan.”
Inclusive pronouns	Using “we,” “our,” “you can” for solidarity	5	“We usually eat this in the afternoon.”
Gesture alignment	Using hand movements to match actions	5	Stirring while saying “mix well.”
Visual symbols	Including traditional items (utensils, batik, leaves)	4	Wooden spoons, banana leaves, etc.

Table 2. Observed Discourse and Multimodal Strategies in Student Tutorials

Discussion

The results reveal that English-language culinary tutorials created by Indonesian university students are not simply instructional tasks but rich acts of intercultural

²¹ Kress and Leeuwen, *Multimodal Discourse*.



mediation, identity construction, and cultural translation. Through both linguistic and multimodal means, the students navigated between two worlds—the global communicative function of English and the local meanings embedded in traditional cuisine. Their reflections and discourse practices illuminate how digital project-based learning can nurture intercultural communicative competence (ICC), intercultural awareness, and moral consciousness simultaneously.

Food as a Medium of Cultural Narration and Mediation

The culinary tutorials transformed cooking into cultural storytelling. Students' choices of dishes such as *bubur sumsum*, *es pisang ijo*, or *dadar gulung* demonstrate how food embodies collective memory, identity, and moral value in Indonesian communities. In presenting these dishes in English, students performed what Byram (1997) terms “the act of mediation”—interpreting meanings across cultural systems and making local practices comprehensible to others.²² Their discourse did not merely describe ingredients or steps but constructed a narrative of belonging and cultural pride.

This use of English as a vehicle for expressing local wisdom challenges the conventional notion of English as a foreign or external language. Instead, it becomes a “glocal” medium, enabling learners to affirm national identity within a global frame. Such linguistic hybridity aligns with Pennycook's (2017) argument that English is no longer a monolithic language but a resource for identity performance and cultural negotiation.²³ Through their tutorials, students re-appropriated English for Indonesian purposes, positioning themselves as cultural ambassadors rather than passive learners.

Food's symbolic role in the tutorials also reveals how material culture mediates moral and spiritual values. As Wijaya (2019) notes, “food is a daily reaffirmation of cultural identity through symbolic meanings of ritual, traditions, and special occasions.”²⁴ When students explained when and why certain dishes are served (e.g., *bubur sumsum* during Ramadan), they embedded these moral codes within their English discourse. This moral encoding turns their tutorials into intercultural narratives where the preparation of food simultaneously becomes an act of social reflection.

Moreover, several groups began their videos with “*Assalamualaikum*” before greeting in English. This linguistic layering demonstrates intercultural inclusivity, balancing Islamic courtesy with global accessibility. In an Islamic-based higher education context, such as the students' university in Jember, this blending of faith-based and global discourse reflects *interreligious tolerance through communication*. By maintaining cultural and religious greetings while using English as a lingua franca, students practice coexistence discursively. Their performance exemplifies what Deardorff (2006) describes as the ethical dimension of ICC—communicating with openness, curiosity, and respect toward difference.²⁵

Performing ICC

²² Byram, *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*.

²³ Pennycook, *The Cultural Politics of English as an International Language*.

²⁴ Serli Wijaya, “Indonesian Food Culture Mapping: A Starter Contribution to Promote Indonesian Culinary Tourism,” *Journal of Ethnic Foods* 6, no. 1 (2019): 9, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42779-019-0009-3>.

²⁵ Deardorff, “Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization.”



The project concretely manifested multiple dimensions of Byram's ICC model—attitudes, knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness.²⁶ Students' reflections revealed positive *attitudes* of curiosity and openness; their narratives about explaining Indonesian food to foreigners illustrate empathy and adaptability. For example, they frequently described rephrasing terms, providing analogies (e.g., "*pandan is like vanilla*"), and explaining cultural significance ("This dessert is served during Ramadan"). These instances demonstrate the skills of interpreting and relating—understanding another's perspective while articulating one's own culture in ways that foster mutual understanding.

In terms of *knowledge*, students demonstrated awareness of cultural diversity within Indonesia itself. By selecting dishes from different regions (Java, Makassar, Madura), they recognized internal plurality while presenting a unified national image. This reflects what Holliday (2018) calls "small culture formation"—situated intercultural communication rooted in local communities rather than abstract national stereotypes.²⁷ By representing regional foods, the learners enacted Indonesia's cultural diversity as a resource for global dialogue.

Their skills of discovery and interaction were visible in both verbal and visual modes. Linguistically, they experimented with vocabulary and simplified grammar to ensure clarity. Nonverbally, they used gestures, gaze, and camera framing to simulate interpersonal engagement—supporting research which shows that bodily and visual signals (for example eye-gaze and gesture) often engage learners more deeply than only textual input.²⁸ In this sense, the students' digital tutorials represent moments of intercultural emergence: they not only described cultural artifacts but discovered how to communicate cultural identity in globalized digital space.

Finally, the project stimulated critical cultural awareness—the ability to evaluate cultural practices from multiple perspectives. Students reflected that the process made them revalue local traditions they had taken for granted. One wrote, "*I realized our traditional foods have deep meaning; before this, I just ate them.*" This metacognitive shift demonstrates critical engagement with one's own culture, a hallmark of intercultural learning. By reflecting critically on local wisdom, students began to see themselves not as mere cultural inheritors but as cultural interpreters.

Multimodal Literacy and the Semiotics of Intercultural Communication

Beyond linguistic content, the multimodal dimension of the tutorials plays a central role in intercultural mediation. Kress and van Leeuwen (2009) describe multimodality as the orchestration of multiple semiotic resources—language, image, gesture, color, sound—to construct meaning.²⁹ In these tutorials, multimodal meaning-making was evident in how students aligned verbal narration with visual display. Gestures

²⁶ Byram, *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*.

²⁷ Holliday, *Understanding Intercultural Communication*.

²⁸ Sara Feijoo and Mariona Anglada, "Multimodal Input in the Foreign Language Classroom: The Use of Hand Gesture to Teach Morphology in L2 Spanish," *Frontiers in Communication* 9 (April 2024): 1370898, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2024.1370898>.

²⁹ Kress and Leeuwen, *Multimodal Discourse*.



synchronized with imperative verbs (“mix,” “stir,” “pour”) and facial expressions (smiling, direct gaze) created immediacy and warmth, reducing cultural distance.

Visual design elements, such as batik tablecloths, coconut shells, and banana leaves, served as nonverbal cues of authenticity. These visual tokens of local identity complemented the verbal explanation, together forming what Kress and van Leeuwen term “intersemiotic complementarity.” The images did not merely illustrate; they symbolized Indonesian aesthetics and values, allowing international viewers to infer context beyond words. This visual ethnography turned each tutorial into a *micro-cultural performance*.

The students’ multimodal creativity also underscores digital literacy as intercultural literacy. The YouTube platform enabled participants to imagine real audiences and construct visual personas aligned with global communicative norms. For example, phrases such as “Hello everyone” and “See you next time” mirrored global digital discourse, while the local imagery preserved authenticity. According to Lotherington and Jenson, multimodal and digital literacy practices in L2 settings allow learners to “use a variety of representational modes (visual, audio, gestural, spatial, tactile) to participate in globalised media-rich communication” (2011, 230).³⁰ This hybridity—global form, local content—represents a semiotic negotiation of cultural identity in global communication.

Additionally, the tutorials’ interpersonal orientation—use of inclusive pronouns (“we,” “our,” “you can”) and polite imperatives—signals relational positioning. Students positioned themselves as both hosts and teachers, inviting the viewer into a shared cultural experience. The linguistic hospitality displayed here mirrors Indonesian *tata krama* (etiquette) values of warmth and respect. Thus, the multimodal data show how traditional politeness values extend into digital intercultural communication, reaffirming the moral grounding of local wisdom.

Globalization, Identity, and Cultural Agency

The project unfolded within a globalized educational environment where English often symbolizes modernization and mobility. Yet, rather than losing cultural specificity, the students’ work demonstrates cultural agency—the capacity to articulate local identity within global discourse. By using English to describe Indonesian foods, students resisted the homogenizing tendencies of global culture, re-centering Indonesian narratives within a global platform.

Students strategically mixed Indonesian and English terms, preserving local semantics while enhancing intelligibility. For instance, the choice to retain words such as “*cendol*” or “*tape*” rather than replace them with English approximations signals linguistic ownership—a declaration that these words, and by extension the culture they signify, deserve global recognition. Research in the Indonesian EFL context shows that bilingual learners often insert Indonesian lexical items within English discourse not only to clarify

³⁰ Heather Lotherington and Jennifer Jenson, “Teaching Multimodal and Digital Literacy in L2 Settings: New Literacies, New Basics, New Pedagogies,” *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 31 (March 2011): 226–46, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190511000110>.



meaning but also to maintain cultural-identity markers and assert their local voice within global communication.³¹

Furthermore, the digital platform itself serves as an arena of cultural citizenship. Uploading their tutorials on YouTube allowed students to represent Indonesian culture to global audiences, fulfilling the civic dimension of ICC as proposed by Byram.³² They became “ambassadors of culture,” a role that merges linguistic ability with social responsibility. The act of performing hospitality and tolerance through language and visuals transforms intercultural competence from theory into praxis.

This expression of agency is particularly significant in Islamic-based Indonesian higher education, where English is sometimes viewed as culturally neutral or Western. By embedding religious and moral symbols (greetings, modest attire, communal values) into their English performances, the students redefined English as a moral, inclusive, and spiritual tool rather than a secular one—a practice that aligns with findings that English language teaching in Indonesian Islamic tertiary institutions is framed not just for linguistic gain but for faith-strengthening and virtue building.³³ Here, moral virtue and intercultural openness are not contradictory; they are complementary expressions of humanity.

Intercultural Tolerance and Ethical Communication

A notable dimension emerging from both reflections and discourse data is the articulation of tolerance and empathy. Students frequently linked food-sharing to moral values such as generosity and unity. One participant wrote, “When we cook together or eat together, we practice tolerance and respect.” This resonates with research showing that intentional food-sharing occasions foster prosocial behaviour and strengthen communal trust: for example, in a study of voluntary food-sharing among previously unacquainted individuals, sharing food was shown to increase assessment of the sharer as more prosocial.³⁴

Tolerance here is not treated as passive acceptance but as active understanding—communicating one’s culture in ways that invite curiosity rather than defensiveness. According to Melikov, Tabasaranskii, and Akhmedova (2019), genuine intercultural engagement goes beyond merely tolerating difference to consciously broadening one’s own value framework through open interaction with others.³⁵ By explaining Islamic greetings, regional traditions, and social rituals in English, students transformed potentially exclusive symbols into inclusive dialogue.

This moral discourse is particularly salient in the Indonesian context, where pluralism and harmony are core educational values. Integrating *local wisdom* in English

³¹ Nur Fitamala Sari, “Code Switching and Code Mixing in Classroom Presentation of Indonesian EFL Students,” *EDUCASIA: Jurnal Pendidikan, Pengajaran, Dan Pembelajaran*, November 1, 2022, 91–120, <https://doi.org/10.21462/educasia.v7i2.71>.

³² Byram, *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*.

³³ Nisa Syuhda et al., “Contextualizing Islamic Traditions in English Language Teaching at Indonesian Islamic Higher Education,” *Forum for Linguistic Studies* 6, no. 3 (2024): 260–73, <https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v6i3.6739>.

³⁴ Chujun Wang et al., “Food Sharing With Choice: Influence on Social Evaluation,” *Frontiers in Psychology* 11 (August 2020): 2070, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.02070>.

³⁵ Ibragim Melikov* et al., “Dialogue Of Cultures As An Alternative To Tolerance In Intercultural Communication,” December 28, 2019, 2222–29, <https://doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2019.12.04.296>.



tasks aligns with the national vision of education, which aims to cultivate not only intellectual but ethical and intercultural maturity. In this sense, the project embodies Indonesia’s broader educational philosophy: that learning a global language should reinforce, not replace, cultural identity and moral integrity.

The Convergence of Language, Culture, and Faith in Digital Space

Another dimension illuminated by this study is the intersection of language, culture, and faith in students’ intercultural expression. Islamic greetings, modest visual presentation, and references to Ramadan embedded in some tutorials signify the coexistence of religious and cultural identity within English use. Rather than fragmenting their identities, students integrated them holistically, illustrating what Holliday (2018) calls the “grammar of culture”—the fluid, context-specific combination of beliefs and practices shaping communication.³⁶

The simultaneous use of Islamic expressions and global English conventions challenges the secular bias often attributed to English language education. According to Mulyati & Kultsum (2023), integrating Islamic and cultural values into English instruction empowers Muslim-students by aligning language learning with their faith and cultural identity.³⁷ By embedding religious and moral symbols (greetings, modest attire, communal values) into their English performances, the students redefined English as a moral, inclusive, and spiritual tool rather than a secular one. Here, moral virtue and intercultural openness are not contradictory; they are complementary expressions of humanity.

These findings contribute to reimagining ICC not merely as a linguistic skill but as *moral intercultural praxis*. The students’ respectful manner of address, modest performance, and commitment to hospitality reflect a spiritual form of communicative competence. Their use of English becomes an extension of *akhlaq* (ethical conduct), resonating with Islamic pedagogical traditions that prioritize courtesy and empathy.

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that English-language culinary tutorials function as rich intercultural spaces where students connect language learning with moral, cultural, and digital expression. Through multimodal discourse and reflective engagement, learners not only practiced linguistic accuracy but also performed acts of cultural mediation—translating, explaining, and celebrating local wisdom for global audiences. Their English use became a bridge between local identity and international intelligibility.

The findings affirm that project-based multimodal tasks foster intercultural communicative competence (ICC) by integrating attitudes of openness, skills of interpretation, and critical cultural awareness. Students’ discourse revealed moral and spiritual values embedded in food-sharing, hospitality, and respectful address—showing

³⁶ Holliday, *Understanding Intercultural Communication*.

³⁷ Yatni Fatwa Mulyati and Ummi Kultsum, “The Integration of Islamic and Cultural Values in English Teaching,” *IDEAS: Journal on English Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature* 11, no. 1 (2023): 703–11, <https://doi.org/10.24256/ideas.v1i1.3942>.



that language education in Islamic higher education contexts can simultaneously cultivate intercultural tolerance and ethical communication.

Ultimately, this research contributes to reimagining English teaching as a site of *intercultural formation* rather than mere linguistic training. By positioning learners as cultural ambassadors and moral communicators, EFL classrooms can nurture globally minded yet locally grounded individuals who embody both cultural pride and empathy. Such integration of language, culture, and faith affirms that intercultural competence is not only communicative but also ethical, creative, and humanistic.

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