Dissecting Cultural Identity Construction among EFL Learners: Voices from the Periphery

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Abstract. This paper investigates how English as a foreign language (EFL) learners construct their cultural identity and how globalisation influences this construction. It also explores studies on globalisation and English language learning in EFL contexts, focusing on students living in peripheral areas. 44 EFL learners aged between 18 and 25 years old were the participants in the study. The study utilized a mixed-method descriptive approach as the foundational framework for this research. The quantitative data consists of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. They were collected using open-ended questions and then supplemented with semi-structured questions. The qualitative approach is further supported by previous research on cultural identity, such as cultural identity projection analysis and the influence of globalization on education. The study revealed that EFL English learners express their cultural identity through various aspects, such as their interactions with others, self-perception as students in a globalized world, and the impact of globalization on their identity. Students' cultural identity in peripheral areas is influenced by nationality, lifestyle, language, local community, education, cultural shock, mass media, and political beliefs. These elements influence the construction of an individual's cultural identity.

Keywords: *Cultural Identity, EFL Learners, Globalization, Peripheral*

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INTRODUCTION

Research on globalization has become the main issue characterizing the state of the world. Nowadays, it is inevitable that globalization has absorbed every human's walk of life penetrating the aspect of life including but not limited to political, socio-economic, educational as well as cultural. The term globalization has come into a debate among scholars, some focusing on its impact on economic, and political matters and some others concerned on the trajectory line of it to the vulnerability of disintegration of certain nation's identity, yet some have put their attention on the cultural concerns of this phenomenon and how this has affected and shaped different aspect of culture to be written in English using standardized academic writing structure and composition.

Concerning globalization, there seems to be a vigorous bond between language and cultural identity construction at the societal level, from the center to the periphery. Culture and globalization are two divergent features of different people. Globalization and emerging culture are profoundly linked and involve mutual interaction (Tomlinson, 1999). One of the dominant consequences of globalization is the spread and connectivity of languages, particularly the English language (Crystal, 2003). As a product of culture, language is one of the most effective instruments for determining an individual's identity, behavior, perception, and cultural heritage. English has become a lingua franca, and the activity of learning English has resulted in one of the most influential rooms for the deployment of cultural values in English-speaking countries(Byram & Feng, 2005; Tajeddin & Ghaffaryan, 2020; Upali, 2016).

According to Block (2010), learning and teaching English is currently the most effective medium for conveying globalization and promoting the domination of English-speaking cultures. In the context of such a rapidly changing world, it is presumable that the young generation will find it challenging to construct their social identities, especially concerning the nature of education and external cultural influences. According to Giddens (1990), globalization is the development of worldwide social interactions that connect distant places where local happenings are impacted by events occurring miles away and vice versa. He added that globalization is commonly viewed as a force that radiates outward, projecting away from local communities and into the global arena.

The most critical argument is about cultural globalization. The arguments refer to the cultural identity trajectory among teenagers residing in the periphery and the role of mass media as facilitating factors in shaping their cultural identity. The current research, portrayed under the sociolinguistics of globalization, is an attempt to scrutinize how EFL students in the periphery context project their cultural identity and to profoundly investigate how the globalized world shapes students' cultural identity. The above situation is in line with Bloomaert's (2008) statement that sees the process of globalization in the periphery context. It is especially relevant when considering globalization processes from the center to the periphery. We observe the relocalization of global depiction, discussions, and behavior patterns into pre-existing, robust, and enduring patterns. Peripheral local communities are touched by the structure of globalization, self-presentation, and image remain firmly local. Societies with deep inequality create strata and niches with different lifestyles based on rules, norms, and irrelevant opportunities.

The need to investigate this issue has become more crucial because the subject has also been relatively under-researched, particularly on exploring periphery students projecting their cultural identity and how the wave of globalization has shaped their cultural identity as students residing in the peripheral. Hence, to fill the gaps, this study

will broaden the scope and dimensions of the themes of the analysis by outlining two essential objectives: first, how do EFL students in the periphery context project their cultural identity, and second, what ways the globalized world has shaped their cultural identity. Using data from surveys and questionnaires taken in Lampung Regency, a region located geographically and economically on Sumatera island's periphery, this research demonstrates how peripheral contexts should be viewed as critical sites for understanding the current sociolinguistics of globalization.

Globalization is another significant issue in this study. Understanding the scope of this term is pivotal to the readers' comprehension of this research. Given the variety of definitions of the fundamental term "globalization," this cannot be reduced to a single universal definition. Therefore, at this point, the researcher would like to outline the definition of globalization under the sociolinguistics of globalization concerning cultural identity in a peripheral context. From the perspective of globalization, the research utilizes the notion of globalization coined by Appadurai (2008). Globalization, as he suggested, is the ever-changing and "flowing" of technology, "techno-scapes," economics, "finance-scapes," media "mediascapes," and ideology "ideo-scapes" via the movement of people across cultural and national borders. He explains that "Scapes" refers to the result of processes, given material shape and meaning by human action. These "flows" via "-scapes" alter perceptions of "center" and "periphery," resulting in imagined worlds constructed by different people and groups.

As local cultures change in response to globalization, some young people feel at home in neither local nor global culture (Doku, 2011). Globalization is changing the cultures it touches, and the deployment of globalization is bringing changes to the cultures affected, though the changes do not mean the deletion of the native traditional values attached within (Kaul, 2012).

If cultural identities are becoming increasingly homogenized, it is important to delve more into the subject from several perspectives. Investigating the relationship between globalization and cultural identity will show the direct and indirect effects and the number of future generations that may suffer.

Cultural identity mingling may occur among people whose local culture is rapidly altered by globalization. Globalization has become a tool for the mingling of peoples and identities and local space by distance. According to Bochner (1973), as cited in Kaul (2012), "the cultural identity of a society is characterized by its majority group, and this group is relatively recognizable from the minority sub-groups with whom they share the physical environment and the space that they inhabit." The notions of cultural identity involve the shared principles, values, definitions, and beliefs and the day-to-day, largely unconscious, patterning of interactions or activities. Second, individual cultural identity relates to their culture and is defined as a functioning aspect of individual personality. Cultural identities are shaped and constructed by different factors such as religion, nationality, gender, language, local community, education, profession, family, and political attitudes. These factors contribute to one's cultural identity development (Esquivel et al., 2021).

While the study of how globalization affects students' identity construction is not new, there has been a recent surge in interest among researchers in examining the impact of globalization on English language learning for EFL learners in peripheral contexts. Many of these studies emphasize the positive effects of globalization, as discussed by Poggensee (2016). She highlights the importance of learners' perceptions regarding English as a global language in Senegal and the United States about access to education and employment. It demonstrates that the educational possibilities for pupils learning English

are more accessible and abundant and shows that the opportunities within the education setting are more open and available for students learning English. The aim of learning English, especially for Senegal students, is to communicate with others. A deterioration in their language is seen as an effect of globalization, but it is not threatening as they experience an impact of the effect of globalization.

Azhari (2017) found a contradiction in the impact of globalization on language learning and stated that EFL learners do not necessarily imitate the native speakers in their inner circle when learning English. Moreover, students in foreign countries are free to express themselves in English. Teachers must be aware of incorporating students' identities into English. This makes them to be fluent in English and proud of their identity.

Jewel and Haque (2018) found that globalization has affected English. Their research highlighted a looming requirement for educating and socially sharpening EFL students on the social status of English as a universal dialect and communication in English-speaking towns. This research focused on the reflection of students' perceived the contribution of globalization to spreading the English language in their lives. A different perspective on the reflection of globalization on cultural identity was addressed by Wang (2008), who proposed that globalization has improved cultural identity. According to this viewpoint, accepting other cultures allows people to become more self-aware of their cultural identities than they perceived before. Furthermore, Wang (2008) highlighted that globalization, rather than homogeneity, might contribute to a sense of interconnectedness or togetherness from one to another. From this concept, globalization might be viewed as the facilitator of cultural identities.

In respect of how students project their cultural identity is depicted by some other researchers. Seppälä (2011) brought the impacts of Globalization on the Cultural identity of Chinese University Students in China. With Ethnographic Research and qualitative methods. Her findings found that the Western lifestyle and values increased in China. Yet participants' language attitudes strengthened one's cultural identity as a resistance. There is a pressure to learn English in China. Students have positive values in learning English since it gives them a better future.

Azhar et al. (2014) are concerned with the effects of globalization on youth cultural identity. They studied globalization's impact on young socio-cultural identities. Through technical advancements and Western imperialism, globalization has an effect on young cultural identity. Globalization has reduced the significance of local cultural activities.

A study by Roy and Al Harthy (2022) investigated the impact of the Indiana University of Pennsylvania classroom environment on overseas students' cultural identity construction. The findings show that life experiences and early problems were the most essential variables influencing the construction of international students' cultural identities. To develop their cultural identities, the international students went through the steps of the acculturation paradigm.

However, far too little attention has been paid to cultural identity construction in the EFL context and in what ways globalization has shaped their cultural identity construction, and studies concerning globalization and English language learning in the EFL context seen from the students residing in periphery situatedness in specific are rare. Thus, the formulation of the research problems is as follows:

(1) How did EFL learners in a peripheral context project their cultural identity?

(2) In what ways did the globalized world shape their cultural identity?

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

The study utilizes qualitative and quantitative methodologies, including theories and findings from the literature, to analyze cultural identity projection and the influence of globalization on students' cultural identity by Creswell and Guetterman (2018). According to Creswell and Guetterman (2018), the mixed method research commences with a comprehensive survey to generalize results to a population. Subsequently, in a subsequent phase, it concentrates on qualitative, open-ended interviews to gather detailed perspectives from participants to elucidate the initial quantitative survey. Mixed-method qualitative research provides numerical descriptions of trends, attitudes, and opinions.

Research Participants and Sampling Procedures

A total of 44 Lampungnese students who study English at a university located in Lampung Regency, a periphery situatedness region out of and far-reaching of the capital city of Indonesia, were recruited as the sampling for the questionnaire stage. Ranging in ages from 18 to 25, the participants consisted of male and female students. Most of them had resided in Lampung Regency for five to twenty years.

Data Collection

A semi-interview and questionnaire were conducted to get the data. This will also employ a questionnaire as a separate investigation to answer the research question on how globalization shapes their cultural identity. The student's cultural identity is investigated by utilizing a variety of items on a Likert scale, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." The initial pool of items was developed after examining the relevant literature and prior investigations. The participants are chosen from only 12 out of 44 students involved in an interview session. To conduct the interview, the researcher selected samples of participants based on the students who are accessible and know the researchers. Furthermore, the interview session will be recorded to make it easier for the researcher to collect and analyze the data, and it will be transcribed and interpreted to answer the second research question, which deals with how globalization has shaped their cultural identity construction who learn English residing in a periphery context.

Data Analysis

The data analysis for this study was methodically designed, using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to enable a thorough interpretation of data acquired through questionnaires and interviews. The quantitative research includes calculating mean scores from Likert scale responses to determine how EFL learners project their cultural identities. Iterative coding was used to uncover and refine reoccurring themes based on semi-structured interviews. This approach involved familiarizing with the data, creating initial codes, and combining or separating themes to capture the intricacies of

students' experiences, resulting in a thorough comprehension of the practical components of translanguaging(Nowell et al., 2017).

Setting

The participants studied EFL in Lampung Regency, a peripheral region of the capital city of Indonesia. The primary languages in the region are Indonesian and English, with some individuals incorporating vernacular languages in their daily communication in English classroom contexts.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Figure 1. Student's cultural background
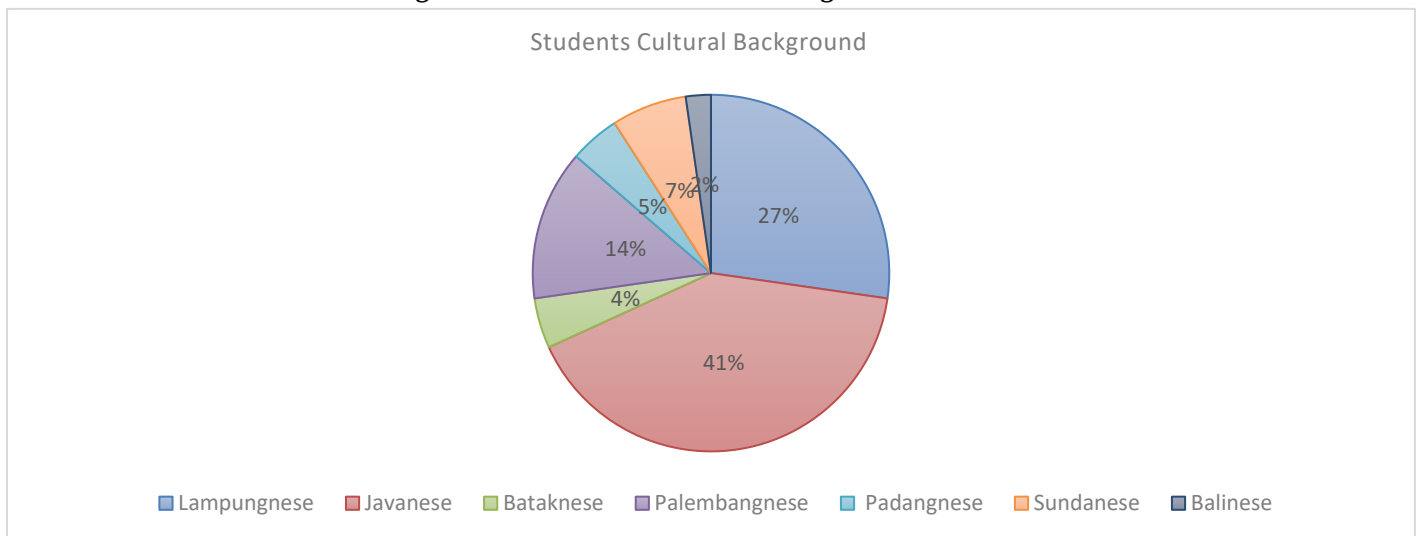
The research findings begin with the demographic information of the respondents in this survey. According to Figure 1.1, 44 respondents were from various ethnicities in Lampung Regency.
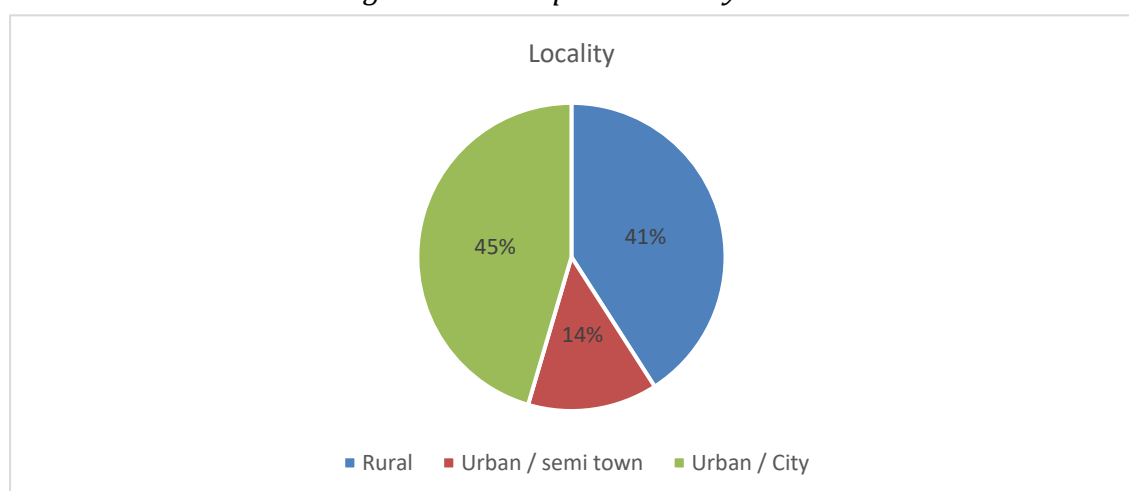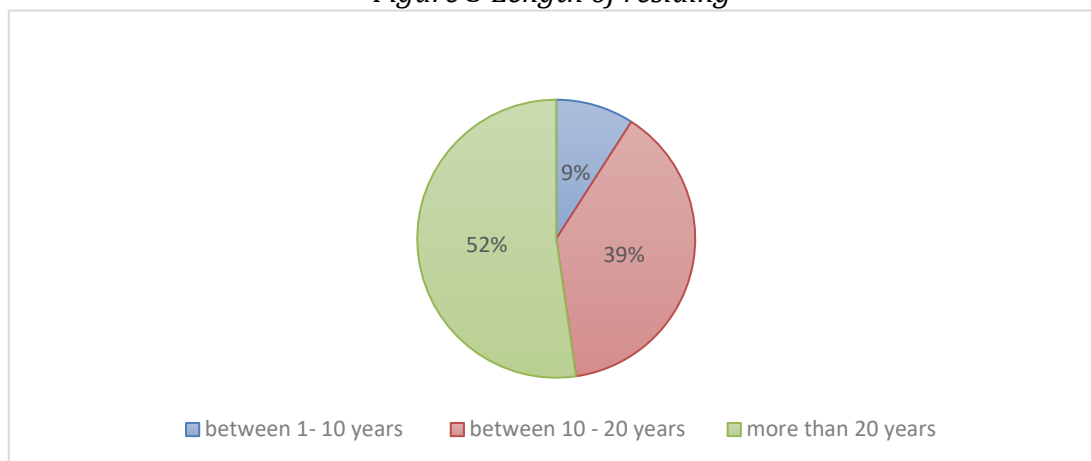
Figure 2. Participants' locality

Figure 2 shows that 41 % of students live in rural areas, followed by those who live in urban or semi-towns and urban cities with 14 % and 45 %.

Figure 3 Length of residing

The data shows the length of respondents living in Lampung Regency. Data shows only 9 % of the total respondents between 1 to 10 years living in Lampung, followed by 10 to 20 years for 39%. 52 % or 23 respondents have resided in Lampung for 25 years or more.

Table 1. Percentage distribution on EFL students' projection on their cultural identity

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	As a language learner, I become more familiar with western cultural values than my own	9.1 %	29.5 %	56.8%	4.5 %
2	Some local cultural norms must be changed or replaced with modern cultural norms originating from the western world	2.3 %	22.7 %	54,5 %	20.5 %
3	In today's Globalized Era , following my local cultural norms is meaningless	2.3 %	2.3 %	70.5 %	25 %
4	If any cultural shock or conflict between my local cultural norms/values and foreign/western cultural norms/values, I prefer to adopt western cultural norms.	0 %	11.4 %	68.2 %	20.5 %
5	the impacts of globalization have lost the essence of Local events/festivals	6.8 %	43.2%	40.9%	9.1 %
6	As an English learner, i see that western culture such as	18.2 %	68.2 %	11.4 %	2.3 %

> America/Britain is currently being
>
> accepted as an international culture.

Based on the data above, it can be highlighted that students residing in the periphery context tend to follow the phenomenon of globalization since they are exposed to Western culture. It shows that 29. 5 % claimed that they are more familiar with the culture of the West since they are learning English, while 9. 1 % strongly agreed that they know Western culture better than before. In contrast, 56. 8 % of students disagreed that they are familiar with and know more about Western culture than before. This statement corresponds to Canagarajah et al. (1999); local cultures are being driven out by English language education because it is primarily in learning and teaching that students start adopting and becoming familiar with the diversity of global culture.

In projecting their cultural identity, it is also shown that 2. 3 % of students strongly agreed, and 22. 7 % of students agreed that their local norms should be replaced with modern cultural norms of the Western world. 54.5 % of respondents strongly disagreed, followed by 20.5 % who disagreed with changing their local norms with the present culture. From this depiction, we know that even though they are from a peripheral context, they have realized the importance of their local culture as their cultural identity projection. This corresponds to Jan Bloomaert's that seeing the process of globalization taking place in the periphery context, the patterns of behavior and values of locals are relocalized into existing strong and long-lasting patterns. Even if such peripheral local communities are 'touched' by globalization, their structure, self-presentation, and image remain firmly local.

How they project their cultural identity as peripheral English students can also be seen from their cultural identity construction. Based on the data, it is seen that only 2.3 % of them claimed to strongly agree that in today's Globalized Era, following their local cultural norms is meaningless. 70.5 % strongly disagreed with that statement, and 25 % disagreed that their local cultures have no meaning due to globalization. In other words, they think their local cultures are still meaningful in everyday life.

Additionally, 11% or five students agreed that when there is a cultural shock or conflict between local cultural norms or values and foreign or Western cultural norms or values, they prefer to adopt Western cultural norms. Whereas 68. 8 % of students strongly disagreed, followed by 20 % who disagreed to consent to Western culture whenever they encounter internal conflict. It can be concluded that students situated in peripheral contexts do not have conflict with themselves when they hold their cultural identity. This finding mismatches with what L. Jensen (2010) stated; a construction of cultural identity involves adopting the beliefs and practices––the custom complexes––of one or more cultural communities whenever individuals reflect it in their social life. It is found that most of them do not adopt other (Western) cultures whenever conflicts appear.

Table 2. Percentage distribution on EFL students' projection on the pride of cultural identity

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I consider myself as part of my native ethnic	38.6 %	54.5 %	6.8 %	0 %

No	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
2	I consider myself as part of another ethnic group in the midst of globalization	9.1 %	31.8 %	50 %	9.1 %
3	I am proud to be a part of my native ethnic.	61 %	38.6%	0 %	0 %
4	I have a strong sense of belonging to my culture	25 %	61.4 %	13.6 %	25 %
4	I have a strong sense of belonging to my culture	25 %	61.4 %	13.6 %	25 %

The table above also highlights how EFL English students in a peripheral context perceive their own cultural identity amid the wave of globalization. Based on the data, it is found that 54.5% of respondents claim that they are part of their ethnicity. 6.8% of them disagree that they belong to their own culture. Concerning the involvement of other cultural belongings, most of them, or 50%, claimed that they do not belong to the part of the others. It is clear as what L. A. Jensen et al. (2011) stated that culture and globalization become a decent mingle yet explosive mixture, with the capacity to perceive not only traditional modes of belonging but also established ways of thinking about being and belonging to a particular group of culture. It shows that 31.8% of them mentioned that they agreed that they became part of another ethnicity. Interestingly, even if the deployment of globalization occurs in a peripheral setting, all of them argued that they were proud of a part of their native ethnic group. Further, in terms of a sense of belonging, most students, or 81%, agreed that they have a strong sense of belonging toward their cultural norms and beliefs.

Table 3. Percentage distribution on EFL students' projection on National Identity.

No	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	During a globalization spread, I'am proud of speaking and having Indonesian culture.	75 %	25 %	0 %	0 %
2	As foreign language learners, Indonesian is no longer a priority in for communication	6.8 %	16 %	58.8 %	20.5 %

Based on the data, it is portrayed that all of them, or 100 % agreed, that the deployment of globalization has no effect on their personality perceiving the pride of speaking and having Indonesian as their national identity. Moreover, the statement addressed to explore their national identity. It is also seen in how they consider the Indonesian language significant and a priority in daily communication. The data shows us that 58. 8 % disagreed that the Indonesian language is not being considered a priority, followed by 20 % strongly disagreed with that statement as well.

***Table 4 Percentage distribution in what ways Globalized world has shaped students'
cultural identity.***

No	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I feel better when I look like and dress like people from western country	4.5 %	29.5 %	50 %	15.9 %
2	Mass media and western fashion have changed my lifestyle	2.3 %	45.5 %	40.9 %	11.4 %
3	I like to wear western style dress	2.4 %	34.1 %	50 %	13.6 %
4	Wearing western dress has become a part of my life	2.3 %	18.2 %	63.6 %	15.9 %
5	I realized that social media takes us away from interacting in a real life	25 %	61.4 %	9.1 %	4.5 %
6	I like fast food rather than local products/culinary.	2.3 %	25 %	59.1 %	13.6 %
7	Foreign fast food has become part of my daily lifestyle	2.3%	18.2 %	63.6 %	15. 9 %
8	Adopting foreign cultural values such as English can threaten and damage my local cultural values	11.4 %	61.4 %	22.7 %	4.5 %
9	In my opinion, speaking English with a local accent or Indonesian accent is not a bad thing	25 %	58.2 %	68.2 %	0 %
10	I often speak English rather than vernacular or Indonesian with my friends.	4.5 %	34.1 %	56.8 %	4.5 %
11	I believe that knowing an English program is something influential and has pride	15.9 %	70.5 %	13.6 %	0%
12	In language practice, it is important to speak English like a native English speaker.	20.5	61.4	15. 9	2.3

Based on the data above, the factors affecting one's cultural identity vary from language, interaction or relation, technology, food, behavior, belief, food, and lifestyle. Cultural identity is shaped by lifestyle. The data show that 33 % of respondents agreed that they feel and look even better when they dress imitating Western culture. 50 % disagreed that Western dress has made them look better. Mass media and fashion have changed their life in a peripheral context. 45. 5 % have claimed that this aspect has done so. The globalized world has shaped their cultural identity in interacting with others. Regarding the sensitivity of social media to their social contact, 61.4% agreed. 25% strongly agreed that social media draws them away from interacting in real life. Only 4. 5 % or two of the total strongly disagreed that the phenomenon of social media has taken their life away from real interaction with family and friends.

The way they behave and react to the current globalization phenomenon can also be seen in the habit of eating fast food. The data show us that 25 % agreed that fast food becomes part of their daily life. This occurs especially to those who live in semi-urban areas where everything is accessible and ordered online. This statement is strengthened by one of the students named Zulyaden, who claimed that.

> *Excerpt 1" in my opinion, in today's era, everything is easy to get, from taxi online to food. Everything is on our hand. I like to order food to my regular eating".*

Another way that the globalized world has shaped their cultural identity is seen in language use. The data show that 34.1 % often speak English rather than vernacular or Indonesian with friends. English is one of the instruments used to spread globalization from local to global. Learning and teaching English is currently the most effective medium for conveying globalization and promoting the domination of English-speaking cultures (Block, 2010). Based on the excerpt from the interview, one of the students, Ega Melani, stated that.

> *Excerpt 2"When studying, I need to prioritize the cultural values of native English speakers. This statement approves us that one cultural identity can be shaped through the language practice and use.*

The exposure to English shapes their cultural identity. It can be seen from the statement that knowing an English program is something influential and has pride. 70.5 % agreed, and 5 % strongly agreed that having the English program in their daily life makes it easy to access the news globally. They think that it is a part of the exposure to internationalization since they are students of English in a peripheral setting, they could get the same opportunity to access the English Channel. They perceive that having the English program enables them to get broader information and knowledge about English and new insights. Due to the language practice, 61.4 % argued that it is significant to speak English like a native English speaker. 20.5 % strongly agreed that the practice of using English should be like a native English speaker. The respondents claimed that exposure to practicing English is the sense of internationalization they must keep.

> *Excerpt a respondent named Muhammad Rizki "Social relations: adjusted to the context and theme of the discussion. Communication, technology, and networking require us to always update our knowledge, foreign language skills are very important to learn.*

CONCLUSION

The present study highlights the state of EFL students residing in a peripheral context by seeing the phenomenon of globalisation in their projection toward cultural identity construction. Some findings found that when it is situated in learning and teaching activity, they start adopting and familiarising themselves with the diversity of global culture and admitted that local cultures are also driven out. In addition, only a few agreed that their local norms should be replaced with modern cultural norms originating from the Western world. Most respondents expressed disagreement with the replacement and alteration of their local norms. Based on this portrayal, it is evident that although originating from a peripheral context, they have recognised the significance of their local culture in shaping their cultural identity. This signifies that their local cultures are still meaningful in their everyday life. While respecting cultural shock or conflict between local and Western cultural values or norms, most disagree with adopting Western culture whenever they encounter internal strife. Students situated in peripheral contexts do not have a conflict with themselves when they hold their cultural identity.

Globalisation has shaped learners' cultural identity, including lifestyle. Mass media and fashion also have changed their life in a peripheral context. Half of the respondents have claimed that this aspect has done so. In addition, a global world has shaped their cultural identity as seen by how they interact with others. The majority of them admitted that social media draws them away from interacting in real life. Besides that, how individuals behave and react to globalisation may also be noticed through their preference for fast food. It can be concluded that 25% of respondents mentioned that fast food is a part of their daily lives. This occurs notably for those who reside in semi-urban settings where anything can be obtained online. What has been elaborated above significantly shows us that the construction of one's cultural identity is affected by some factors.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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