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The Roots of Demotivation in Studying English: Sociocultural Values among Students in a Rural Area

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Abstract

This confessional ethnographic study strives to reveal the sociocultural values that are suspected as trigger factors of students' demotivation in studying English. The study was conducted in a junior secondary school in the Miendogunu Village, Buton, Sulawesi, one of the rural areas in Indonesia. There were 32 participants in this study (21 students, nine parents, an English teacher, and the school principal). This research relied on data gathered through in-depth interviews and observation. The data analysis covered taxonomic analysis, componential analysis, and thematic analysis, specifically aimed at discerning inter-domain connections and how those connections relate to the larger cultural landscape. The results revealed three interrelated themes, namely: ethnocentric stereotype (the tendency to look down on English because it is a foreign culture), the skeptical view (doubt toward the worth of English), and slow living lifestyle (a lifestyle that encourages a slower approach to aspects of everyday life). These three sociocultural values are investigated as the trigger factors that have turned the EFL students' halfhearted toward English. A complementary strategy focused on changing students' mindsets is needed; they need to be aware that English, nowadays, is the language of technology and has become an added and preferable qualification for employability. To a certain degree, it is important to impart awareness to the villagers regarding the significance of preserving their indigenous culture. However, a cautious approach is necessary, as isolating themselves entirely from external cultural influences may be deemed an unwise course of action.

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1. INTRODUCTION

It is common knowledge that culture greatly affects how people perceive the world and shapes their perspectives. Culture encompasses the implicit and explicit beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviors of a social group passed on through interactions between people (Beldo, 2010). Cultural issues have recently taken center stage for language instruction researchers worldwide (Ahmad, 2015; Conn et al., 2019; Mohammed, 2020; Rahaman et al., 2019). Meanwhile, in the context of English as a foreign language (EFL), sociocultural value is particularly prominent as opposed to other factors that have a significant influence on learners' attitudes toward learning English all over the world, such as teachers' qualifications, learning environments, and the status of English as a foreign language (Poedjiastutie et al., 2021).

Sociocultural theory holds that rather than taking place in a vacuum, learning is influenced by the social, historical, economic, political, and cultural facets of its setting (Vygotsky, 2000), and it aims to understand learners' cultural backgrounds in light of how they encode and comprehend the world around them (Alfred, 2003; Perez, 2004). According to Sellami-Sellami (2021), students who join a language school bring their own culture with them; they become living examples of the culture they share with others. Most academics concur that values influence language learning; when sociocultural value is competitive and favorable, it cultivates intrinsic motivation for learning a second/foreign language and creates a positive attitude (Ahmad, 2015; Kmiotek & Boski, 2017; Liton, 2016; Mohammed, 2020). It means that students' cultural values might act as a barrier, making it difficult for teachers to gauge their students' learning. The cultural issue influences students' learning; occasionally, cultural background fosters students' learning in advance but may also present challenges to learning. To assist students in bridging the cultural divide, Kuo and Lai (2006) advised foreign language teachers to pay closer attention to the variety of cultural practices, identify key cultural components in each domain when developing language curricula, and use appropriate teaching methods in learning activities. Hence, it is crucial to highlight the cultural and traditional values of the students' homelands, as these values have a significant impact on their motivation to learn a foreign language because they are broad convictions about how one should behave (Levontin & Bardi, 2019; Pazyura, 2016).

As a multicultural country, Indonesia has a number of traditional and sociocultural values inherited from generation to generation. Some of the values were predicted to trigger demotivation and negative attitudes in EFL students in learning English. However, so far, studies are scarce on this issue in the Indonesian context. A study on the sociocultural challenges of English teaching in remote areas of Indonesia was known to only be conducted by Poedjiastutie et al. (2021) in Pemana Island, East Nusa Tenggara. This study aims to fill this knowledge gap focused on a single community, namely students and their cultural environment, the Miendogunu Village. Miendogunu (meaning mountain people) is an ethnic group located in a mountainous area in the center of Buton Island, Indonesia. This hinterland village is still out of touch with modern facilities; no cellular sign, internet, or electricity was available. The local

government is now to bring the village community closer to educational facilities by building an elementary school in 1997 and a junior secondary school in 2014.

Based on a preliminary study, the schoolteachers admitted that the students had low motivation to learn English. Hence, English has lower grades than other subjects, such as History, Mathematics, Art, Sport, and many others. Compared to the English academic achievements of students from the rural areas around their school, they were consistently significantly weak. The average score achieved in the subject ranges from 30.00 to 45.00 on a scale from 0.00 to 100.00, according to the Buton regency's criteria for completing the English subject (65.00). This is typical when English is taught and learned in Indonesia's rural and remote regions. Previous studies carried out in Indonesia's remote and rural areas (e.g., Anwar et al., 2020; Saiful & Triyono, 2018) claimed that low student achievement in English lessons had been attributed to students' demotivation to learn English and a lack of parental support, a lack of learning facilities, and a shortage of English teachers. Instead of these contributing reasons, however, it is hypothetical that the Miendogunu have different values and perspectives on English as a foreign culture. The present paper aims to shed light on the sociocultural values possessed by the people of Miendogunu Buton, Indonesia, which are thought to affect the students' desire to learn English. Regarding this, sociocultural values are the concealed guiding principles by which EFL learners organize their conduct while studying English. To guide the inquiry, a research question is established: "What are potential students' viewpoints that originate from their sociocultural values that have sparked their demotivation in studying English?"

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Sociocultural Barriers in EFL Teaching and Learning

It is widely recognized that people behave and think in ways typically influenced by the culture in which they were reared, regardless of where they live (Kuo & Lai, 2006). Kidd and Teagle (2012) stated that culture is a collection of formal and distinctive values in all societies and communities worldwide. These values dictate the normative behavior that society must practice by fostering social cohesion. Sociocultural values, according to Anılan et al. (2019), can be defined as the entirety of the material and spiritual elements that cover the social, cultural, economic, and scientific values of a nation, as well as the entirety of the beliefs that contain the fundamental characteristics that set humans apart from other living things. Dehghani et al. (2011) defined sociocultural values as the ideas and permanent convictions that people have long held and that society receives as the basis for their behaviors. Vygotsky (2000), the founder of cultural-historical psychology, stated that the circumstances and surroundings affect people's learning behaviors; people's behaviors, mental and spiritual development, and emotional and physiological beings are all influenced by an age-old tradition and sociocultural environment. In their classic and seminal work, Gardner and Lambert (1972) asserted that a positive attitude enhances second language learning, whereas a negative attitude does not serve the purpose. Hence, Sivan (1986) affirmed that people's specific objectives, interests in teaching and learning, and values come from the sociocultural environment.

There is a plethora of research tackling the issue of sociocultural barriers, specifically on the teaching and learning English as a second or foreign language. Such studies have focused on traditional and sociocultural milieus, which turn the students into demotivated learners. For example, Pazyura (2016) analyzes the influence of sociocultural factors on students' motivation to learn English in different countries. This research reveals the main problems in oral English teaching practice and illustrates the relationship between oral English teaching and cross-cultural communication competence. Liton (2016) strove to single out the barriers and obstacles in terms of academic, course curriculum system, and sociocultural issues that impact students' learning English at Jazan University, Saudi Arabia. The research discloses that most intervening voices reflect students' negative stance towards learning English due to cross-cultural factors, lack of motivation, and EFL teaching method and curriculum strategic defects.

In the context of Saudi Arabia, Ahmad (2015) tended to ascertain several traditional and sociocultural barriers to English language learning, namely, the lax approach to teaching English in Saudi schools, the relaxed attitude of Saudi students toward learning, the inadequacy of competitive and learning environments both at home and in the classroom, and the hiring of some unskilled schoolteachers were investigated as some of the significant obstacles to learning English in this country.

In the Indonesian context, a study on the sociocultural challenges of English teaching in remote areas was only conducted by Poedjiastutie et al. (2021) in Pemana Island, East Nusa Tenggara. According to the study, the sociocultural difficulties of teaching English in the rural setting include the society's economic position, local attitudes about the English subject, and the curriculum's mismatch with the community's needs. Although the earlier studies have provided some insight into the subject, more research on the shortcomings and inadequacies of these studies is still required. By addressing these gaps and limitations, this research seeks to expand on the findings of earlier studies and ultimately contribute to a more thorough understanding of the subject at hand.

2.2 Psychological Barriers in Second/Foreign Language Learning

The term 'psychological barrier' in pedagogy refers to anything that interferes with, limits, or ultimately lessens the efficacy of instruction, education, and human growth (Hoy, 2016). Domyreva (2019) claimed that students' psychological problems affect how well they perform in their learning activities and prevent them from meeting their cognitive and other demands, which creates psychological hurdles in the educational process. Among the psychological barriers to a second or foreign language, negative attitudes and demotivation are of which has attracted the attention of researchers recently (e.g., Boonchuayrod & Getkham, 2019; Getie, 2020; Minalla, 2022; Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011)

2.2.1 Negative attitude

According to Bohner and Wanke (2002), attitude is the propensity of a person to react favorably or unfavorably to something (a concept, an item, a person, a circumstance). Getie (2020) stated that negative and positive attitudes significantly influence the success of language learning; students with a good attitude toward

learning are eager to learn and, as a result, will be motivated to complete their studies. It means that a positive outlook on language acquisition is a great way to start. However, negative attitude prevents students from succeeding in their academic endeavors since those with negative learning attitudes could experience anxiety, easily get bored, and find it difficult to appreciate their learning (Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011).

One psychological variable originating from the sociocultural domain that might result in a negative attitude toward learning a second or foreign language is ethnocentrism (Samia, 2015; Shakeebaee et al., 2017). American sociologist William G. Sumner used ethnocentrism for the first time in his book, 'Folkways'. According to Sumner (2016), ethnocentrism is a way of thinking in which one sees one's group as the center of the universe and holds it up as the standard to measure and evaluate all other groups. Ethnocentrism frequently results in pride, vanity, and the idea that one's group is superior, or more correct or normal than all others—particularly about the traits that distinguish each ethnicity's cultural identity, such as language, behavior, customs, and religion (McCornack & Ortiz, 2017). Ethnocentrism is considered to be manifested in various social interactions, one of which is affecting the learning of a second/foreign language (Shakeebaee et al., 2017).

Researchers have developed suggestions for dealing with the ethnocentric issue in second or foreign language instruction. For example, to reduce ethnocentrism, Cadd (2008) highlighted the cultural similarities and differences between native and other cultures. Amari (2015) stated that enhancing students' intercultural competency can serve as a substitute for reducing ethnocentrism. Other recommendations to address ethnocentrism include promoting intellectual understanding of knowledge of a second or foreign language and culture (Putnam, 2011) and altering second or foreign language teaching techniques by stressing cultural education (Abid, 2017).

2.2.2 Demotivation

Demotivation is the opposite of motivation; it is thought to have a detrimental impact on learning and lower motivation levels. Demotivation is the term for a drop in motivation level brought on by outside forces that sap students' motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). It implies that any factors are considered demotivators if they lower learners' motivation. Dörnyei (2001) affirmed that motivation is the main determinant factor in learning a foreign language and categorized the following main demotivating factors in second or foreign language learning, namely: the teacher, inadequate school facilities, reduced self-confidence, negative attitude, compulsory nature of second or foreign language study, interference of another foreign language being studied, negative attitude towards second or foreign language community, attitudes of group members, and course book.

Little or no contact with native English speakers can be one of the demotivators in second or foreign language learning. Ho (2002) observed that in many EFL situations in Asia, it might be difficult to motivate students, particularly in rural locations where students may struggle to perceive the value of studying English since they have limited contact with native English speakers. The same issue with motivating rural students who feel they will never come into contact with English speakers occurred in Mexico (Izquierdo et al., 2021) and Columbia (Holguín & Morales, 2016). A similar problem is common in Indonesia, where many residential

areas are inaccessible and rarely visited by foreigners due to a lack of access roads connecting them to other locations.

Murray et al. (2023) identified skepticism toward new ideas as an obstacle and demotivation factor to English learning in countryside China. The skeptical point of view in this concern can be designated as a tendency to diminish the importance of English. According to Coliva and Pritchard (2021), skepticism is an all-encompassing attitude of doubt or questioning toward one or more apparent examples of knowledge that are asserted to be nothing more than dogma or belief. Skepticism occurs because of the limitations of the mind (Greco, 2011; Popkin, 2003). du Plessis and Mestry (2019) affirmed that probably the tendency to undervalue the worth of English because the learners are skeptical that English will not enhance the quality of their lives, and they find that learning is not sustained at home, which creates them demotivated to study English.

The relevance between learning English and the learners' daily lives becomes one of the causal factors of their demotivation to learn English. This is closely related to the affective filter hypotheses proposed by Krashen (2003). The affective filter is a barrier to second-language learning or acquisition brought on by unfavorable emotional (affective) reactions to one's environment. According to the affective filter hypothesis, feelings like self-doubt, worry, and boredom might hinder learning a second language. These negative emotions, i.e., demotivation, prevent efficient language input processing. In contrast, it is evident that motivation is one of the affective variables that can influence language learning; it appears as a predictor of performance in a foreign language, as stated in a remarkable number of articles, for example, Yadav and BaniAta (2012), Afrough et al. (2014), Alshenqeeti (2018), Iftanti et al. (2023).

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Design

This study was qualitative and employed an ethnographic study design. Since this research reports the researcher's fieldwork experiences, it refers to a confessional ethnography (Denzin, 2013; LeCompte et al., 1993; Maanen, 2011). It consists of extended participant observation periods and ethnographic in-depth interviews, in which the researcher investigates and interprets the sociocultural values reflected by the participants' behaviors and attitudes alleged to be the source of demotivation toward English learning. To better comprehend what the participants' behaviors and activities meant to them, the researcher took on the role of an active participant-observer and thoroughly immersed himself in the research environment. Through this immersion, the researcher gains a glimpse into the study subjects' daily activities at school and in their surroundings.

3.2 Participants

This research was conducted in a junior secondary school in the village of Miendogunu during the 2021/2022 academic year. A total of 21 students were enrolled at this school, consisting of 14 male students and seven female students, with ages

ranging from 14 to 19. This school is overseen by a total of five teachers, with one of them also serving as the principal. All 21 students comprised the research participants, including nine parents (two women and seven men, ranging in age from 40 to 65 years), an English teacher (a 36-year-old man), and the principal of the school (a 40-year-old man). Thus, a total of 32 individuals participated in this study.

3.3 Data Collection

Observation and interviews were employed to collect data since this research is in a paradigm of psychology and sociology, as scientific disciplines have in common that it does not separate people's behavior from the situation in which it is exposed (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The investigation lasted for six months (from June to December 2021); this gives the researcher long-term access to this culture-sharing group and enough time to build a detailed record of the participants' behavior and beliefs. The interviews were conducted face-to-face. During the interview process, the researcher recorded each conversation with the participants. Field notes were used to recall the details of the observation

The type of interviews utilized in this study was unstructured interviews, also known as non-directive interviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). This means that the researcher did not employ interview rules that had been carefully and methodically set up to get information from participants. This approach was adopted to go more into the topic being studied. The interviewer's inquiries for the students were to find out what they think of English, its advantages, and what they believed in English teaching and learning. Parents were asked about the worth of their children learning English and any kind of support they may have provided for their children's English language learning. The English teacher was asked to share his experience while serving at this school, particularly concerning the students' attitudes, engagement, and achievement in English lessons, as well as the EFL teaching method he applies during classroom practices and students' responses to the assignments. The school principal was requested to talk about his experiences working there, mainly how he saw the community's interest and attitude in education, as well as the attitudes and involvement of the students in the teaching and learning process. The questions posed to the participants evolved in line with the flow of their responses.

The interview with students was conducted in the school area during the break, while the interview with parents, the English teacher, and the school principal was conducted by visiting them from house to house. The interview procedure could run between 30 and 60 minutes, depending on the situation. If the questions posed to the participants at that time were not answered, the interview was continued in the following meeting. The interview took place casually in a relaxed environment, much like a normal conversation. To build an atmosphere of intimacy with the participants, the interviews with students and parents were conducted using the Pancana language (the local language of the villagers).

3.4 Data Analysis

The interview data was manually transcribed and verbatim transcribed. It records every word from an audio file in the text precisely as it was originally uttered, including word, pause, shutter, and filler words. This is preferable. The data were

analyzed using domain analysis to identify components or elements of cultural meaning (Spradley, 2016). The steps of analysis cover: (1) taxonomic analysis, which involves a search for the way cultural domains are organized, (2) componential analysis, which involves a search for the attributes of terms in each domain, (3) theme analysis, which searches for the relationship among domains and how they are linked to the cultural scene as a whole.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present research reveals three sociocultural values that trigger students' demotivation in studying English. The identified themes were ethnocentric stereotypes, skeptical views, and a slow lifestyle. When presenting the findings, codes were used to identify the respondents: S-1 to S-21 stood for Students 1 through 21, P-1 to P-9 for Parents 1 through 9; and ET and SP for English Teacher and School Principal, respectively.

4.1 Ethnocentrism

As expressed in the interview, the students were not interested in learning English because it is the language of foreign countries, and they believe that everything from a foreign culture is harmful and inappropriate for them. They were also discouraged from learning English as they were certain that their mother tongue was superior to English. This way of thinking can be described as ethnocentrism. According to numerous works (Samia, 2015; Shakeebaee et al., 2017), ethnocentrism is one of the psychological factors emerging from the sociocultural domain that may lead to a negative attitude toward learning a second or foreign language.

The following excerpt samples reflect ethnocentrism, which hinders students' motivation to learn English.

(1) We have our language, which emm I think is better than other languages and I'm proud of my mother tongue. As an outsider's language, English is not appropriate for us to learn. If I have to learn the language in school, it is just because it has become one of the subjects we have to learn. (S-3)

(2) I believe that our mother tongue, I mean [pause] is much more I mean more vital than the language of foreigners including English. It is not appropriate for the people of this village to learn the language. So, I am uhh…not interested in learning English. (S-17)

(3) Any foreign cultures [pause] eem must be evil for us to bring into our daily life habits, and English is one of them. I am not interested in learning English because it is the language of foreigners. (S-14)

The three excerpts contain two points: the student's mother tongue is more vital and better than any other language, and foreign culture is evil to bring into their daily life. The students' points of view toward the English language reflect a strong sense of loyalty to their mother tongue. According to Riley (1980), a strong commitment to one's native language could be connected with ethnocentrism. The students' point of view toward English aligns with their parents' ideas, as expressed in the following excerpts.

(4) Anything related to our culture mm…more vital than the culture of outsiders. As the language of foreigners, English is not suitable for our children to learn because imitating the culture of foreigners is mm… not a wise behavior. (P-7)

(5) As part of school subjects, we let our children learn English or any other foreign languages [pause] but we insist they not easily be attracted to foreign languages. They might forget their own language. (P-3)

As expressed in the excerpts, it is hard for them to accept English because it is the language of foreigners. This conservative way of thinking is contrary to most non-native English speakers who consider the ability to speak English a symbol of highbrow, which makes them feel somewhat elevated, to some degree (Rahaman et al., 2019). Today, English is increasingly acknowledged as a crucial language for international communication that provides access to the necessary information and tools to advance the nation's technical, scientific, and economic development (Riazi, 2005). Nevertheless, as depicted in the excerpts, the students are not instrumentally motivated to learn English as they believe they will not benefit from it. They participate in English education because it is required in the school curriculum. It is not easy to motivate students to study English when they do not perceive an immediate need. Drawing on the theory of 'possible L2 selves', Yashima (2009) made the case that people who are aware of how they relate to the world are more likely to be motivated to study and communicate in English because they can probably vividly picture their English-using selves.

Ethnocentrism would impede students from taking advantage of English's status as an international language. On the other hand, the original language and culture will be retained and undisturbed by outside cultural influences. Khati (2013) believed that the widespread usage of English in Nepal has endangered the indigenous tongue. Likewise, Latin and Greek disappeared from the school and university curricula after English was taught in schools (Crystal, 2003). Rahaman et al. (2019) made a similar point in the same case, claiming that British policy has affected Bangladeshi culture, which has been vital in transforming Bangladesh into a modern nation by emulating Western culture.

4.2 The Skeptical View

The participants believe that English is not useful in their lives. The tendency to devalue the worth of English can be described as the syndrome of skeptical view (Coliva & Pritchard, 2021). The inclination to look down on the value of English happens, as they believe that many people are successful in their work without the capability to speak English, as expressed in the following interview excerpts.

(6) Everyone in this village emm successful in their work, and they do not speak English. So, I think English is not a prerequisite to being successful in life. I think there are so many successful people without English speaking proficiency. (S-6)

The skeptical point of view also occurs because they think that speaking only in their local language (monolingual) is enough; they fail to see learning English as being crucial. This kind of extreme skepticism occurs because of the limitations of the mind (Greco, 2011; Popkin, 2003). This circumstance is expressed in the following excerpts.

(7) For daily communication, we have our language. I have never seen people speak English in this area not either in other villages. So, mm… [pause] I think learning English is pointless as I will never use the language in communication. (S-9)

(8) I think we should learn something important and useful. I do not emm [pause] understand the purpose of learning English. So, I am not interested emm to learning English. It is not important for my life. (S-7)

Parents' remarks, as shown in (9), are consistent with what their children are saying. They believe that learning English is not necessary for the residents of this hinterland village since it will be useless. Even if their children are fluent in English, they will never use it for everyday conversations.

(9) English may be umm-yeah worthy to learn, but in our lives in this village umm it is almost of no use. English is the language of outsiders and the speakers of the language will never come here to visit us and we also umm-umm will never go abroad. I think learning English is not a necessity in our lives. (P-6)

They tend to deny the importance of English in worldwide relations and modern civilization based on their mere beliefs. This happened, perhaps, because they had been living in an isolated hinterland area with rare contact with the outside world. This supports du Plessis and Mestry's (2019) and Murray et al. (2023) findings that hurdles to English acquisition include skepticism against innovative notions and the notion that learning English will not improve one's quality of life.

Excerpt (9) is the evidence that in learning English, there is no support that the students get from home. Parents believe that studying English will not improve their children's lives. This strengthens the claims made by Holguín and Morales (2016) that students are not receiving adequate parental support to learn English since so many parents do not think it is worthwhile to educate their children on anything other than the fundamentals of reading, writing, and math.

The results of the interview with an English teacher support the opinions of students and parents as shown in the interview segment that follows.

(10) What can I say is the students have no- umm enthusiasm for learning English. When they are given an assignment-umm only a small number of them will complete it umm on time, most of them are late for various reasons, for example, umm, forgetting, being sick, umm helping their parents in the fields, and so on. Whatever teaching method I apply umm only a small part of them would actively participate, and the others just stay silent, and-umm waiting for the lesson to be over. They show a negative attitude toward learning English. (ET)

The results of the observations performed during the teaching and learning process corroborate what the English instructor has disclosed. The students all remain silent and show confusion when the teacher asks them about the topic they just studied. This environment contrasts starkly with other classrooms where these students participate in active behavior (such as social sciences and the arts).

4.3 Slow-Living Lifestyle

The land of the Miendogunu village is fertile and has a friendly climate. It offers the inhabitants a sufficient food supply to suit their daily needs. Gardening yields an

abundance of crops, while the nearby forests yield various that can be gathered at any time, such as leaves, roots, fruits, honey, tree bark, shoots, and many others.

In short, the surrounding nature pampers the residents of this village as it provides their necessities of life that can be gained without difficulty and without waiting for a long time. The ease with which they can fulfill their life's needs has triggered a lack of respect for time and a relaxed lifestyle. Lubis (2012), in his work *Manusia Indonesia* (Indonesian People), put forward some of the vices of Indonesians; he believed that in particular geographical contexts, cultural scope, and ethnic groups of Indonesians, people are found to act slowly and like to be lazy. These are signs of a slow-living lifestyle, a way of life that encourages a slower attitude and a relaxed or leisurely pace in daily life, as described by Parkins and Geoffrey (2006) and Tam (2008).

Ahmad (2015) is certain that one of the reasons why students do poorly in English lessons may be that the participant interview results, described in the following extracts, provide evidence of a slow-living lifestyle.

(11) The subjects I like best are those umm that make me not work- to work in a rush, and the subjects that still allow me emm to relax. I don't like to work in a rush because it makes me stressed. (S-7)

Other students have voiced the same viewpoint, as shown in the following excerpts.

(12) The subjects I like best are those that can make me relax and emm relax, for example, Sports and Art. I don't like English because I have to memorize the meaning of confusing words and do so strange grammar assignments. I hate the subject emm which makes me emm have no time to relax. (S-18)

(13) Uh I don't like learning English and other subjects that make me emm to work very hard and to work in a rush. The problem is that emm our teachers do not let us do things emm slowly. We have to be fast emm and in a hurry and that is what I hate. It makes me mad. (S-3)

The students' comments resonate with the school principal's comment as expressed in the following excerpt.

(14) Nature pampers them because emm it is easy for the villagers to get what they need without straining and emm without waiting for a long, long time. They can take foodstuff easily from the nature around them. Honey, leaves, fruits, and grain are easy to get. (SP)

The ease with which the natural world satisfies their daily needs has consequences for a lifestyle that promotes an activity at a leisurely or relaxed pace, a slower approach to parts of daily life. It validates the claims made by Ahmad (2015) in the context of Saudi Arabia, who identified a relaxing personality as a sociocultural hindrance to learning English.

The results of interviews with students show the same way of thinking and perspective on time as illustrated in the following quotations.

(15) The problem is our teachers set a deadline to finish our assignment. I like to work not in a rush to do my school assignments because unfinished assignments will be completed in the next few days. (S-21)

(16) The problem is that we have to be punctual in finishing our assignments. There is not enough time for us. (S-14)

These statements are strengthened by the English teacher's comment, as expressed in the subsequent excerpt.

(17) The students show mm disobedience behavior, for example, lateness to class, mm postponing or rejecting doing finishing their assignment. I mean mm not only for English class but for most of the class. (T)

The English teacher's opinion resonates with the school principal's comments as articulated in the following excerpt.

(18) In general, the students still lack respect for time. I mean it is hard for us to enforce time discipline here. If we emm apply discipline and a system of punishment, eventually many students will leave this school. We here have to work hard at persuading students to be serious in I mean going to school. Just imagine, in the last 6 six months there were at least emm seven students who dropped out of this school because they had no desire anymore to go to school. We have made various efforts to persuade them to return to school, but all have been in vain. (SP)

The results of observation strengthen the results of interviews that demonstrate thought patterns and perspectives on time. Young and old inhabitants are frequently observed chatting while smoking, drinking coffee, playing games, or playing their traditional musical instruments in the house halls after everyone from the neighboring village has left for work in the morning. They returned in the afternoon and went on when residents in other villages were still working. This phenomenon proves that the ways people of different cultural backgrounds make use of time are dissimilar. For example, for the average American, time is very important; they continually set deadlines based on time. Time is something that can be gained, spent, kept, filled, killed, saved, used, wasted, lost, and planned (Gebhard, 2017).

Meanwhile, Nydell (2018) states that the Arabs' perspective on time is moving from the past to the present, and they move with it. Social gatherings and appointments do not usually start or end simultaneously. In many cases, arriving late for an appointment is permissible if a time has been specified. The results of the observations and interviews indicate that the Miendogunu people have a unique perspective on and use of time. Due to their slow-living philosophy, they have developed the habit of idling, doing things slowly, and moving slowly.

5. CONCLUSION

The current study aims to investigate the sociocultural factors that have contributed to students' demotivation to study English. The study discovered three interconnected themes: the ethnocentric stereotype (the propensity to devalue English simply because it is an aspect of a foreign culture), the skeptical view (doubt about the importance of English), and the slow living lifestyle (a way of life that promotes taking things more slowly in daily life). The mindset that English is not useful in their lives is shaped because they have lived in an isolated hinterland village without access to electricity, cellular networks, and the internet, which causes them to be left behind regarding information and technology. Perhaps a complementary strategy is needed to

bring about change in students' mindsets; they need to be made aware that English, nowadays, has become an added and preferable qualification for employability and vital for economic opportunities at the national and international levels. To some extent, the villagers need to be given awareness that maintaining local culture is important, but closing themselves off from outside culture is an unwise decision.

The local government and policymakers need to take appropriate steps to overcome the lack of facilities in this remote area so that the community knows how to benefit from technological development. The existence of the internet in this hinterland area will give people access to information and technology and will become a means of learning for schoolchildren. Internet exposure to Western or foreign cultures may help students feel less ethnocentrism while simultaneously stimulating their interest in other cultures and giving them a place to learn about various facets of other civilizations. This could potentially lead to greater knowledge and awareness about the similarities and differences between foreign and local cultures.

Furthermore, the students also need to be made aware that time is the only asset that cannot be changed, purchased, or stored. They need to be accustomed to using time-on-task effectively. For this purpose, teachers can stimulate students by rewarding those who can complete assignments before the predetermined deadline. To improve English learning outcomes, English teachers must conduct action research by applying appropriate teaching strategies to English learning activities to help students bridge the culture gap. The strategies recommended by Kuo and Lai (2006) for teaching a second or foreign language within a cultural framework are beneficial to adopt for this purpose. The strategies that can be adopted include providing culturally relevant materials, applying role play as a sociocultural approach, and viewing students as cultural resources. Then, for future study, it is recommended to investigate how to reduce the impact of ethnocentric, skeptical points of view and slow-living styles in learning English.

Finally, the mindset and perspective of the local community will change over time, making the findings of this research only valid today and not for the future due to the frequent contact of the local community with the outside world as well as the development of information and communication technology that can reach this area. One day, when information and technology have reached this place, a further study could be conducted to explore the influence of information and technology on the perceptions of local and schoolchildren towards English language learning.

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