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Developing a Culturally Responsive Model for Teaching English Speaking through Toraja Culture to Non-Native English Learners

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Abstract

This study aims to develop a culturally responsive model for teaching English speaking through the integration of Toraja culture to non-native English learners. The study is grounded in the premise that English language instruction in many non-native contexts remains largely decontextualized from learners' sociocultural backgrounds, resulting in limited engagement, reduced communicative confidence, and insufficient relevance to learners' lived experiences. In response to this gap, the proposed instructional model incorporates Toraja cultural values, local expressions, traditional practices, and community-based contexts into speaking activities in order to promote meaningful language use and cultural connectedness. The study employs a research and development approach to design, validate, and refine the instructional model through pedagogical analysis, contextual material development, and expert review. The resulting model emphasizes culturally meaningful interaction, learner-centered participation, contextualized speaking tasks, and communicative practice grounded in local identity. The findings suggest that the integration of Toraja culture into English speaking instruction enhances learners' motivation, participation, confidence, and communicative competence while also fostering cultural awareness and identity affirmation. This study contributes to the growing discourse on culturally responsive pedagogy by offering a localized instructional framework for English speaking education in non-native settings, particularly in rural and culturally rich educational contexts.

Keywords: Developing, Culturally, Responsive Model, Teaching English Speaking, Toraja Culture.

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is widely regarded as one of the most demanding yet essential skills in English language learning because it requires learners to mobilize linguistic knowledge, pragmatic awareness, and real-time interactional strategies simultaneously. In contemporary English language education, the goal is no longer

limited to grammatical mastery; rather, it extends to the development of communicative competence and intercultural sensitivity, enabling learners to use English appropriately and effectively across diverse contexts (Dervin dan Hahl 2025). In EFL settings, this orientation is particularly important because English

functions not merely as a school subject but as a medium for participation in wider academic, social, and global communication.

In the Indonesian context, the teaching of English must respond to both global demands and local realities (Dervin dan Hahl 2025), argues that English needs in Indonesia operate on global and local planes at once; consequently, English instruction should not be detached from learners' immediate sociocultural environments (Mereckaitė 2022). Her study further indicates the need for English teaching that strengthens communicative aspects, pragmatics, and intercultural skills rather than relying solely on formal language knowledge. This argument is highly relevant to rural and culturally rich regions, where students' experiences, identities, and communicative needs are deeply shaped by local traditions and community life (Mar Ico et al. 2023).

Despite this growing recognition, English speaking instruction in many non-native contexts remains predominantly textbook-driven, decontextualized, and insufficiently responsive to learners' cultural backgrounds. Such conditions may weaken students' engagement and reduce their confidence to speak, especially when classroom discourse is disconnected from what they know and value in everyday life (Mar Ico et al. 2023). This concern is consistent with evidence from Indonesian EFL research showing that speaking anxiety remains a substantial issue, with proficiency emerging as a significant predictor of learners' anxiety in oral performance. When speaking instruction is experienced as unfamiliar, abstract, or culturally distant, learners may participate less actively and develop limited confidence in using English for meaningful communication (Lestari dan Andiansyah 2024).

One promising response to this challenge is culturally responsive pedagogy (Lestari dan Andiansyah 2024). Emphasize that culturally responsive teaching seeks to connect instruction with the communities, identities, and funds of knowledge that learners bring into the classroom. In language education, this perspective implies that learners' home culture, local values, and lived experiences should be treated not as peripheral background elements but as pedagogical resources that can support participation, relevance, and meaning-making (Pradhan dan Dey 2025). Likewise, intercultural language teaching research has shown that models integrating culture into language instruction can facilitate simultaneous growth in language competence and intercultural competence (Pradhan dan Dey 2025). For English speaking instruction, this means that oral tasks should be designed around contexts that are socially recognizable and culturally meaningful to learners (La'biran et al. 2024).

Within this framework, Toraja culture offers a particularly rich foundation for context-based English speaking pedagogy. UNESCO describes Tana Toraja as a living tradition characterized by distinctive settlement patterns, *tongkonan* houses, ceremonial grounds, burial customs, cosmology, and strong social identity (Wong, Hussin, dan Saat 2022). Beyond its architectural and ritual significance, Toraja culture embodies local wisdom, collective memory, and community values that remain meaningful in everyday life. Such cultural resources can provide authentic themes for speaking instruction, including self-introduction through family lineage, descriptive speaking through traditional houses and landscapes, narrative speaking through local stories, and interpersonal communication through culturally grounded values of kinship, mutual help, and respect.

Recent Toraja-focused studies suggest that integrating local culture into English teaching is both feasible and educationally meaningful. (Wong, Hussin, dan Saat 2022), for instance, found that English teachers in North Toraja incorporated Toraja cultural values into classroom instruction through local stories, folktales, and value-based interactions, while emphasizing values such as family, togetherness, hard work, friendliness, respect, and mutual support. However, that study primarily described the presence of cultural values in general English teaching rather than developing a structured pedagogical model for speaking instruction. Similarly, a study in the UKI Toraja repository described a speaking-teaching model practiced at the university level, but its focus was on classroom management, media use, monitoring, interaction, and evaluation rather than on a culturally responsive model explicitly designed around Toraja culture for non-native English learners. These studies indicate an important starting point, yet they also reveal a conceptual and pedagogical gap.

Accordingly, there is still a need to develop a culturally responsive model for teaching English speaking that systematically integrates Toraja culture into instructional objectives, materials, classroom interaction, and assessment (La'biran et al. 2025). Such a model is important not only for improving speaking proficiency but also for affirming learners' cultural identity and making English learning more meaningful in rural and non-native contexts. The novelty of the present study lies in its attempt to move beyond the general inclusion of local cultural content toward the design of a structured speaking pedagogy grounded in Toraja culture and informed by culturally responsive teaching principles (Hayati 2015). Therefore, this study aims to develop a culturally responsive model for teaching English speaking through Toraja culture to non-native English learners and to offer a localized pedagogical framework that contributes to English language teaching, speaking instruction, and culture-based education in Indonesia and comparable EFL contexts.

Although culturally responsive teaching has increasingly been recognized as important in Indonesian English language education, existing studies have largely emphasized its general relevance, policy alignment, and broad classroom implementation rather than the development of a specific model for speaking instruction. For example, recent work in Indonesian ELT highlights the urgency of culturally responsive teaching in creating inclusive and learner-centered classrooms, while other studies have developed culturally responsive English teaching models for primary-level EFL contexts. However, these studies do not specifically address how a culturally responsive framework can be systematically designed for English speaking pedagogy through a distinct local cultural base such as Toraja culture (Hayati 2015).

More specifically, Toraja-focused studies have shown that local cultural values and indigenous knowledge can be integrated into English language teaching and English for Tourism courses. These studies demonstrate that Toraja cultural content has pedagogical potential for enhancing learner motivation, contextual relevance, and intercultural awareness (Ganendra et al. 2025). Nevertheless, their focus remains either descriptive, centered on how teachers incorporate cultural values in general English classes, or limited to ESP/EFT contexts concerned with tourism communication. They do not offer a structured, culturally responsive instructional model designed explicitly for teaching English speaking to non-native English learners in formal classroom settings.

In addition, research on local wisdom-based English instruction in Indonesia has often concentrated on instructional materials, especially reading materials and general classroom resources, rather than on an integrated speaking model that systematically links learning objectives, cultural content, communicative tasks, classroom interaction, and authentic assessment. This indicates that the pedagogical use of local culture is still frequently treated as supplementary content rather than as the organizing foundation of speaking instruction. At the same time, evidence from Indonesian EFL contexts shows that speaking anxiety remains a substantial issue, suggesting the need for speaking instruction that is more familiar, meaningful, and culturally grounded for learners.

Therefore, the research gap addressed in this study lies in the absence of a culturally responsive and systematically designed model for teaching English speaking through Toraja culture to non-native English learners. The novelty of this study is not merely in inserting local cultural content into English lessons, but in developing a structured speaking pedagogy in which Toraja culture functions as the core framework for instructional objectives, materials, interactional tasks, and assessment. In this way, the study seeks to contribute both theoretically to culturally responsive English language pedagogy and practically to context-sensitive speaking instruction in culturally rich and non-native learning environments.

RESEARCH AND COLLECT IDEA

a. Speaking Instruction and Communicative Competence

Speaking is a central dimension of English language learning because it requires learners to mobilize linguistic knowledge, discourse management, sociolinguistic appropriateness, and interactional strategies in real time. In EFL contexts, speaking instruction is expected to move beyond structural mastery toward communicative competence, enabling learners to use English effectively and appropriately in meaningful social interaction (Ganendra et al. 2025). In this regard, intercultural communicative language teaching has gained importance because it integrates language competence with awareness of cultural context. Tran and Duong's study demonstrated that an intercultural communicative language teaching model improved both language competence and intercultural competence among EFL learners after a thirteen-week intervention, suggesting that speaking pedagogy benefits from a closer integration of language and culture.

b. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in EFL Classrooms

Culturally responsive pedagogy has been increasingly recognized as a relevant approach in EFL education because it connects instructional content with learners' cultural identities, experiences, and community knowledge. Rather than treating culture as an additional topic, this approach positions culture as an integral pedagogical resource that can increase engagement, relevance, and participation. Recent evidence from EFL classrooms in Indonesia shows that culturally responsive teaching can improve student learning outcomes and language proficiency while also making lessons easier for students to understand (Pardede 2025). At the same time, the literature notes that implementation remains constrained by curriculum demands, teacher preparedness, and the challenge of selecting appropriate cultural content. These findings indicate that culturally responsive pedagogy is pedagogically

promising, but it requires systematic instructional design in order to be effectively applied in language classrooms.

c. Cultural Familiarity and English Speaking Performance

A substantial body of literature suggests that cultural familiarity plays an important role in oral language performance. When speaking tasks are connected to topics, values, and experiences that learners already know, students tend to participate more actively and experience lower levels of anxiety. In the Indonesian EFL context, Diep et al. found that cultural familiarity was significantly associated with speaking performance and foreign language anxiety, highlighting that culturally meaningful content can support learners' confidence and oral production (Saragih et al. 2024). This is particularly relevant for non-native English learners in rural or peripheral settings, where culturally distant materials may reduce learners' willingness to speak. Therefore, speaking instruction that draws on familiar sociocultural content may provide a more supportive foundation for communicative development.

d. Local Culture and Source Culture in English Language Teaching

The integration of local culture into English language teaching has also been supported by research on source culture in Indonesian EFL materials (Saragih et al. 2024). A study on Indonesian EFL textbooks found that authors frequently selected source culture because it is easier for learners to understand, more accessible in real terms, and useful for preserving cultural knowledge while broadening students' awareness of diversity. This finding supports the view that local culture is not merely supplementary content but can function as a meaningful entry point for language learning. When learners encounter English through culturally familiar materials, they are better positioned to connect vocabulary, meaning, and communicative purpose with their lived experiences. As such, local culture can strengthen both pedagogical relevance and identity affirmation in EFL classrooms.

e. Toraja Culture as a Pedagogical Resource

Within this broader discussion, Toraja culture provides rich pedagogical resources for English language teaching. Research on Torajan heritage in language learning resources shows that cultural elements such as folktales, legends, cuisine, songs, dances, and interaction with cultural figures can be incorporated into English learning to strengthen both language proficiency and cultural literacy (Rachmatika dan Izzah 2024). Another study in North Toraja found that elementary students and teachers identified ten local wisdom topics as important for English materials, including tourism objects, thanksgiving rituals, funeral ceremonies, traditional food and drink, clothing, social values, folklore, arts, and fairy tales. These findings indicate that Toraja cultural content is not only available but also pedagogically relevant and desired by learners and teachers.

f. Cultural Values in Toraja-Based English Learning

Studies focusing on Toraja values in English classrooms further suggest that local culture can contribute not only thematic content but also ethical and social dimensions of learning. Research on the integration of Toraja cultural values into English language teaching reports that teachers connected instruction with values such as religiosity, honesty, hard work, respect, equality, cooperation, and politeness (Rachmatika dan Izzah 2024). These values were embedded in classroom interaction, teacher modeling, and lesson delivery, demonstrating that Toraja culture can shape both the

content and the pedagogy of English instruction. In parallel, research on Tallu Lolona describes it as an educational system transmitting religious, moral, social, and cultural values in Toraja society, which suggests that Toraja culture contains a coherent value structure that can serve as a meaningful basis for culturally responsive speaking pedagogy.

g. Synthesis of the Literature

Overall, the literature shows three important tendencies. First, effective speaking instruction in EFL requires communicative and intercultural orientation rather than a narrow focus on grammar. Second, culturally responsive pedagogy and cultural familiarity can improve learner engagement, comprehension, confidence, and language performance (Zainal et al. 2023). Third, local culture, including Toraja culture, has significant pedagogical potential for contextualizing English learning and strengthening learners' cultural identity. However, the existing literature has mainly discussed the inclusion of culture in general English teaching, textbook content, or materials development. There remains limited attention to a systematically developed, culturally responsive model specifically designed for teaching English speaking through Toraja culture to non-native English learners. This gap provides the conceptual justification for the present study.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This study employed a Research and Development (R&D) design to develop a culturally responsive model for teaching English speaking through Toraja culture to non-native English learners. The purpose of this design was to produce an instructional model that is theoretically grounded, culturally relevant, and pedagogically applicable in EFL classrooms.

The study was conducted in Toraja, South Sulawesi, Indonesia, where English is taught as a foreign language and local cultural values remain strongly embedded in learners' everyday lives. The participants consisted of English teachers, non-native English learners, and expert validators in the fields of English language teaching, instructional design, and Toraja culture. They were selected purposively based on their relevance to the objectives of the study.

The research procedure consisted of five stages: problem identification and needs analysis, model design, expert validation, limited try-out, and revision of the final model. In the first stage, classroom observations, interviews, and document analysis were conducted to identify the problems in teaching speaking and to examine the extent to which local culture had been integrated into classroom instruction. The findings from this stage, together with the review of relevant literature, served as the basis for designing the preliminary model.

The initial model was then validated by experts to examine its content relevance, cultural appropriateness, pedagogical clarity, and practical feasibility. After being revised based on expert feedback, the model was implemented in a limited classroom try-out to assess its practicality and its contribution to students' speaking participation and performance. The final version of the model was produced after revising the preliminary design based on the results of the try-out.

Data were collected through observation, interviews, documentation, validation sheets, and speaking performance assessment. Qualitative data were analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, while quantitative data from

validation and speaking scores were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentages and mean scores. To ensure trustworthiness, the study applied triangulation of methods and sources by involving teachers, students, and experts in the data collection and validation process.

FINDINGS

The findings of this study are presented based on the stages of model development and implementation, including needs analysis, model development, expert validation, and limited classroom implementation. The findings demonstrate that the integration of Toraja culture into English speaking instruction contributes positively to students' participation, confidence, and communicative competence.

1. Findings from Needs Analysis

The needs analysis revealed several major problems in teaching English speaking to non-native English learners. First, speaking instruction was generally textbook-oriented and focused on dialogue memorization rather than communicative interaction. Second, students showed low confidence and participation during speaking activities because the topics used in speaking tasks were often unfamiliar and not related to their daily lives. Third, teachers rarely integrated local cultural content into speaking instruction, even though students were very familiar with Toraja cultural practices and local social contexts.

The interviews with teachers indicated that they believed integrating local culture could make learning more meaningful and engaging, but they lacked a structured instructional model and culturally relevant teaching materials. Classroom observations also showed that students were more active when discussing familiar topics related to their community, family traditions, and local ceremonies. These findings indicate that culturally relevant content has strong potential to support speaking instruction in non-native English learning contexts.

2. Findings from Model Development

Based on the needs analysis and literature review, the researcher developed a culturally responsive model for teaching English speaking through Toraja culture. The model consisted of several components, including learning objectives, cultural-based speaking materials, learning procedures, classroom interaction patterns, teacher and student roles, and authentic assessment strategies.

The model emphasized culturally familiar speaking topics such as family lineage, traditional houses (Tongkonan), local ceremonies, traditional food, community life, local stories, and cultural values such as respect, cooperation, and kinship. Speaking activities were designed in the form of role plays, storytelling, interviews, group discussions, descriptive speaking, and oral presentations. The model also emphasized student-centered learning, interaction, collaboration, and communicative practice.

The developed model followed five main instructional stages: orientation, cultural exploration, communicative practice, elaboration, and reflection. These stages were designed to gradually guide students from cultural familiarity to communicative language use.

3. Findings from Expert Validation

The expert validation results indicated that the developed model was valid and appropriate for implementation. The experts

evaluated the model in terms of content relevance, cultural appropriateness, pedagogical design, clarity of learning procedures, suitability of speaking tasks, and practicality for classroom implementation.

The validation results showed that the model was categorized as valid and feasible for use in English speaking instruction. The experts suggested minor revisions related to the clarity of instructions, adjustment of language difficulty level, and the inclusion of more varied speaking assessment rubrics. After incorporating the experts' suggestions, the model was revised and prepared for classroom implementation.

4. Findings from Limited Try-Out Implementation

The limited classroom implementation showed that the culturally responsive speaking model had a positive impact on students' participation and speaking performance. Students were more willing to speak when the topics were related to Toraja culture because they already had background knowledge and personal experiences related to the topics. This familiarity reduced speaking anxiety and increased students' confidence.

During the implementation, students actively participated in role plays about traditional ceremonies, group discussions about local culture, and oral presentations describing Toraja cultural objects and traditions. Classroom observation showed increased student interaction, more frequent use of English in communication, and higher engagement compared to conventional speaking lessons.

The speaking performance assessment indicated improvement in several aspects of speaking, including fluency, vocabulary use, comprehension, and interactive communication. Students were able to express ideas more confidently and use English more meaningfully because they were discussing topics they understood culturally and socially.

Overall, the findings of the study indicate that the culturally responsive model for teaching English speaking through Toraja culture is pedagogically relevant, culturally appropriate, and practically applicable in non-native English learning contexts. The integration of Toraja culture into speaking instruction not only supports language learning but also strengthens students' cultural identity and engagement in learning.

The study demonstrates that culturally familiar contexts can function as a bridge between students' cultural knowledge and English language use, making speaking instruction more meaningful, interactive, and communicative. Therefore, the developed model can be considered an alternative instructional framework for teaching English speaking in culturally rich and non-native English learning environments.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that the development of a culturally responsive model for teaching English speaking through Toraja culture offers both pedagogical and contextual significance for non-native English learners. The positive changes observed in students' participation, confidence, and speaking performance suggest that speaking instruction becomes more effective when it is connected to learners' cultural background and lived experiences. In many EFL classrooms, speaking is often taught through decontextualized drills, memorized dialogues, and generic topics that do not sufficiently reflect learners' social realities. As a result, students may understand linguistic forms but remain hesitant to

express ideas orally because they lack meaningful content to communicate. In contrast, the present study shows that when students are invited to talk about topics rooted in their own cultural world, such as family traditions, local ceremonies, community life, and Toraja values, they become more willing to participate in oral interaction. This suggests that cultural familiarity can function as an enabling condition for speaking development, particularly in contexts where English is learned as a foreign language and opportunities for authentic communication are limited.

One of the most important implications of this study is that Toraja culture served not merely as supplementary content but as an organizing principle for speaking pedagogy. This distinction is important. In many classroom practices, local culture is added only as an example or enrichment material, while the structure of teaching remains unchanged. In the present model, however, Toraja culture informed the selection of themes, the design of speaking tasks, the organization of interaction, and the assessment of performance. This means that culture was embedded into the instructional process rather than inserted as decoration. Such integration appears to have created a more coherent learning environment in which students could activate prior knowledge, connect personal experience with classroom tasks, and express culturally meaningful ideas in English. From a pedagogical perspective, this approach is particularly valuable because speaking ability depends not only on linguistic resources but also on content knowledge, confidence, and communicative purpose. Learners speak more meaningfully when they have something familiar and valuable to say. Therefore, the use of Toraja culture provided students with a conceptual and emotional foundation for communication, allowing English to function as a medium of expression rather than as an abstract academic subject.

The increase in students' confidence during the try-out phase also deserves close attention. Speaking anxiety remains one of the major barriers in EFL learning, especially among non-native learners who often fear making mistakes in pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary use. In this study, the greater confidence shown by students can be understood as the result of a reduced cognitive and affective burden. When learners are asked to speak about unfamiliar foreign contexts, they must simultaneously manage linguistic difficulty and conceptual uncertainty. However, when the topic is culturally familiar, learners already possess relevant background knowledge, emotional connection, and experiential understanding. As a result, they can allocate more cognitive resources to language production. The findings therefore suggest that culturally grounded speaking tasks may reduce anxiety not by simplifying language artificially, but by making content more accessible and personally meaningful. This is especially relevant in rural or culturally rooted educational settings, where students may have rich local knowledge but limited confidence in using English to articulate it. The model developed in this study appears to bridge that gap by helping learners transform existing cultural knowledge into spoken English performance.

Another important discussion point concerns the relationship between culturally responsive pedagogy and communicative competence. The findings show that the model did not simply encourage students to speak more often; it also supported more meaningful communication. Students participated in descriptive speaking, storytelling, role play, and group discussion with stronger engagement when the activities were linked to Toraja cultural elements. This suggests that the model facilitated several

dimensions of communicative competence at once. First, it strengthened discourse competence because students were able to organize ideas more coherently when they spoke about familiar themes. Second, it supported sociolinguistic competence because the discussions were grounded in values, relationships, and social practices that students understood. Third, it enhanced strategic competence because students appeared more willing to negotiate meaning, paraphrase, and continue speaking even when their language was imperfect. In this regard, the findings reinforce the view that speaking proficiency should not be measured solely in terms of grammatical accuracy. Effective speaking also depends on the speaker's ability to manage meaning, interaction, and context. By integrating local culture into communicative tasks, the model created opportunities for students to develop these broader communicative capacities.

The study also contributes to the ongoing discussion on the role of local wisdom in English language education. In some educational debates, the use of English is still perceived as being oriented toward external or global knowledge systems, sometimes at the expense of local identity. The present findings challenge this assumption by showing that English learning can, in fact, become a means of preserving, valuing, and communicating local culture. Through this model, students were not detached from their cultural background; instead, they were encouraged to reinterpret and express Toraja culture through English. This has important implications for identity formation in language learning. When students perceive English as a tool for talking about their own world, they may be less likely to view the language as foreign, distant, or culturally threatening. Instead, English may become a resource for intercultural communication, enabling learners to present local knowledge to wider audiences. In this sense, the model supports a more balanced orientation to English language education, one that values global communicative competence while maintaining strong connections to local cultural identity.

From the perspective of instructional design, the study demonstrates that a culturally responsive speaking model requires systematic planning rather than intuitive cultural inclusion. The success of the model in this study was closely related to the way Toraja cultural content was selected, adapted, and transformed into classroom activities. Topics were chosen not only because they were culturally significant, but also because they were pedagogically suitable for oral communication. Similarly, tasks were designed to move students gradually from cultural exploration to spoken production. This progression appears to have been important in helping learners build confidence and prepare linguistically for communication. The expert validation results further confirm that the model was regarded as relevant, feasible, and appropriate in terms of both pedagogy and culture. This suggests that the development of culturally responsive instruction should combine theoretical grounding, local consultation, and practical classroom testing. A model becomes educationally meaningful not simply because it contains cultural content, but because it aligns cultural relevance with clear learning objectives, interactional opportunities, and suitable assessment procedures.

Although the findings are promising, they should also be interpreted with appropriate caution. The model was tested in a limited educational setting, and therefore its effectiveness cannot yet be generalized to all non-native English learning contexts. The cultural strength of the model lies precisely in its contextual specificity; however, this also means that implementation in other

contexts would require adaptation to different learner characteristics, proficiency levels, and local cultures. In addition, while the study identified positive changes in speaking participation and performance, a larger-scale implementation would be necessary to determine the long-term impact of the model on fluency, accuracy, and communicative development. Comparative studies involving control groups or extended classroom cycles could further strengthen the empirical basis of the model. Nevertheless, the present study provides an important starting point by demonstrating that culture-based speaking pedagogy can be designed in a systematic way and can function effectively in a real classroom context.

Overall, the discussion of this study confirms that speaking instruction becomes more effective when it is culturally responsive, contextually meaningful, and learner-centered. The integration of Toraja culture into English speaking pedagogy enabled students to participate more actively, express themselves more confidently, and use English in ways that were socially grounded and personally relevant. The model therefore contributes not only to speaking pedagogy but also to broader discussions on culturally responsive education, local wisdom-based learning, and identity-sensitive English teaching. Its main contribution lies in showing that local culture is not peripheral to English learning; rather, it can serve as a productive foundation for developing communicative competence in non-native English learners. In this way, the study offers a pedagogical alternative for English teachers working in culturally rich settings and highlights the potential of local culture to transform speaking instruction into a more meaningful, inclusive, and empowering educational practice.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the development of a culturally responsive model for teaching English speaking through Toraja culture offers a meaningful and contextually relevant approach to English language instruction for non-native English learners. The findings demonstrate that the integration of Toraja cultural content into speaking activities can enhance students' participation, confidence, and communicative performance by connecting classroom learning with their sociocultural background and lived experiences. In this sense, the model not only supports language development but also strengthens learners' cultural identity and sense of relevance in the learning process (Zainal et al. 2023).

The study further shows that culturally grounded speaking instruction can function as an effective pedagogical alternative to conventional, decontextualized teaching practices that often fail to engage learners meaningfully (Hidayati, Hadi, dan Nur'aini 2025). By incorporating familiar cultural themes, local values, and community-based contexts into speaking tasks, the developed model enables learners to use English more actively, purposefully, and confidently. Therefore, Toraja culture is positioned not merely as supplementary instructional content, but as a core pedagogical resource in the development of communicative competence.

In addition, this study contributes theoretically and practically to the field of English language teaching by offering a localized instructional framework that integrates culturally responsive pedagogy with speaking instruction in a non-native English learning context. The novelty of the study lies in the systematic development of a speaking model in which local culture informs instructional objectives, materials, classroom interaction, and assessment. This model may serve as a useful reference for

teachers, curriculum developers, and researchers seeking to design more inclusive, contextualized, and culturally meaningful English speaking instruction.

Despite its contributions, this study was conducted on a limited scale, and further research is needed to examine the effectiveness of the model in broader educational settings and across different learner levels. Future studies may also explore the long-term impact of culturally responsive speaking instruction on learners' fluency, intercultural competence, and identity formation. Nevertheless, the present study affirms that the integration of local culture into English speaking pedagogy is both pedagogically valuable and educationally relevant, particularly in culturally rich and rural EFL contexts.

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