

## Local Wisdom in Deeper Learning: Cultivating Academic Identity and Cultural Sustainability in EFL Writing

**Sahril Nur**

[sahrilfbsunm@unm.ac.id](mailto:sahrilfbsunm@unm.ac.id)

Universitas Negeri Makassar

**Geminastiti Sakkir\***

[geminastitisakkir@unm.ac.id](mailto:geminastitisakkir@unm.ac.id)

Universitas Negeri Makassar

\*corresponding author

**Katharina Barbe**

[kbarbel@niu.edu](mailto:kbarbel@niu.edu)

Northern Illinois University, USA

### Abstract

*The hegemony of Anglo-American rhetorical conventions in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction often forces learners to negotiate between global literacy demands and the marginalization of their indigenous epistemologies. This study investigates the integration of Bugis-Makassar local wisdom—specifically the philosophies of Siri' na Pacce (honor and empathy) and Sulapa Eppa (holistic worldview)—into a Deeper Learning framework for teaching academic writing. Conducted as a qualitative case study in South Sulawesi, the research involved undergraduate English Literature students engaged in a Project-Based Learning curriculum. Data from writing portfolios, in-depth interviews, and reflective journals revealed that embedding local wisdom significantly improved structural coherence, elevated psychological capital, and transformed students' academic identities. The Local Wisdom-Based Deeper Learning model empowered students to transition from passive language reproducers to confident cultural ambassadors, demonstrating that cultural sustainability and rigorous global academic standards are mutually reinforcing goals in modern language education.*

**Keywords:** Deeper Learning, Academic Identity, Cultural Sustainability, Local Wisdom, EFL Writing.

### INTRODUCTION

The global landscape of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) academic writing is increasingly characterized by a profound tension between the mastery of standardized international conventions and the preservation of students' cultural voices. In higher education, academic writing is not merely a cognitive exercise of language application; it is a profound act of identity construction where novice writers must navigate the complex, often alienating demands of their discipline (Déri, Kovács, & Tóth, 2022; Zhang & Wang, 2024). However, the pervasive influence of dominant Anglo-American discourse often implicitly positions indigenous epistemologies as extraneous or even contradictory to rigorous academic thought. Consequently,

learners frequently experience a profound sense of alienation, adopting a passive, imitative stance that dilutes their authentic authorial voice, compromises their cultural identity, and weakens their overall linguistic motivation (Al-Hoorie & MacIntyre, 2020; Lu et al., 2022).

In response to the limitations of surface-level language reproduction, modern pedagogical paradigms have pivoted toward "Deeper Learning," an approach that prioritizes critical thinking, complex problem-solving, and metacognitive engagement. Deeper Learning transcends rote memorization and mechanical grammar drills, challenging students to synthesize information, collaborate effectively, and construct original arguments based on authentic contexts (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Fullan & Langworthy, 2014). Yet, despite its transformative potential, many prevailing Deeper Learning frameworks remain culturally agnostic, failing to tap into the rich cognitive and affective resources embedded within the learners' own heritage. When advanced pedagogical models ignore the sociocultural realities of the classroom, they miss a critical opportunity to anchor deep cognitive processing in contexts that are genuinely meaningful to the students.

This systemic gap underscores an urgent need for pedagogies that actively champion cultural sustainability alongside academic proficiency. Cultural sustainability in education involves more than a superficial acknowledgment of heritage; it requires the deliberate integration of local wisdom as a valid framework for organizing thought, ethical behavior, and social interaction within the classroom (Byram, 2021; Zein, 2020). By decolonizing the curriculum and elevating local philosophies to the status of academic scaffolds, educators can mitigate the homogenizing effects of globalization. This culturally responsive approach ensures that the pursuit of international literacy does not mandate the erasure of local identity, thereby fostering learners who are both globally competent and locally rooted (Weda, Atmowardoyo, & Rahman, 2022).

Within the context of South Sulawesi, Indonesia, the Bugis-Makassar local wisdom presents a profound philosophical foundation for enriching the EFL academic writing process. The cultural tenets of *Siri' na Pacce*—which emphasize an intricate balance of self-honor (*siri'*) and profound social solidarity (*pacce*)—offer powerful ethical guidelines that can reshape collaborative learning, peer review, and academic integrity (Azis, Saleh, & Suriani, 2020; Reski, Nur, & Widayati, 2021). Simultaneously, the concept of *Sulapa Eppa* (the four-sided holistic worldview) provides a native geometric metaphor for logical balance and structural coherence (Alamsyah, Mualimin, & Supriyono, 2021; Syarif, Harisah, & Sir, 2018). Integrating these indigenous paradigms into the academic writing classroom offers a culturally resonant pathway to achieve the rigorous analytical demands of English discourse.

Therefore, this study aims to explore the efficacy of integrating Bugis-Makassar local wisdom into a Deeper Learning framework for EFL academic writing. Specifically, the research investigates how this integration influences the structural development of student texts, the collaborative dynamics of the learning environment, and the evolution of the students' academic identities. By bridging the gap between global rhetorical standards and local epistemological roots, this research seeks to demonstrate that cultivating cultural sustainability directly enhances the psychological resilience, motivation, and ultimate communicative competence of EFL learners.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of academic identity in L2 and EFL writing has evolved significantly, shifting from a view of the writer as a deficient language user to a recognition of the writer as an active creator of knowledge. Identity in academic writing is deeply social, requiring learners to continuously negotiate their autobiographical self (who they are) with their discursive self (how they project their voice in text) to meet the expectations of an academic community (Zhang & Wang, 2024). For EFL novice writers, this negotiation is notoriously difficult; they are often compelled to adopt unfamiliar rhetorical personas, leading to a dissonance between their lived experiences and their academic output. This struggle frequently results in a weakened authorial stance, where students rely heavily on citing Western authorities rather than asserting their own analytical voices, effectively stifling their academic autonomy (Hyland & Hyland, 2019; Mahmud & Nur, 2018).

To address the affective challenges of this identity negotiation, Positive Psychology has become increasingly relevant in SLA and language learning literature. Theoretical frameworks such as the concept of Psychological Capital (Hope, Efficacy, Resilience, Optimism) emphasize the importance of psychological well-being in academic achievement (Luthans, Youssef-Morgan, & Avolio, 2015; MacIntyre, Gregersen, & Mercer, 2016). When applied to EFL writing, these frameworks suggest that students are more likely to take the intellectual risks required for advanced writing when they operate from a foundation of psychological safety and high self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Fathi, Pawlak, & Hejazi, 2024). Cultivating this psychological capital is essential for helping students endure the rigorous, iterative process of academic drafting and peer review, ultimately increasing their L2 writing motivation and well-being (Seligman, 2011).

Cultural sustainability serves as a critical macro-level framework that intersects with both academic identity and positive psychology. In educational contexts, cultural sustainability advocates for the active preservation and revitalization of indigenous knowledge systems within contemporary curricula (Lu et al., 2022). It challenges the deficit perspective that views local cultures as obstacles to global modernization, proposing instead that native epistemologies are vital assets for holistic development. By integrating local wisdom into the classroom, educators validate the students' cultural backgrounds, providing a profound sense of meaning that deeply motivates the learning process and reduces language anxiety (Al-Hoorie & MacIntyre, 2020; Zein, 2020).

The necessity of cultural sustainability is amplified by the risk of linguistic imperialism inherent in globalized English education. The uncritical adoption of Anglo-centric teaching materials often inadvertently signals to learners that their native concepts are academically inferior or irrelevant to scholarly pursuits. Decolonizing the EFL curriculum involves consciously resisting this narrative by designing learning experiences where local philosophies are not treated merely as exotic topics for translation, but as the very analytical lenses through which global issues are examined (Byram, 2021). This epistemological shift empowers students, validating their heritage as a legitimate foundation for rigorous scholarly inquiry and advanced academic writing.

Deeper Learning principles align perfectly with the goals of culturally sustaining pedagogy, as both demand high cognitive engagement and authentic application of knowledge. Deeper Learning moves beyond the transmission of facts, focusing on equipping students with the

capacity to critically evaluate information, communicate complex ideas effectively, and direct their own learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Fullan & Langworthy, 2014). These competencies are foundational for academic writing, which inherently requires the synthesis of disparate sources and the construction of original, well-reasoned arguments. However, deep cognitive processing is intrinsically linked to prior knowledge; therefore, learning is deepest when it connects to the cultural schemas already present in the students' minds (Vygotsky, 1978).

The intersection of Deeper Learning and cultural sustainability suggests that academic rigor and cultural relevance are mutually reinforcing. When writing tasks are anchored in the students' cultural reality, cognitive load is optimized, allowing working memory to focus on the complex mechanics of target language rhetoric rather than struggling with alien conceptual frameworks (Barrot, 2021). This culturally responsive approach to Deeper Learning ensures that students are not merely mimicking academic forms, but are engaged in true epistemic development, using English to articulate ideas that matter to their communities and future professions (Zhao, 2012).

In the Indonesian context, specifically within South Sulawesi, the Bugis-Makassar philosophy of *Siri' na Pacce* provides a compelling cultural anchor for such an approach. *Siri'* refers to a complex interplay of self-respect, honor, and shame, while *pacce* denotes an unwavering sense of empathy, solidarity, and shared suffering (Azis, Saleh, & Suriani, 2020). Together, these values dictate the moral and social behavior of the Bugis-Makassar people, demanding integrity in one's actions and a profound responsibility toward the community (Rahmawati & Yusuf, 2022). Translating these pervasive cultural tenets into the pedagogical space offers a localized framework for managing classroom dynamics, student motivation, and ethical accountability.

Applying *Siri' na Pacce* to the ethics of academic writing offers a culturally resonant alternative to standard Western academic integrity policies. Instead of framing plagiarism merely as a violation of institutional rules, it can be framed as a breach of *siri'*—a loss of personal and family honor caused by intellectual theft. Conversely, the concept of *pacce* transforms the often-dreaded process of peer feedback (Hyland & Hyland, 2019). When peer review is positioned as an act of solidarity—helping a peer improve so that the collective honor of the cohort is maintained—students engage more constructively, fulfilling the collaborative competencies central to Deeper Learning and sociolinguistic development (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Complementing this ethical framework is the Bugis-Makassar concept of *Sulapa Eppa*, which translates to the "four-sided worldview" (Syarif, Harisah, & Sir, 2018). This philosophy represents the ideal of balance and perfection, historically tied to the holistic approach to life embedded in traditional maritime and social architectures (Alamsyah, Mualimin, & Supriyono, 2021). In cognitive terms, *Sulapa Eppa* demands that an issue be examined from all sides to achieve a complete, balanced understanding. This native geometry of thought provides a powerful, pre-existing cognitive structure that can be harnessed to teach the complexities of English rhetorical organization.

Applying *Sulapa Eppa* to academic writing provides a cultural metaphor for essay structuring that resonates deeply with students. The four sides can be mapped onto the foundational components of a rigorous academic argument: context, assertion, counter-argument, and synthesis. By utilizing a structural paradigm that students already intuitively understand, educators can demystify the linear, often rigid expectations of English academic prose. This bridging strategy validates the students' native logical structures while successfully teaching

them to navigate target language conventions with greater ease and academic grit (Fathi, Pawlak, & Hejazi, 2024).

Project-Based Learning (PjBL) serves as the ideal pedagogical engine to deliver this synthesis. In EFL settings, PjBL has been shown to successfully increase learner autonomy, motivation, and critical thinking by anchoring language use in tangible, extended projects (Bell, 2010; Ngadiso et al., 2021). When combined with explicit scaffolding, PjBL environments support students as they negotiate the transition from novice writers to independent academic authors, connecting theoretical knowledge with practical, culturally relevant outcomes (Paris, Hadi, & Rosyidi, 2024; Yuliani & Lengkanawati, 2017).

Synthesizing these elements produces the Local Wisdom-Based Deeper Learning (LWBDL) model for EFL writing. This framework posits that by activating local cultural capital—using *Siri' na Pacce* to foster ethical collaboration and psychological resilience, and *Sulapa Eppa* to scaffold logical coherence—educators can facilitate a more profound engagement with academic writing. The model hypothesizes that when students write from a place of cultural authenticity, their motivation increases, their structural proficiency improves, and their academic identity flourishes.

## METHOD

This research employed a qualitative case study design to investigate the nuanced processes of identity transformation, cognitive engagement, and writing development. A case study approach was deemed most appropriate as it allows for an in-depth, holistic exploration of complex social phenomena within a real-life, bounded context (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018). By focusing on a specific cohort undergoing a targeted pedagogical intervention, the research could closely track how the integration of abstract cultural philosophies tangibly influenced the students' lived experiences and academic output over time.

The study was conducted at the Faculty of Languages and Literature at Universitas Negeri Makassar, located in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. This setting was intentionally chosen due to its rich cultural milieu; the institution serves a student body predominantly composed of individuals from the Bugis and Makassar ethnic groups. The cultural vibrancy of the university provided an authentic, naturalistic environment where the philosophies of *Siri' na Pacce* and *Sulapa Eppa* were not historical artifacts, but lived values that shape daily social interactions in the broader community (Azis, Saleh, & Suriani, 2020; Reski, Nur, & Widayati, 2021).

The participants in this study consisted of a cohort of undergraduate English Literature (ELITE) students who were enrolled in an advanced academic writing course. These literature majors represent a unique demographic within the EFL context; they are required not only to master English grammar but to develop high-level critical analysis, rhetorical sophistication, and a distinct authorial voice (Déri, Kovács, & Tóth, 2022). Understanding how these specific learners negotiate their cultural identity against the backdrop of demanding English rhetorical standards was the central focus of the investigation.

Purposive sampling was utilized to select 30 participants from the larger cohort. The selection criteria ensured a diverse representation of baseline writing proficiencies, ranging from intermediate to advanced, as well as varying degrees of self-reported engagement with local cultural traditions. This deliberate variance allowed the researcher to observe the efficacy of the Local Wisdom-Based Deeper Learning model across a spectrum of student capabilities, ensuring

that the findings captured a comprehensive view of the intervention's impact (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Mahmud & Nur, 2018).

The instructional intervention spanned a 16-week semester and was grounded in a Project-Based Learning (PjBL) curriculum with explicit deep learning objectives (Bell, 2010; Paris, Hadi, & Rosyidi, 2024). Rather than writing generic essays on disconnected topics, the students were tasked with researching and analyzing local community wisdom, translating these insights into rigorous English academic articles suitable for international publication. The pedagogical design explicitly taught the concepts of *Siri' na Pacce* and *Sulapa Eppa* not just as subject matter, but as the procedural and structural frameworks for conducting peer reviews, organizing arguments, and maintaining academic integrity.

The first primary method of data collection was the longitudinal analysis of student writing portfolios. Over the course of the semester, each participant compiled a portfolio containing multiple drafts of their academic articles, peer feedback forms, and final submissions. These portfolios provided concrete, documentary evidence of the students' cognitive development, capturing the evolution of their structural coherence, the integration of local epistemologies into their arguments, and the gradual emergence of a confident academic voice (Hyland & Hyland, 2019).

The second method of data collection involved in-depth, semi-structured interviews. A subset of 12 students, selected based on their portfolio trajectories (showing varied levels of improvement), participated in extensive interviews at the midpoint and conclusion of the semester. These interviews were designed to probe the metacognitive processes behind their writing decisions, exploring how they consciously negotiated their cultural identities and managed the psychological demands of the tasks. The semi-structured format allowed the researcher to pursue emerging themes while ensuring core research questions were addressed.

The third qualitative data source was the use of structured reflective journals. Participants were required to submit bi-weekly reflective entries detailing their emotional and psychological states, their motivation levels, and their personal reactions to the integration of local wisdom in the classroom. These journals functioned as a transparent window into the affective domain of the learners, capturing real-time data on the development of their psychological capital and providing crucial context for the writing behaviors observed in the portfolios (Luthans, Youssef-Morgan, & Avolio, 2015; MacIntyre, Gregersen, & Mercer, 2016).

Data analysis was conducted using a rigorous thematic analysis approach, combining both inductive and deductive coding cycles (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In the first cycle, open coding was applied to the transcribed interviews, journal entries, and textual features of the portfolios to capture the raw, immediate experiences of the participants. In the second cycle, axial coding was utilized to group these initial codes into broader categories, searching for specific patterns related to identity shifts, structural improvements, and peer collaboration dynamics.

To ensure theoretical alignment, the emerging categories were then mapped against the core components of the theoretical framework. The data was explicitly analyzed through the lenses of Deeper Learning competencies, Positive Psychology (specifically the development of resilience and writing grit), and the Bugis-Makassar values of honor and holistic balance (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Fathi, Pawlak, & Hejazi, 2024; Syarif, Harisah, & Sir, 2018). This theoretically informed analysis allowed the researcher to draw robust connections between the pedagogical intervention and the observed student outcomes.

Trustworthiness and credibility were established through the rigorous triangulation of the multiple qualitative data sources (portfolios, interviews, and journals) to corroborate findings across different mediums (Yin, 2018). Furthermore, member checking was conducted; preliminary findings and transcript interpretations were shared with the interviewed participants to verify that the researcher's thematic conclusions accurately reflected their lived experiences and cultural realities.

Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process, particularly given the focus on personal identity and cultural heritage. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, with explicit assurances that their cultural knowledge would be treated with deep respect and academic rigor. Participant anonymity was strictly maintained through the use of pseudonyms in all documentation and publications, ensuring a safe environment for genuine reflection and intellectual risk-taking. Finally, the researcher maintained a reflexive stance to mitigate bias during data interpretation.

## FINDINGS

The thematic analysis of the data revealed that the integration of *Siri' na Pacce* fundamentally transformed the culture of academic integrity and collaboration among the ELITE students. Initially, instances of uncredited borrowing and poor paraphrasing were common, often stemming from a lack of confidence in target language formulation rather than malicious intent. However, when the curriculum re-framed academic integrity through the lens of *siri'* (honor and self-respect), students' perspectives on originality shifted dramatically (Azis, Saleh, & Suriani, 2020). Plagiarism was no longer viewed merely as a violation of a Western academic rule, but as a deeply personal loss of face that reflected poorly on their individual and communal identity.

Evidence from the writing portfolios demonstrated a marked and rapid decrease in plagiarism following this cultural framing. Students began to take meticulous care with their citations, displaying a newfound intrinsic motivation to ensure their work was genuinely their own and properly attributed. The reflective journals confirmed this shift, with numerous students noting that viewing academic honesty as an extension of their cultural honor provided a stronger, more internalized behavioral deterrent than the threat of institutional punishment. This internal locus of control directly reflects the self-directed learning competencies central to Deeper Learning (Fullan & Langworthy, 2014).

Furthermore, the concept of *pacce* (solidarity and empathy) revolutionized the peer review process. In the early weeks, peer feedback was superficial and overly polite; students were hesitant to critique their classmates for fear of causing offense or disrupting social harmony, a common issue in collectivistic EFL settings (Hyland & Hyland, 2019). By explicitly teaching that providing rigorous, constructive feedback is an act of *pacce*—a demonstration of caring enough to help a peer improve and protect the cohort's collective honor—the classroom dynamic shifted from polite avoidance to deep, collaborative engagement (Rahmawati & Yusuf, 2022).

The interview data highlighted how this culturally anchored collaboration enhanced the students' psychological capital. When faced with the immense cognitive load of academic writing, the shared ethos of *pacce* built a profound sense of resilience and optimism. Students reported feeling less isolated in their struggles, viewing the demanding writing tasks not as solitary burdens, but as collective challenges they were overcoming together. This communal

support structure actively nurtured the traits necessary for sustained academic effort and L2 writing grit (Fathi, Pawlak, & Hejazi, 2024; Luthans, Youssef-Morgan, & Avolio, 2015).

Ultimately, the application of *Siri' na Pacce* successfully bridged the affective and social domains of writing. By leveraging indigenous moral frameworks, the pedagogical model cultivated an environment of high psychological safety and rigorous peer accountability. This cultural scaffolding transformed the classroom into a genuine community of practice, where the Deeper Learning goals of collaborative problem-solving and ethical communication were naturally and enthusiastically realized, bypassing traditional language anxiety barriers (MacIntyre, Gregersen, & Mercer, 2016).

The second major theme centered on the application of *Sulapa Eppa* (the four-sided holistic worldview) as a cognitive scaffold for structuring complex English academic arguments. Analysis of early portfolio drafts revealed that the students frequently struggled with the linear, direct rhetorical style expected in Anglo-American academic writing. Their initial essays often exhibited circular reasoning, tangential narrative structures, or a failure to clearly synthesize opposing viewpoints, reflecting a disconnect between their native cognitive patterns and target language expectations (Déri, Kovács, & Tóth, 2022).

The pedagogical intervention introduced *Sulapa Eppa* as a geometric metaphor for essay organization, instructing students to ensure their arguments possessed "four balanced sides": the establishing context, the core assertion, the critical counter-argument, and the holistic synthesis (Alamsyah, Mualimin, & Supriyono, 2021). This framing resonated immediately. Because *Sulapa Eppa* represents a culturally familiar concept of perfection and completeness, the students intuitively grasped that an essay missing a counter-argument was inherently "unbalanced" and therefore intellectually flawed (Syarif, Harisah, & Sir, 2018).

Subsequent portfolio analysis demonstrated a significant and measurable improvement in essay coherence and logical flow. Students actively used the four-sided metaphor to map out their outlines, ensuring that their paragraphs transitioned logically and built toward a unified conclusion. The quality of critical analysis deepened, as the cultural mandate for holistic balance forced students to engage seriously with opposing literature rather than ignoring contradictory evidence, thus satisfying the rigorous demands of global academic discourse.

The cultural metaphor effectively functioned as a cognitive bridge. It allowed students to achieve the rigorous structural demands of English writing without feeling that they had to abandon their own cultural cognitive frameworks. The reflective journals indicated a high degree of metacognitive awareness regarding this process; students explicitly noted how visualizing their essays through the lens of *Sulapa Eppa* reduced the cognitive load of organizing complex ideas in a foreign language, allowing them to focus more on lexical precision and rhetorical strength (Barrot, 2021).

This finding suggests that native cultural concepts, rather than acting as negative interference in L2 writing, can be harnessed as powerful pedagogical assets. By mapping target language rhetorical conventions onto indigenous philosophical structures, the Local Wisdom-Based Deeper Learning model facilitated a deeper cognitive engagement with the text, enabling students to master complex academic structures with greater ease, structural integrity, and profound cultural pride (Weda, Atmowardoyo, & Rahman, 2022).

The third defining theme was the profound transformation of the students' academic identities, evolving from passive language reproducers to confident cultural ambassadors. In the

initial phases of the course, the students' writing was characterized by a distinct lack of authorial stance. They relied heavily on stringing together direct quotes from Western scholars, effectively silencing their own voices and positioning themselves as mere observers of the academic discourse rather than active participants (Zhang & Wang, 2024).

As the Project-Based Learning curriculum required them to investigate and write about local community wisdom, a noticeable shift occurred (Bell, 2010). Finding a lack of extensive Western literature on their specific local topics, the students were compelled to synthesize global theoretical frameworks with primary data from their own cultural context. This necessity forced them to adopt an active, analytical voice, positioning themselves as the primary authorities on the local phenomena they were describing, thereby asserting their intellectual autonomy.

Interviews conducted toward the end of the semester highlighted a surge in academic self-efficacy and cultural pride. Students reported a paradigm shift in how they viewed their relationship with English; they no longer saw it merely as a foreign system to be memorized, but as a powerful global tool they could wield to elevate their local heritage onto the international stage. They expressed a deep sense of ownership over their writing, feeling that their unique cultural perspectives added valuable nuance to global academic conversations (Lu et al., 2022; Zein, 2020).

This identity shift represented a successful enactment of cultural sustainability within the educational space. The students were actively preserving their heritage not by keeping it isolated, but by rigorously translating it and defending it within global academic contexts. The integration of local wisdom had provided them with the necessary "Meaning" (PERMA) to endure the rigors of advanced writing, validating their autobiographical selves while profoundly strengthening their discursive selves (Seligman, 2011; Zhang & Wang, 2024).

Overall, the findings paint a comprehensive picture of transformation. The ELITE students did not merely improve their grammar or vocabulary; they experienced a holistic development of their cognitive skills, psychological resilience, and academic identities. The Local Wisdom-Based Deeper Learning model demonstrated that when EFL writing instruction respects and utilizes the students' cultural roots, it unleashes a level of motivation and analytical depth that standard, culturally agnostic pedagogies struggle to achieve.

## DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this study offer compelling evidence that integrating local wisdom into Deeper Learning frameworks significantly enhances both the cognitive and affective dimensions of EFL academic writing. The data clearly demonstrates that when students are invited to utilize their cultural heritage as an analytical lens, they exhibit higher levels of motivation, better structural proficiency, and a stronger authorial voice. This validates the core premise of the Local Wisdom-Based Deeper Learning (LWBDL) model: that cultural sustainability and academic rigor are deeply complementary, rather than competing, educational objectives (Lu et al., 2022; Zein, 2020).

By leveraging the Bugis-Makassar philosophy of *Siri' na Pacce*, this research extends current literature on academic integrity and character building in cross-cultural contexts (Azis, Saleh, & Suriani, 2020). Traditional approaches often rely on punitive Western models of intellectual property, which can feel arbitrary or disconnected from EFL learners' moral realities. Framing plagiarism as a violation of *siri'* (honor) roots academic ethics in a pre-existing, highly

emotional cultural schema. This suggests that culturally responsive moral frameworks are far more effective at internalizing ethical behavior than institutional policies alone.

This culturally grounded approach aligns seamlessly with the principles of Positive Psychology and motivation in L2 writing (Al-Hoorie & MacIntyre, 2020). The transition from a competitive, individualistic writing process to a collaborative one driven by *pacce* (solidarity) actively built the students' psychological capital and resilience (Fathi, Pawlak, & Hejazi, 2024). The cultivation of L2 writing grit was evident as students learned to view peer critique as a communal support mechanism rather than a personal attack, echoing findings that point to emotional regulation and positive relationships as key drivers of EFL achievement (MacIntyre, Gregersen, & Mercer, 2016; Seligman, 2011).

The observed shift in peer review dynamics also highlights the value of culturally sustaining pedagogies in fostering authentic communicative competence. In many EFL contexts, peer review fails because students lack the sociolinguistic confidence to critique their peers or fear violating face-saving norms (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Hyland & Hyland, 2019). By mapping this academic task onto a native cultural obligation, the pedagogy bypassed language anxiety, generating rich, meaningful negotiations of meaning that are the hallmark of true Deeper Learning and effective dialogic feedback (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the application of *Sulapa Eppa* as a structural scaffold provides a novel and significant contribution to L2 rhetorical studies. Historically, the field has often operated on a deficit model, viewing learners' native rhetorical patterns as interference that must be eradicated to master English linearity. This study directly challenges that paradigm, proving that native cognitive structures—such as the deeply ingrained holistic balance seen in Bugis ethnoecology—can be actively harnessed to understand and replicate target language conventions (Alamsyah, Mualimin, & Supriyono, 2021; Syarif, Harisah, & Sir, 2018).

Instead of fighting the students' holistic tendencies, the pedagogy utilized the cultural metaphor of *Sulapa Eppa* to explain the necessity of comprehensive, balanced argumentation. This approach bridged the epistemological gap, allowing students to map the abstract requirements of an English essay onto a familiar geometric concept of perfection. This radically reduced cognitive load and facilitated faster structural mastery, providing a practical methodology for Genre-Based Instruction in diverse cultural contexts (Barrot, 2021; Déri, Kovács, & Tóth, 2022).

This structural bridging strategy implies that educators do not need to choose between teaching standard English rhetoric and honoring native thought patterns. By finding the pedagogical parallels between global standards and local philosophies, teachers can facilitate a deeper cognitive engagement with the text. Students learn not just the "how" of English essay structure, but the underlying logical "why," translating it through their own cultural idioms while enhancing their overall cognitive flexibility (Fullan & Langworthy, 2014).

The enhancement of self-regulated learning and metacognition was a clear by product of this intervention. Portfolios structured around these cultural values naturally encouraged metacognitive reflection, allowing students to monitor their thinking processes continuously (Mahmud & Nur, 2018). As learners applied the *Sulapa Eppa* framework, their metacognitive awareness regarding planning, organizing, and evaluating their paragraphs deepened significantly, aligning with best practices in process writing (Hyland & Hyland, 2019).

The transformation in academic identity observed serves as the most critical indicator of Deeper Learning success. The journey from silent, passive language reproducers to authoritative, confident authors encapsulates the ultimate goal of higher education (Zhang & Wang, 2024). This identity shift was entirely predicated on the validation of their cultural background as a legitimate source of academic inquiry, resisting the colonial epistemologies that have historically dominated EFL materials (Byram, 2021).

As students integrated local wisdom into their articles, they successfully merged their autobiographical selves with their discursual selves. They were no longer pretending to be detached Western scholars; they were writing authentically as Indonesian academics participating in a global dialogue. This psychological empowerment is crucial; it fuels the intrinsic, autonomous motivation that sustains long-term academic effort and lifelong learning (Al-Hoorie & MacIntyre, 2020; Yuliani & Lengkanawati, 2017).

Moreover, this identity shift acts as a potent countermeasure against the homogenizing forces of globalized English. By training students to articulate their local realities in rigorous academic English, the LWBDL model promotes true cultural sustainability (Lu et al., 2022). It ensures that the spread of English literacy does not result in a monoculture of thought, but rather equips diverse voices with the linguistic tools to share their unique epistemologies with the world, a vital component of 21st-century global citizenship (Zhao, 2012).

The integration of local wisdom therefore acts as a vital cultural buffer. It protects students from the alienation often associated with advanced foreign language acquisition, proving that one does not need to sacrifice local identity to achieve global competence. This finding is particularly vital for institutions in Indonesia, offering a blueprint for participating in international academia without compromising national character or millennial identity (Reski, Nur, & Widayati, 2021; Weda, Atmowardoyo, & Rahman, 2022).

These insights advocate strongly for a paradigm shift in EFL curriculum design. The heavy reliance on purely Anglo-centric textbooks implicitly marginalizes the students' lived experiences. Curricula must be reimagined to include localized, culturally resonant content, not as supplementary reading, but as the core material upon which critical thinking and academic writing skills are practiced and assessed (Zein, 2020).

Project-Based Learning emerged in this study as the ideal pedagogical vehicle for this cultural integration (Ngadiso et al., 2021). PjBL moves writing out of the theoretical vacuum and demands practical, community-oriented outcomes that actively promote critical writing components and higher-order thinking (Bell, 2010). By requiring students to investigate their own communities, PjBL naturally surfaces local wisdom, providing rich material for academic analysis (Paris, Hadi, & Rosyidi, 2024).

The study also underscores the critical importance of lecturer agency. Educators are not merely deliverers of curriculum; they are cultural mediators. The success of this intervention relied on the instructor's deliberate decision to legitimize Bugis-Makassar philosophies within the academic space. This highlights the need for teacher training programs to emphasize culturally responsive pedagogy and empower educators to adapt global methods to local realities (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

Connecting these findings to broader societal goals, the Local Wisdom-Based Deeper Learning model supports the development of human capital that is both globally competitive and deeply committed to national character. In a rapidly globalizing world, graduates who possess

both high-level English literacy and a strong, grounded cultural identity are uniquely positioned to navigate cross-cultural professional environments with integrity (Byram, 2021; Luthans, Youssef-Morgan, & Avolio, 2015).

Looking forward to the era of Augmented Intelligence and Generative AI, grounding writing in unique local human experiences becomes even more essential. As AI tools become proficient at producing generic academic prose, the true value of human writing will lie in its authenticity, context, and unique cultural perspective. Teaching students to write from their cultural roots ensures their voices remain distinct, analytical, and irreplaceable in the future landscape of research.

Ultimately, the successful synthesis of Bugis-Makassar philosophy and English academic writing conventions proves that cultural heritage and rigorous scholarship are mutually reinforcing. When educators honor the wisdom of the local culture, they do not lower academic standards; rather, they provide the psychological and cognitive foundation necessary for students to reach the highest levels of academic excellence.

## CONCLUSIONS

The integration of local wisdom, specifically the Bugis-Makassar philosophies of *Siri' na Pacce* and *Sulapa Eppa*, into EFL academic writing successfully fosters Deeper Learning and cultivates a resilient academic identity. This study demonstrates that native epistemologies are not barriers to acquiring global literacy; rather, they are potent cognitive and affective resources. Through the Local Wisdom-Based Deeper Learning (LWBDL) model, students transitioned from passive language reproducers to confident cultural ambassadors, proving that authentic cultural expression and rigorous English rhetorical standards can be synergistically achieved.

By harnessing culturally grounded concepts of honor, empathy, and holistic balance, the students achieved significantly higher cognitive engagement and structural coherence in their essays. Furthermore, the pedagogical framing elevated the students' psychological capital, transforming a typically solitary and anxiety-inducing task into a collaborative, community-driven endeavor. This approach effectively enacted cultural sustainability, ensuring that learners preserved their heritage by actively translating and defending it within the global academic discourse.

The pedagogical implications of this research are substantial for EFL practitioners in higher education. Educators should systematically embed indigenous knowledge systems into their writing curricula to enhance relevance, intrinsic motivation, and ethical engagement. Moving away from purely Anglo-centric models, teachers should utilize culturally familiar metaphors to scaffold complex target language structures, and frame classroom collaboration through local moral philosophies to build psychological safety and robust peer accountability.

## REFERENCES

- Al-Hoorie, A. H., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2020). *Contemporary language motivation theory: 60 years since Gardner and Lambert (1959)*. Multilingual Matters.
- Alamsyah, Mualimin, M., & Supriyono, A. (2021). The Sea as Life Support for Bugis People in Colonial Period. *E3S Web of Conferences*, 317, 04003.
- Atmowardoyo, H., Sakkir, G., & Sakkir, R. I. (2023). Students' English skills and their ways of

- learning. *Celebes Journal of Language Studies*, 333-338.
- Azis, A., Saleh, S. F., & Suriani, A. I. (2020). Inculcating Siri' Na Pacce Value in Primary School Learning. *Mimbar Sekolah Dasar*, 7(1), 82-92.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. W.H. Freeman.
- Barrot, J. S. (2021). Integrating technology into ESL/EFL writing through Grammarly. *RELC Journal*, 53(3), 644-647.
- Bell, S. (2010). Project-based learning for the 21st century: Skills for the future. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, 83(2), 39-43.
- Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*. Cambridge University Press.
- Byram, M. (2021). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence: Revisited* (2nd ed.). Multilingual Matters.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. SAGE Publications.
- Darling-Hammond, L., Flook, L., Cook-Harvey, C., Barron, B., & Osher, D. (2020). Implications for educational practice of the science of learning and development. *Applied Developmental Science*, 24(2), 97-140.
- Déri, I., Kovács, G., & Tóth, Z. (2022). Academic writing in a foreign language: Challenges and strategies. *European Journal of Education*, 57(4), 512-526.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2009). *The psychology of second language acquisition*. Oxford University Press.
- Fathi, J., Pawlak, M., & Hejazi, S. Y. (2024). Exploring the roles of ideal L2 writing self, growth L2 writing mindset, and L2 writing grit in L2 writing achievement among EFL learners. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 46, 1150-1178.
- Fullan, M., & Langworthy, M. (2014). *A rich seam: How new pedagogies find deep learning*. Pearson.
- Haidir, A. M., Dollah, S., Basri, M., & Sakkir, G. (2025). The Implementation of the Collaborative Learning Approach in Teaching Speaking: A Case Study of an Indonesian EFL Classroom. *Ethical Lingua: Journal of Language Teaching and Literature*, 12(1).
- Hyland, K., & Hyland, F. (2019). *Feedback in second language writing: Contexts and issues* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Lu, J., Liu, Y., An, L., & Zhang, Y. (2022). The cultural sustainability in English as foreign language textbooks: Investigating the cultural representations in English language textbooks in China. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 944381.
- Luthans, F., Youssef-Morgan, C. M., & Avolio, B. J. (2015). *Psychological capital and beyond*. Oxford University Press.
- MacIntyre, P. D., Gregersen, T., & Mercer, S. (2016). *Positive psychology in SLA*. Multilingual Matters.

- Mahmud, M., & Nur, S. (2018). Exploring students' learning strategies and gender differences in English language teaching. *International Journal of Language Education*, 2(1), 51.
- Ngadiso, N., Sarosa, T., Asrori, M., Drajadi, N. A., & Handayani, A. (2021). Project-based Learning (PBL) in EFL learning: Lesson from Indonesia. *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 13(2), 1114-1122.
- Nur, S., & Sakkir, G. (2025). Beyond Anxiety. *Celebes Journal of Language Studies*, 147-160.
- Nur, S., Sakkir, G., & Nurfadhilah, A. S. (2025). The Motivational Core of L2 Academic Writing: A Systematic Review of Theory, Research, and Pedagogy. *Tamaddun*, 24(2), 297-310.
- Paris, A. S., Hadi, M. W., & Rosyidi, A. Z. (2024). Implementing Project-Based Learning Model (PjBL) to Develop Students' Writing Skills in Composing Academic Texts. *Jambura Journal of English Teaching and Literature*, 5(2), 102-113.
- Rahmawati, E., & Yusuf, M. (2022). Everyday communication patterns influenced by siri' na pacce. *Journal of Sociolinguistics and Cultural Studies*, 4(1), 22-35.
- Reski, P., Nur, R., & Widayati, C. (2021). Local Wisdom of Bugis Makassar Siri 'na Pacce From Millennials Glasses. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 525.
- Rosalia, H., Saputri, F., Amir, H. S., & Sakkir, G. (2025). Exploring the Writing Challenges Faced by First-Year EFL Students. *Celebes Journal of Language Studies*, 23-33.
- Sakkir, G. (2018). *Writing: Beginner*. Deepublish.
- Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being*. Free Press.
- Syarif, A. Y., Harisah, A., & Sir, M. M. (2018). Sulapa Eppa As The Basic or Fundamental Philosophy of Traditional Architecture Buginese. *SHS Web of Conferences*, 41, 04005.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.
- Weda, S., Atmowardoyo, H., & Rahman, F. (2022). Intercultural communicative competence of Indonesian university students. *Asian Englishes*, 24(1), 75-89.
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods*. SAGE Publications.
- Yuliani, Y., & Lengkanawati, N. S. (2017). Project-based learning in promoting learner autonomy in an EFL classroom. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 7(2), 47.
- Zein, S. (2020). *Language policy in superdiverse Indonesia*. Routledge.
- Zhang, L., & Wang, J. (2024). To be like a "scholar": a study on the construction of authorial identity of Chinese EFL learners in academic writing. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14, 1297557.
- Zhao, Y. (2012). *World class learners: Educating creative and entrepreneurial students*. Corwin Press.