

# 18. Islamic Indonesian EFL students' responses on

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## Islamic Indonesian EFL students' responses on English-speaking countries

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### ABSTRACT

EFL students learn English within the notion of English as an international language. The gap in this research is to study the learning of English as a language to the study of the culture of the English-speaking countries. This gap emerged after cross-culture understanding was taught in a one-semester course at an Islamic state university in Indonesia. Phenomenology is the theory used in this research, within the qualitative research approach and descriptive statistics. 110 respondents were given the questionnaires, with open-ended questions asking four interrelated questions about the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and Australia as the three English-speaking countries. The respondents' answers in the questionnaire were analysed by using codes, or themes, that later on show the frequency of each theme. The answers were categorized according to the themes and the percentage based on frequency. Thus, the findings of this research highlighted that, Indonesian Muslim students have certain themes in looking at English-speaking countries, such as the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and Australia when they learn English as a foreign language.

**Keywords:** *English as a foreign language; English-speaking countries; Language understanding.*

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## 1. Introduction

Ever since the development of global literacy has emerged in almost every country in the world, this research is interested in investigating the basic but profound questions from their EFL students: How do they perceive English-speaking countries as they learned English as the EFL? How do the Indonesian Muslim students perceive the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and Australia based on topics they learned in the Cross-Culture Understanding subject? EFL students in Indonesia recognize English as a foreign language. There is a demand for students to develop such intercultural communication skills in using English socially and proficiently.

The first and foremost part of this research is the conception of language and culture that have strong ties to one another. Such ties exist between English as a language and culture. As the research generally accepts critical assumptions (Leedy, 1997), we assumed that belief or faith and everything around them is an important part of a culture, while language also plays an important role in culture with its verbal and non-verbal codes (Liliweri, 2007). Thus, without fully understanding such cultural codes, cultural misunderstanding becomes an unavoidable thing, and it will result in cultural conflict.

In Indonesia, the majority of the students have Islam as their religion. Their spiritual identity is known as Muslims. In terms of the educational context, the Quran and Sunnah are essential and crucial sources of information on life and the hereafter for this type of student. "Islam looks at education as a form of worship (*ibadah*) where Muslims share a common set of values based on the Quran (the fundamental and most reliable source for many fields of knowledge) and Sunnah" (Hashim & Langgulong, 2008, p. 1). In line with this research, its value lies in the fact that the findings of this research could also be brought to the dynamics of EFL teaching and learning in many other countries that also consider English as a foreign language, such as Thailand or Turkey. Research shows that the discussion on culture has always become an essential element in foreign language teaching and learning (Lie, 2000) and that is also connected to the process of learning English as a foreign language in Indonesia.

In brief, this research tries to fill the missing link, or the gap, between learning English as a foreign language and what EFL students respond about the countries that acknowledge English as their official languages, such as the USA, the UK, and Australia. Hence, the research presents the findings with one essential purpose: to explore and interpret Islamic EFL students' conception of English-speaking countries qualitatively.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. English speaking countries: the USA, the UK, and Australia

Historically, the Dutch, as colonials, had ruled in Indonesia for three hundred years and it banned the existence of private schools that trained carders to free Indonesia from oppression (Hashim & Langgulong, 2008). In this sort of condition, some scholars

also argued that English in Indonesia can be considered a second language. As Martin (2016) mentioned in her article, most Indonesian students were trained to speak like English native speakers (American or British), but to say that English teachers in Indonesia tend to undermine the social and cultural backgrounds of second-language speakers of English should be reviewed properly.

Furthermore, Martin (2016) also stated that the standardization of speaking like those in New York or London has made second-language speakers of English classified as inferior. Additionally, she also stated that today, English is spoken worldwide, especially outside of the US, the UK, Canada, New Zealand, or Australia. Fortunately, the cultures of English-speaking people allow these EFL students to be able to communicate on a personal level with the native speakers of English because other than verbal languages, they do still have non-verbal languages that might work across different languages. In short, to understand the cultures of people coming from different cultural backgrounds, we should start by looking at cultural needs. One of the needs is to communicate by using languages. The point is that before we teach English, getting to know what students perceive about English-speaking countries is important.

## 2.2. Cross-culture understanding (CCU) and English language teaching

Between understanding culture and learning a language, there is a connection. Language and how people perceive things around them are closely related (Liliweri, 2007). It includes how Indonesian EFL students think and perceive English-speaking countries, as in line with viewing the Indonesian language as the national one (Zakaria, 2017). Porter and Samovar theorize that perception of culture relates to the internal process of how people perceive and think about what happens around them and it is constructed through belief, value, attitude, world view, and social organization (as cited in Mulyana, 2006).

Culture can be viewed from a variety of angles, such as the written aspects (Otwindowska-Kasztelanic, 2011). If we look at the educational system of Islamic institutions as part of Indonesian, we can acknowledge that the core values are personality and universality (Hashim & Langgung, 2008, p. 15-16).

Brita and Ningsih (2014, p.7) also stated that the United States of America, Britain, and Australia are the majority of native English speakers in the world, and terminologically, English culture is different from Indonesian culture because Indonesian culture exists only in Indonesia; meanwhile, English culture, due to colonization, can be seen in many parts of the world.

Additionally, Abednia and Crookes (2019) as well as Tathahira (2020) stated that connecting critical literacy into the process of teaching and learning in second language classrooms will provide higher benefits for the students learning English as a language. After researching Indonesian EFL student teachers' experiences in speaking English in Jambi, Indonesia, Abrar et al. (2018) found out that language barriers,

psychological factors, learning environment, and practicing the language become interrelated elements influencing the fluidity of the English-speaking experience.

In terms of culture and language teaching, research shows more colorful nuance in different countries. For example, research that had been completed by Ahamdpour and Kuhi (2019) in Boukan, West Azerbaijan, concluded that the way culture is treated in Iranian high schools seemed to receive a negative response. Their research was collected from two hundred and fifty female EFL learners. Despite that, theoretically, they also stated that culture and language cannot be separated. It usually takes a bit of time to help students reach the point of being intercultural. According to research by Altan (2018), intercultural sensitivity constructs the functionality of intercultural communication competence in the sense of learning languages for economic, social, and cultural relationships adjustment of countries involved in cooperation.

Furthermore, Aydemir and Mede (2014) in their research, stated that there were significant implications for integrating the learning of target culture into the classroom teaching of English as a foreign language at a state university in Turkey. While Cedar (2012) researched 39 Thai undergraduate students about responding to compliments in English. From Cedar's research, it was found that cultural transfer existed in the EFL learning classroom after pre-test and post-test comparing Thailand students and native English speakers in the United States. However, there is no explanation of what Thai students thought about English-speaking cultures. Creswell and Sinley (2017) argued that being culturally sensitive is increasingly important for the growth of the worldly research community while most research that applies mixed-methods should reach the act of naturalizing the English-speaking countries.

Doman (2015) finished the research in the University of Macau, on the struggles that most EFL Chinese students encountered while they were studying in a United States college and at College English program - Macau General Education. He emphasized that factors that affect students' level of ability in acquiring English are culture, motivation, anxiety, self-esteem, and gender. In Hungary, research showed unique findings of the relationship between language and culture (Dombi, 2016). He applied a qualitative research paradigm and briefly stated that intercultural interactions can exist very well, although no native speakers of English exist in the process of learning English.

In line with this Dombi's research, Gierke et al. (2018) emphasized that intercultural competence (IC) is a crucial skill to be mastered by EFL students, and this skill needs to be taught flexibly in different countries. For example, North American students tend to select attitudes, such as respect and tolerance, knowledge, and interaction as well as communication as the external outcomes as the most important dimensions of intercultural competence (IC). Meanwhile, American students claimed that being open-minded and respectful are signs of someone who has intercultural competence; meanwhile, someone who is tolerant and curious is valued by people who have stayed outside the USA, more than one month (Gierke et al., 2018). In other

words, people coming from different cultures usually expect similar responses to their culture, but this is not the case in English language teaching and learning. Intercultural communication ability is the key. Heidari, Ketabi, and Zonobi (2014), in their insightful paper in Iran, stated that the need for intercultural competence grows even further due to the existence of globalization.

Research on language and culture in South Korea depicts findings from a different angle: the EFL teachers. Howard (2019) investigated that EFL teachers in South Korea possibly face marginalization and challenges of acculturation overseas and he also pointed out that such expatriate teachers may lead to critical gaps in terms of their professional identity and development as English teachers. Moreover, in the setting of the Asian region, Jan and Fang (2019) emphasized that in terms of different ethnic minority groups' educational experience in Asian multilingual contexts, much proper acknowledgment of cultural and linguistic diversity in Asian societies should be encouraged.

Research conducted by Khairutdinova et al. (2019) figured out that, in Russia, the data from 355 school teachers in two Russian regions – Moscow and Tatarstan – showed that tolerant attitudes were shown by teachers toward diverse groups religiously and culturally. In other words, EFL teachers in Russia recognize and respect students from other sub-cultures in the country. This attitude is in the same boat with research on novice EFL teachers. As stated by Kidwell (2019), novice EFL teachers ought to prepare themselves before teaching language and culture, and there is a certain training on how to teach culture. Thus, in the sense of EFL teachers, cross-culture understanding already takes place and exists among them, but certainly, they should reach the point of being able to have an understanding of how to teach intercultural communication to their students.

O'Brien, (2019) emphasized in his research, that the understanding of cross-culture or intercultural mindfulness can only be reached when the students are introduced to the context in which language is being used properly in its cultural nuance. In Turkey, for example, Özkan (2017) found that English teachers mostly come from non-native backgrounds these days, and that situation leads to the urgency of teaching cultures to the teachers. EFL teachers are also in need of training on cultural understanding, especially for those who never seem to travel or study in an English-speaking country.

13 Interesting research by Pepanyan, Meacham, and Logan. (2019) about international students' alienation in the US higher education, found that American students sometimes do not know how to approach international students considering their privacy and cultural norms of each international student. This situation is purely cultural. It usually leads to cultural misunderstanding if both sides do not want to have the initiative to understand the culture of one another.

The combination of two English teachers coming from different cultural backgrounds teaching in an EFL classroom sometimes does not help that much to

achieve the goal of the cross-culture understanding course. R<sup>15</sup> and Chen (2020) stated that in a Chinese context, the team-teachers that are made up of native-English-speaking teachers (NESTs) and non-native-English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) need pre-semester training before teaching in the classroom. Also, research done by Şentürk (2019) showed that among 60 foreign students studying Turkish at Bartın University School of Foreign Languages, students showed positive responses toward learning a foreign language because they understand the importance of the language.<sup>8</sup> The success of foreign language acquisition is always started by a good motivation for learning a foreign language on the part of the students themselves. Research completed by Ross (2019) concluded that the reaction of the society toward the issues on diversity and difference in the European Union shows that most people associate racism with older people and less-educated ones.

According<sup>5</sup> to research by Yılmaz and Özkan (2016) in Turkey, there is a high-level need for an intercultural curriculum, textbook, and teacher training programs to adjust the intercultural awareness in the English language teaching and learning process. Thus, developing a sense of intercultural awareness in the EFL classes would become an integral part that seems to be difficult to take out if only EFL teachers and educational institutes saw students who were not only proficient in English but also capable of communicating across different cultures.<sup>7</sup>

This research, in brief, touches on the essential part of learning English as a foreign language in Indonesia. Asking the students' responses about the English-speaking countries seems to be challenging due to the feeling of being afraid of the authority and norms (Sukandi, 2015). In it, the students were asked freely for their opinions, so their responses might bring a different angle to see how EFL students expect from learning English. As educational practitioners ourselves, the researchers would claim that the findings certainly have their significance. In this case, (Zulfikar, 2019) stated that experience provides the gate to reaching professional competence as educational practitioners. As such, getting to know the respondents' responses in this matter could bring new ways to see what it means to learn English, the language of the English-speaking countries.

### **3. Method**

This research is qualitative<sup>29</sup> in its nature, while the survey is the approach applied to it. A questionnaire was used as a technique to collect the data. The form of questions in the questionnaire was open-ended questions. The reason for applying the survey was related to the notion of questioning people, in this research is the EFL students, about their conceptions of English-speaking countries, while the questions raised to them, following what Blaxter, Hughes, and Tight (2006) opinion, were the same for all respondents, provided in the distributed questionnaire. One of the foci of qualitative research is to understand cultures (Tracy, 2013). Furthermore, Pongtiku and Kayame (2019) stated that social issues and realities of the world can become factors, or

problems to be studied, in the setting of qualitative research. In that way, the purpose of this research, like many other types of qualitative research (Ghony & Almanshur, 2016), is to describe and explore the initial responses of Islamic Indonesian EFL students regarding the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and Australia as the three dominant English-speaking countries. From a broader perspective, it may also be categorized as research in the field of Social Science research—that is defined as research dealing with humans and their interactions (Djojuroto & Sumaryati, 2010).

Technically, the roles of the researchers in this research were as planners, data collectors, data analysts, data interpreters, and reporters of the research results (Moleong, 2005). Therefore, a theory that relates to this qualitative research is phenomenology, which means that it studies the participants' point of view (Agustinova, 2015). Scholars stated that phenomenology is best known as the cutting edge theory in qualitative research (Djojuroto & Sumaryati, 2010). Phenomenology is known as a theory that focuses on human subjective experiences and interpretations of the world (Moleong, 2005). Besides, it purely applies a qualitative approach toward the data collection and analysis, while the respondents in it did not receive any treatment at all and there was no manipulation of variables (Ghony & Almanshur, 2016).

One of the approaches in cross-culture communication research is the interpretative approach. It is closely related to an inductive or emic approach, which means that the researcher is located within the culture that is being studied (Liliweri, 2007; Tracy, 2013). The purpose of this research is to describe and understand human behavior concerning their thoughts on the diversity of English-speaking countries, such as the United States of America, Australia, and the United Kingdom; even though the respondents to this research had never visited the three English-speaking countries.

The reason why the researchers applied the interpretive approach in conducting the data analysis is that the process adheres to Leedy's (1997, p. 106) holistic, context-bound, and personal view of English-speaking countries. The collected data were interpreted contextually along with the message written by the respondents in the open-ended questionnaire. Besides, this article is categorized into descriptive research because it gives details about current conditions, situations, and events (Postlethwaite, 2005). In other words, descriptive research is a form of research method (Nazir, 2014). To analyze the data, the researchers applied qualitative analysis, while the numerical data in this research were used as a means to have the final description of the findings (Blaxter et al., 2006). Even though descriptive statistics are known to be one of the methods in quantitative studies (Djojuroto & Sumaryati, 2010), the verbal data were coded, and then analyzed by applying the system of descriptive statistics for nominal or ordinal data in the form of proportions. In terms of method, this research was initiated by collecting required information from the participants, and the verbal information was listed in the form of codes or themes (Creswell, 2014).



### 3.1. Questionnaire as the research instrument

The data were collected directly from the respondents by using an online questionnaire after a one-semester course ended. Data on the initial responses will be linked to the representativeness of the data in the form of percentages. The form of data in this research is primary data. In other words, the data were collected directly from the respondents (Sudarso, 2006). It used a questionnaire as the research instrument (Djojuroto & Sumaryati, 2010). The questionnaire used in this research was an open-ended question. This type of question means that the respondents were given the right to answer as freely as they wish with answers that should be in line with the questions (Nasution, 2003; Suyanto & Karnaji, 2006) The questions asked to the respondents are:

1. In a few sentences, what can you tell about the United States of America?
2. In a few sentences, what can you tell about the United Kingdom?
3. In a few sentences, what can you tell about Australia?
4. In your opinion, what do you like best from the cultures of English-speaking countries?

<sup>23</sup> The answers to the questions are briefly presented in the Findings and Discussion section of this article.

### 3.2. Respondents and sampling technique

After the respondents' feedback had been collected, it was found that the respondents filled out the questionnaire from 2018/10/14 5:40:26 PM GMT+7 up to 2018/10/20 7:22:36 AM GMT+7. The researchers selected respondents based on the total number of students in the Cross-Culture Understanding subject in the 2018/2019 academic year. There were three parallel classes: A, B, and C. Students in these parallel classes were regarded as the respondents in this research. Because there are multilayer situations out there about English-speaking countries, therefore, the qualitative approach was used in this research (Leedy, 1997). In terms of sampling, the researchers used total sampling, which means that the population of all students taking the Cross-Cultural Understanding subject was given a questionnaire online.

## 4. Findings and discussion

The findings from this research dealt with the values of the initial responses. Values in this case mean the core aspect of the respondents' verbal written statement. In the theory of cross-culture communication, values are related to individual circumstances dealing with binary conditions: good or bad, right or wrong, appropriate or inappropriate (Liliwari, 2007). Categorizing each response into several codes, or themes is one of the most effective ways to illustrate the 110 responses from the population. The codes, or themes, can be seen in Figure 1, Figure 2, and Figure 3 in this section.

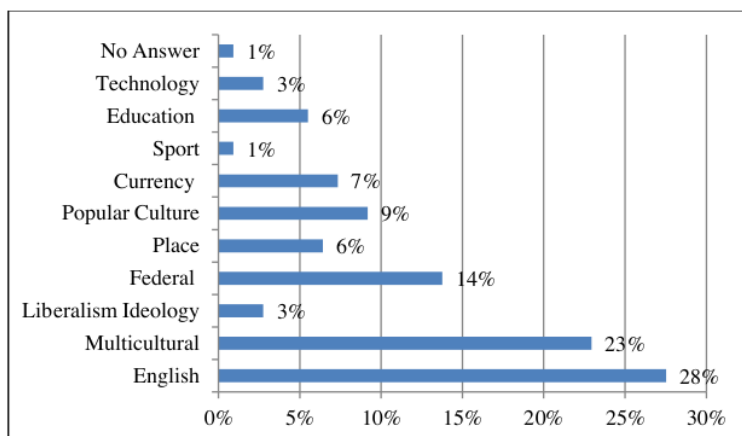


Figure 1. Themes on the Initial Responses about the USA

It can be seen that 28% of the respondents viewed the United States of America as a place where most people speak by using English. The second theme in Figure 1 shows that 23% of the respondents recognized the United States of America as a place where multicultural society can be found. The third theme in rank is that 14% of the respondents viewed the United States of America as a federal government system. The fourth theme in rank is that 9% of the respondents viewed the United States of America as having a popular culture in the country. The fifth theme in rank is that 7% of the respondents viewed the United States of America has an image in terms of currency (American dollars). The sixth and seventh theme in rank is that 6% of the respondents viewed the United States of America has an image of its education and the place of the country. The eighth and ninth theme in rank is that only 3% of the respondents perceived the United States of America as having technology, and another 3% respond to the liberalism ideology in the country. The tenth theme in rank in Figure 3 is: 1% of the respondents viewed the United States of America has major attention to sport at schools and universities. The eleventh theme that was not considered as the value in the initial responses about the United States of America is the no-answer theme, which is only 1% of the population.

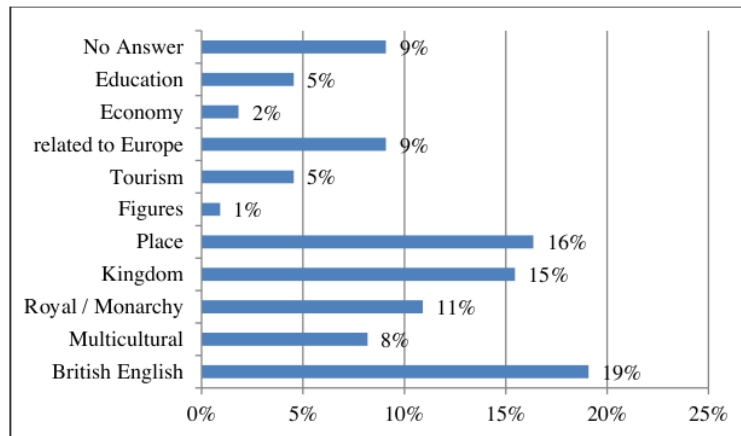


Figure 2. Themes on the Initial Responses about the UK

We can list the themes in order of their rank. The first theme is that 19% of the respondents viewed the United Kingdom as having British English. The second theme is: 16% of the respondents considered the United Kingdom from the sense of place. The third theme is that 15% of the respondents viewed the United Kingdom as having an image of the Kingdom system. The fourth theme is: 11% of the respondents perceived the United Kingdom has an image of the Royal/Monarchy system. The fifth and sixth themes are: 9% of the respondents saw the United Kingdom has a relationship with Europe, while another 9% show a no-answer response. The seventh theme is that 8% of the respondents considered the United Kingdom has a multicultural society. The eighth and ninth theme is: 5% of the respondents view the United Kingdom has the expression of tourism, and the other 5% is about education. The tenth theme is: 2% of the respondents viewed the United Kingdom from the aspect of the economy. The eleventh theme is: 1% of the respondents chose the United Kingdom from the description of its social or historical figures.

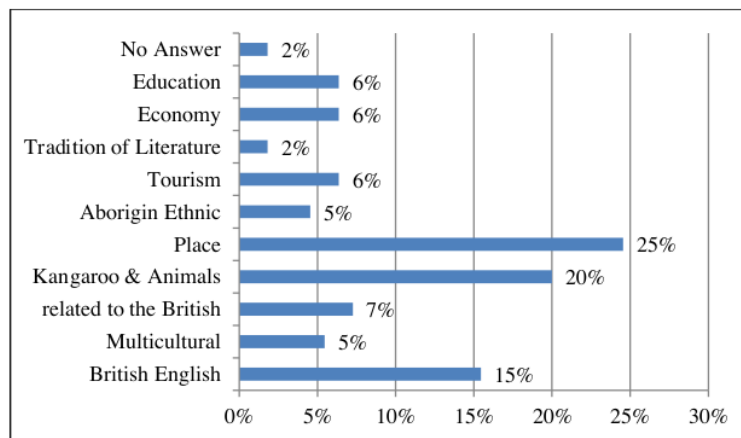


Figure 3. Themes on the Initial Responses about Australia

In terms of Australia, we can list the themes in the following rank. The first theme for the first rank in Figure 3 is that 25% of the respondents viewed Australia

from the aspect of the place, closer to Indonesia. The second theme as in the second rank is: 20% of the respondents argued Australia as a country that has an image of kangaroo and animals. The third theme for the third rank is: 15% of the respondents view Australia as a country that has British English being spoken by Australians. The fourth theme for the fourth rank is: 7% of the respondents chose Australia as a country that has a relationship with the British. The fifth, sixth and seventh themes for the fifth rank are: 6% of the respondents perceived Australia about tourism, economy, and education. The eighth and ninth theme for the sixth rank is: 5% of the respondents viewed Australia as a country with Aboriginal ethnic and the other 5% responded about Australia in terms of its multicultural society. The tenth and eleventh theme for the seventh rank is: 2% of the respondents opinioned Australia with the image of the tradition of literature, while the other 2% did not give any response or no answer.

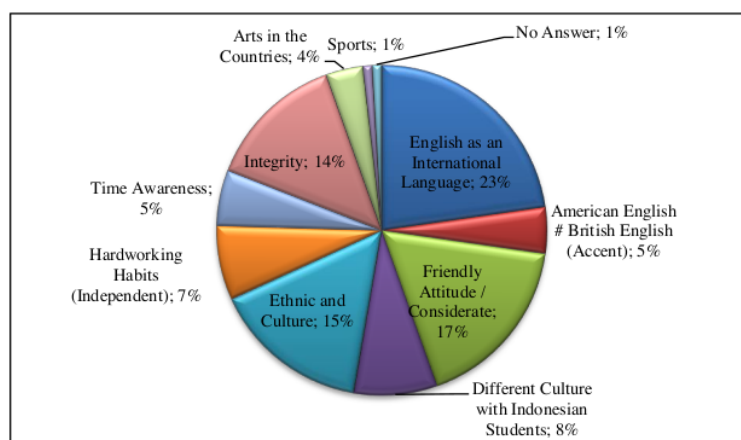


Figure 4. Initial Responses on the English-Speaking Countries in General

From the display of numerical findings and one sample of written verbal expression for each theme above, it is best understood that each country receives a different response. From the 110 respondents who filled out the questionnaire, each of the English-speaking countries has its uniqueness. Nevertheless, the obvious theme that can be seen from the above displays is that the three countries have been seen as the countries that use English as the official language. 23% of the respondents viewed English-speaking countries in response to English as an International Language. They noticed a friendly attitude or being considerate about people in English-speaking countries (17% of the respondents). The countries were also viewed through the lens of ethnicity and culture (15%). Integrity (14%) had also been seen as an active behavior in the countries. The respondents stated that the countries have a different culture from Indonesian students (8%), but the hardworking habits or independent (7%) received attention as well from the respondents. Besides, time awareness (5%) becomes a feature to be seen in the English-speaking countries, along with the respondents' awareness of the use and difference of American English to British English (5%). Not many of the

respondents wrote their responses about the arts in the countries (4%) and this percentage also resembles how the respondents viewed sport in the countries (1%). Of the 110 respondents, only 1 % did not give any response or answer.

There are a variety of themes on how EFL students recognize English-speaking countries, particularly in this research, the Islamic Indonesian EFL students. For the United States of America, themes that came out from the verbal data were related to technology, education, sport, currency, popular culture, place, federal, liberalism ideology, multiculturalism, and English. For the United Kingdom, themes that can be allocated from the students' verbal responses were related to economy, education, Europe, tourism, figures, place, kingdom, royal or monarchy, multicultural, and British English. For Australia, the themes were related to economy, education, the tradition of literature, tourism, Aborigine ethic, place, kangaroo or animals, close to British, multicultural, and British English. According to the students' responses, themes that appear to be the aspects that they like from English-speaking countries were: 1) English as an international language; 2) friendly attitude or considerate; 3) ethnic and culture; 4) integrity; 5) different culture with Indonesian students; 6) hardworking habits or independent; 7) time awareness; 8) accent of American English and British English; 9) sports.

If we connect this notion to the term culture, then we certainly agree that the responses of the EFL students are a reflection of how far they know about the countries that use English not only as a communication device but also as a *lingua franca*. Anugrah and Kresnowiati (2008) stated that culture is defined as everything that is done by humans as the result of the thought process and their moral consciousness. The themes reflected from what the students wrote in the questionnaire reflect that even EFL students have never traveled to English-speaking countries, they have their opinions or responses regarding the countries. In line with this research, the theory of cross-culture understanding becomes true, in the sense that each student needs to know the English-speaking countries before they learn how to use the language. In this respect, the function of theory in research is to fill out the space around an emerging issue (Nazir, 2014). The issue is related to the variety of how EFL students view English-speaking countries, so it eventually fills in the space of such an issue.

Culture also can be seen as knowledge and science used properly and providing benefits for people's lives (Anugrah & Kresnowiati, 2008). It is indeed the agreement of scholars in English studies to say that learning a foreign language means also learning the culture of the foreign language at the same time. The point is that English teachers need to let students know that English in the world is not only American English, British English, or Australian English (Pudyastuti & Atma, 2014).

The initial responses above, basically, are the reflection of what the EFL students heard, watched, listened to, or read about English-speaking countries. The findings of this research reveal that an English-speaking country is different from one another in the circumstances of how its EFL students recognize them. Therefore, the

significance of it may relate to generally acceptable interpretation and reach the point of representativeness on the side of EFL students who have Muslim identity at the most in Indonesia (Blaxter et al., 2006).

Dealing with the identity of Muslim students, there is a strong relationship between learning English as a foreign language to what Muslim students learnt in the educational institutions of Indonesia. It might also be linked, or similar, to Islamic or religious countries in the Southeast Asian region, such as Malaysia. In their article, Hashim & Langgulong (2008, p. 16), clearly stated that:

The Muslim leaders have to recognize that the issue of the Islamic curriculum in Islamic education in Muslim countries is very important because it is not just a matter of acquiring knowledge for earning a living in this world or sharpening the intellect for economic pursuits, but the most important thing is the perfection of the soul and the purification of personality and wisdom.

Islamic Indonesian EFL students not only learnt and studied the knowledge of their religion, Islam, but they also comprehend other learning materials that improve their capacity as generations of future leaders. What is missing at the point, as it has been stated earlier, is that these Muslim students, particularly are enthusiastic in learning English as a foreign language. The only conception that EFL students have is that English is an international language. EFL students need to be trained in how to recognize the importance of using English appropriately within its contexts. Speaking in English in Japan, for example, is different from speaking in English in Spain. These sorts of situations become rich learning materials for EFL students to grasp throughout their lives. The end gate of learning English as a process is when the EFL students improve and adjust themselves to the stage of understanding global literacy. Nakamura (2002, p. 64) argued that language and culture form a symbiotic relationship, and as such, educators and researchers have important tasks: to intellectually implement global literacy for the world living in peace. It is clear that allowing EFL students to learn more about the English-speaking countries, including all of their particularities, and letting the students compare what they know about the English-speaking countries to what they already have as Indonesians is indeed a remarkable pedagogical plan to do.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the thematic description of the verbal responses from the Islamic Indonesian EFL students, as respondents in this research, two points of conclusions can be made. First, among eleven themes on the USA, the UK, and Australia as listed above, the students responded about education, multiculturalism, and English almost equally about the three English-speaking countries. Between the UK and Australia, the students responded that these two countries were closely related in terms of economy, while the USA was regarded as a federal system when it links to the economy, tourism, place, multiculturalism, and British English. Second, the very best thing that the

students like from English-speaking countries is English as an international language. They also responded to the friendly attitude or considerate behavior of the English-speaking people from these three countries, followed by the ethnic and culture inside the country, values on integrity, the different culture with the students, the hardworking habits, and awareness on time, accents of English, arts in the countries, and sports. This research, therefore, indicates that Islamic Indonesian EFL students recognize and know English-speaking countries in many different layers that can be represented with codes or themes above.

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