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INTEGRATING LOCAL AND WESTERN CULTURES IN ENGLISH FOR TOURISM: LECTURERS' PERCEPTIONS AND PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

Cultural integration in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses is a critical issue in EFL contexts, particularly in regions with rich local heritage. This study examines how lecturers at State University of Manado perceive the integration of local and Western cultures in the English for Tourism course, and how these cultures are represented in pedagogical documents. A qualitative research design was employed, using open-ended questionnaires via Google Form, document analysis of the semester learning plan, teaching materials, and student project assignments. Three lecturers from the English Education Department participated. Findings reveal that all lecturers hold strongly positive perceptions toward balancing both cultures. They believe cultural integration enhances student motivation, communicative competence, and intercultural awareness. Document analysis shows that the semester learning plan incorporates tourism topics accommodating both cultural dimensions. Student projects, such as tourism brochures and audiovisual promotions, demonstrate the integration of North Sulawesi's local tourism with global English norms. This study contributes to the growing literature on culturally responsive pedagogy in ESP and Indonesian EFL settings. However, the findings are limited to one university and three lecturers, which may restrict their transferability to other English for Tourism contexts.

Keywords: Cultural Integration, English for Tourism, Intercultural Communicative Competence, Pedagogical Practices, Lecturers' Perceptions.

INTRODUCTION

Language learning is closely connected to cultural understanding. This principle has significantly influenced both the practice and research in language education over the years. Culture is an important element in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. Its role becomes particularly evident in English for Tourism courses because students are prepared to communicate with people from various cultural backgrounds. Thus, learning English is not simple matter of mastering language skills. Students also need an understanding of cultural values and communication practices that affect the use of English in international tourism contexts (Kramsch, 1993; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

English for Tourism is designed to develop communication skills that are relevant to the tourism sector as a part of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The course covers many activities such as guiding tourists, promoting destinations, serving guests, and preparing tourism-related texts. Also, the students are also expected to develop

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intercultural communicative competence (ICC). Byram (2021) explains that ICC involves the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately across different cultural situations. This competence is important because linguistic knowledge alone does not always guarantee successful interaction with international tourists (Jhaiyanuntana & Nomnian, 2020). Recent research has shown that intercultural communicative competence is one of the most important competencies required by tourism students. It is because they are expected to interact with visitors from diverse cultural backgrounds. Tourism students generally recognize that successful communication in tourism settings requires not only language proficiency but also intercultural awareness and sensitivity (Trang & Phuong, 2023).

An important issue in English for Tourism related to the relationship between local and Western cultures. Teaching materials frequently emphasize Western cultural views and tourism contexts. At the same time, Indonesian students are strongly connected to their local cultural backgrounds. As a result, lecturers need to carefully combine global and local cultural elements in the learning process. Students should understand international communication norms, but at the same time they should remain connected to their own cultural background (Pennycook, 1994; Olsen, 2023). If learning materials mainly emphasize Western culture, there is a possibility that students will regard local culture as having less value. Several studies have raised similar concerns regarding the position of local culture in English language education (Patanduk et al., 2025; Rima et al., 2024). Studies on Indonesian EFL textbooks have similarly reported the importance of balancing local, international, and target-culture representation in learning materials in order to strengthen students' intercultural awareness and cultural sensitivity (Agustina & Kencana, 2023).

Previous studies on Indonesian EFL textbooks also reveal that cultural representation and intercultural competence remain important issues in learning materials (Bahri & Agustina, 2023). The interest in cultural integration within English language teaching has grown significantly in recent years. A number of studies have shown that incorporating local culture into classroom activities can bring several benefits for learners. Previous studies show that the addition of local culture can improve student engagement, reduce language anxiety, and strengthen cultural awareness (Tantri, 2025; Azhary & Fatimah, 2024; Thresia, 2015). In the Indonesian EFL context, local culture integration has also been associated with stronger identity development and greater confidence in communication (Darma et al., 2025; Rustam et al., 2025). Meanwhile, exposure to Western cultural perspectives remains important. It is because it helps students participate in international communication and understand global tourism practices (Zhang & Cheng, 2023; Nurul et al., 2023). Studies on tourism English more suggest that intercultural competence is essential for effective communication with international visitors and should be integrated into tourism-oriented language instruction (Jhaiyanuntana & Nomnia, 2020; Miqawati et al., 2024). Existing research has also shown that lecturers generally support cultural integration in English teaching, although many report challenges in its practical implementation (Patanduk et al., 2025; Surianti et al., 2025).

Despite the growing body of literature, limited attention has been given to cultural integration in university-level ESP courses in Indonesia. Studies have rarely explored how lecturers perceive and implement cultural integration in their teaching practices.

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Lecturer perceptions are important because lecturers act as cultural mediators in the classroom (Patanduk et al., 2025; Johnson, 2022). Their beliefs influence material selection, classroom activities, and assessment practices. Most previous studies have focused on general English language teaching rather than tourism-oriented ESP courses, where cultural knowledge has direct professional relevance.

Previous studies on cultural integration in English language teaching can be grouped into three main aspects. The first examines cultural representation in textbooks and teaching materials, including the balance among local, international, and target cultures (Agustina & Kencana, 2023; Bahri & Agustina, 2023). These studies show what cultural content is included in learning materials, but they provide limited insight into how teachers use it in practice. The second aspect explores teachers' perceptions of culture in school or general English teaching contexts (Rima et al., 2024; Rustam et al., 2025). Patanduk et al. (2025) are particularly relevant to the present study because they examine lecturers' perceptions of local cultural values in English teaching materials. However, their study does not specifically focus on a tourism-oriented ESP course or examine local and Western cultures together. The third aspect focuses on tourism and hospitality education, including studies of tourism students' intercultural competence needs (Trang & Phuong, 2023), hotel interns' communication challenges (Jhaiyanuntana & Nomnian, 2020), and cross-cultural understanding materials for tourism guiding (Nafa et al., 2023). These studies offer useful insights into cultural learning and communication in tourism contexts. However, they leave a gap in understanding how lecturers' perceptions relate to course documents and student assignments within a single tourism-oriented ESP course. The relationship between these sources of evidence remains underexplored, particularly when local and Western cultures are examined together.

This gap highlights the need for a contextualized investigation of cultural integration in tourism-oriented ESP courses. Thus, the present study examines the integration of local and Western cultures in the English for Tourism course at State University of Manado. This study investigates (1) how English lecturers perceive the integration of local and Western cultures in the course, and (2) how these cultural dimensions are represented in pedagogical documents, including the course syllabus, teaching materials, and student assignments. This study offers several contributions to the existing literature. First, unlike previous studies that have primarily focused on cultural representation in textbooks or general EFL classrooms, this study investigates cultural integration within a tourism-oriented ESP course in higher education. Second, it combines lecturers' perceptions with evidence from pedagogical documents and authentic student project outputs, providing a more comprehensive understanding of how cultural integration is enacted in practice. Third, the study highlights how students use English not only as a means of communication but also as a tool for representing and promoting local cultural heritage within global tourism contexts. By examining both beliefs and pedagogical evidence, this study provides a contextualized understanding of how cultural integration is enacted in English for Tourism instruction.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore the integration of local and Western cultures in the English for Tourism course. This study used case study

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approach because this aimed to develop an in-depth understanding of how cultural integration was perceived by lecturers and represented in pedagogical documents within a specific educational setting. Rather than measuring cultural integration quantitatively, the study sought to examine how local and Western cultural elements were incorporated into teaching practices and learning materials. The case was bounded to a single course, English for Tourism and making it suitable for contextualized investigation.

This study was conducted in the English Education Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts, State University of Manado, Indonesia. The participants consisted of three lecturers responsible for teaching the English for Tourism course. They were selected purposively because of their direct involvement in course planning, material selection, and classroom implementation. Importantly, these three lecturers constituted the entire lecturers assigned to teach the English for Tourism course during the data collection period. Although the number of participants was relatively small, the inclusion of the complete lecturer enhanced the comprehensiveness of the case study and provided a holistic understanding of cultural integration practices within the course.

Data were collected from three sources to provide a comprehensive understanding of cultural integration within the course. The data were collected from open-ended questionanire, course syllabus or semester learning plan and the students' assignment project. An open-ended questionnaire administered through Google Forms was selected as the primary instrument for collecting lecturers' perceptions. This approach allowed participants to provide detailed and reflective responses while accommodating the geographical distance between the researcher and the participants, as well as their professional schedules. The use of open-ended questions also enabled participants to elaborate on their views regarding cultural integration in their own words. It consisted of open-ended questions organized into several themes, including lecturers' perceptions of culture in English language teaching, the integration of local and Western cultures, teaching materials, instructional strategies, student responses, and challenges in cultural integration. The use of open-ended questions enabled participants to provide detailed explanations and examples based on their teaching experiences. To enhance credibility, questionnaire responses were triangulated with data from the course syllabus (semester learning plan) and student project assignments.

Second, the English for Tourism course syllabus was examined. The analysis focused on course topics, learning objectives, instructional content, and cultural references across the sixteen-week semester structure. Third, fifth semester student assignments were collected and analyzed. The 12 projects were selected to include four examples from each of the three assignment types: tourism brochures, guiding presentations, and audiovisual promotional videos. The projects were selected based on three criteria. First, each had to be a graded assignment completed by fifth-semester students enrolled in the English for Tourism course during the data collection period. This ensured that all projects came from the same instructional context. Second, each project had to represent one of the three assignment types regularly used by the lecturers to help students practice tourism-related communication. Third, each project had to focus on an identifiable destination, activity, or cultural practice so that its cultural content could be analyzed. Based on these criteria, four projects were selected from each assignment type. This approach ensured that the analysis represented all three types without allowing any single type to dominate the comparison. This selection enabled the

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analysis to compare how local and Western cultural elements were represented across different tourism-related genres.

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis adapted from Creswell (2018) and Braun and Clarke (2006). The analysis began by reading the questionnaire responses several times to gain familiarity with the data. After that, meaningful statements related to cultural integration, teaching practices, challenges, and student engagement were identified. The coding process was inductive and conducted manually, line by line. This approach allowed the codes to remain close to the lecturers' own words rather than being fitted into a predetermined framework. Initial codes included "familiar content raises motivation," "fear of cultural dominance," and "difficulty finding English equivalents." The codes were then compared across the three lecturers to identify similarities in meaning. Similar codes were grouped into broader categories, including the benefits of local culture, the role of Western culture, the need for balance, teaching strategies, and challenges. These categories were reviewed against the full set of responses and refined to address overlaps.

Finally, the categories were developed into the themes presented in the Results section, with each theme linked to the relevant research question. In addition, document analysis was conducted on the course syllabus and student projects. The syllabus was read topic by topic, and each of the 12 projects was reviewed in full. Content in both document types was marked as local when it referred to North Sulawesi destinations, food, traditions, or practices; as Western or global when it followed international tourism genres, standardized ESP topics, or conventions of destination marketing; and as combined when both appeared together. These marks were then compared across the three project types. To strengthen the findings, the results from the questionnaire were compared with the evidence from the syllabus and student projects. This comparison helped identify similarities and differences across the data sources. It also provided a deeper understanding of how local and Western cultures were integrated into the English for Tourism course.

In addition, to enhance the credibility of the findings, methodological triangulation was employed through the use of multiple data sources, namely lecturer questionnaires, the course syllabus, and student assignments. Comparing evidence across these sources enabled the researcher to validate emerging themes and interpretations. In addition, all participant responses were reported using direct quotations where appropriate, and translated into English while preserving their original meanings. Detailed documentation of the data collection and analysis procedures was maintained to ensure transparency and dependability.

RESULTS

This section presents the findings from the open-ended questionnaires, syllabus analysis, and student assignment analysis. The findings are organized into two main themes corresponding to the research questions: (1) lecturers' perceptions of local and Western culture integration and (2) the representation of local and Western cultures in pedagogical documents.

Lecturers' Perceptions of Cultural Integration

The Role of Culture in Language Teaching

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Based on the questionnaire responses, all three lecturers expressed strongly positive perceptions about the role of culture in English language teaching. They consistently held that language cannot be separated from culture, and that teaching one without the other produces incomplete learners. Lecturer 1 put the point in terms of meaning:

> *"Culture plays very important role in English teaching. It is because language is not only about grammar and vocabulary. It is the way people think, values, habits and how they interact. Without understanding culture, learners can understand the words but not know the real meaning in communication*."

For Lecturer 1, grammar and vocabulary are only the surface of communication, and real meaning depends on shared values and habits. Lecturer 2 took a more practical view and tied cultural awareness to tolerance and local identity:

> *"Learn culture is very useful. By knowing the different ways of life in many parts of the world, can builds the students tolerance and appreciation of diversity. It also can support local identity. So that mutual respect arises. Students can learn and use conversations appropriate to their own cultures."*

Here, exposure to other ways of life is linked to tolerance and at the same time to the protection of local identity. It suggests that the lecturer sees the two as compatible. Lecturer 3 stressed how students learn to recognize difference:

> *"Culture plays a big role in teaching about differences around students. They can recognize, understand and appreciate the differences in ways of life. They learn the uniqueness of one group people compared to another."*

The three excerpts show that the lecturers treat culture as part of what language is and not as an optional extra. They differ only in emphasis: meaning-making for Lecturer 1, tolerance and identity for Lecturer 2 and awareness of difference for Lecturer 3. In all three accounts, students' own cultural identity is a starting point for learning.

Perceptions of Local Culture Integration

Based on the data, all three lecturers expressed strongly positive views about incorporating local culture into their teaching. They identified multiple benefits such as contextual relevance, student confidence, cultural preservation and inclusive learning. The data from lecturer 2 explained the value of local culture for student identity and confidence in the excerpt below:

> *"I see integrating local culture in English teaching is very positive and effective approach. English is an international language. However, it make the learning process will more meaningful if connected to students' own cultural experiences and identities."*

The lecturer's point is that English, although an international language becomes more meaningful once it is anchored in students' own experience. Lecturer 3 added a benefit that goes beyond meaning, namely pride in one's own culture:

> *"Students can understand and preserve their own cultures. By learning about other cultures, they can increase their appreciation for one another in class. With local culture, students can learn contextually according to their lives. They will not be ashamed of their own culture."*

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This lecturer links local content to cultural awareness and also to respect for other cultures, so local culture is not presented as a closed topic. Lecturer 1 reported what happens in class when such content is used:

> *"They are very motivated and very creative. They enjoy it because they are familiar with the learning content."*

Familiarity seems to lower the barrier to participation. Students already know the content, so they can put their effort into expressing it in English.

Perceptions of Western Culture Integration

The lecturers were equally clear about the value of Western cultural content, though they framed it as complementary rather than dominant. They viewed Western cultural knowledge as necessary for global communication competence in the tourism sector. Lecturer 1 noted the comparative value of Western topics:

> *"It is very good. Because my students and I study topics that are unfamiliar, and we can compare them with contextual situations, and this triggers lively discussion in class."*

The comparison is what matters in this part. Unfamiliar topics become a basis for discussion once students set them against situations they know, so Western content works as a prompt for dialogue and not as a model to copy. Lecturer 2 made this condition explicit by asking for a balanced and critical approach:

> *"Teaching Western culture in the English class very important. It needs to be balanced, critical and contextual way. English develop in Western countries. So many expressions, communication habits and social values in English influence by Western culture. So, introducing Western culture can help students understand language use naturally. It can reduce misunderstandings in international communication."*

Lecturer 3 connected Western cultural exposure to intercultural competence development:

> *"Learn western culture is very useful. It because by learning Western cultures students can develop their intercultural competence. They will increased cultural awareness."*

The finding highlights the lecturers' efforts to position Western culture as a resource for comparison and reflection. The teachers use Western cultural content critically and dialogically, not as a default norm.

The Need for Cultural Balance

The data show that the three lecturers emphasized the importance of balancing local and Western cultures. This was not only theoretical it reflected their actual classroom experience. Lecturer 2 articulated the risk of Western dominance:

> *"Yes, local and Western cultures must be taught in balance way in TEFL. It should create learners who globally competent but still root in their own identity. Focusing only to Western culture can makes students feel their culture is less important. Using local contexts in the classroom can makes materials easier for students to understand. It because the culture close to their daily lives."*

Lecturer 2 therefore sees balance as a safeguard. Western content gives students

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access to international communication, whereas local contexts keep their own culture from being seen as less important. Lecturer 3 saw balance as a motivational strategy:

> *"Yes, we cannot focus only on one culture. It must be balanced so students are motivated and interested in learning like how the differences of dialogues in different places or countries like from England or America expressions."*

For Lecturer 3, variety itself keeps students interested, because they can hear how expressions differ between, for example, England and America. Lecturer 1 added a further reason for balance, namely the dual role of students as language learners and cultural ambassadors:

> *"In international communication, people are often asked to explain their culture of origin. Through local cultural integration, students not only learn to understand foreign cultures, they also can promote their region and country."*

This dual role is especially significant in tourism, where graduates will often be asked to explain their own region to outsiders. Across the three lecturers, then, balance was framed less as a compromise between two cultures than as a condition for students to be both globally competent and locally rooted. The lecturers also believed that comparing local and Western cultures sharpens students' critical thinking.

Cultural Representation in Pedagogical Documents

The Semester Learning Plan

Document analysis of the English for Tourism semester learning plan showed that a 16-week curriculum cover. It consists of nature of tourism, travel agencies and package holidays, reasons for travel, transport for tourism, guiding theory and practice, types of accommodation, marketing and promotion of tourist resorts, alternative holidays, and booking and ticketing. These topics create a scaffold that can accommodate both local and Western cultural content.

Several semester learning plan topics are particularly open to local cultural content. The guiding module (Weeks 6-7) includes practical guiding activities. The lecturers confirmed they orient toward North Sulawesi tourism sites. The marketing and promotion module (Weeks 10-12) includes audiovisual promotion projects confirmed through questionnaire data as local destination promotion tasks. The accommodation module (Week 9) involves role plays where local hospitality norms can be naturally integrated.

At the same time, the semester learning plan reflects globally standardized ESP content. Topics such as package holidays, booking procedures, and international tourist resort promotion draw on Western tourism industry norms. The assessment structure quizzes; case-based learning, mid-term examination, and final project provides space for both cultural dimensions to appear. The semester learning plan does not explicitly designate topics as local or Western. The lecturers populate the framework with culturally relevant content based on their pedagogical choices.

Pedagogical Strategies for Cultural Integration

The questionnaire data revealed specific strategies lecturers use to integrate both cultures. For local culture, all three mentioned project-based learning as their primary

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approach. Students document, describe, and promote local tourism destinations and cultural practices in English. Lecturer 1 described a specific field-based project:

> *"I often ask students to observe. Then they present about tourism objects or the culture of Tondano. I also give them a project to document local wisdom in digital form in English. They make video projects about local culture. For example, what exists in Tondano."*

In this account, project-based learning moves students out of the classroom: they observe real sites, present them in English, and record local wisdom in digital form. Language practice and cultural learning therefore happen in the same task. Lecturer 3 described a brochure project with real-world dissemination:

> *"Students identify tourism destination in North Sulawesi. They prepare a brochure file, then promote tourism sites for example Batu Angus Bitung, Bunaken, Benteng Moraya through the brochure. Then they design it. They present this project in class. After that I upload their brochure files to Instagram. It also can promote tourism in North Sulawesi."*

What stands out here is the audience. By posting the brochures on Instagram, the lecturer turned a class assignment into actual destination promotion, so students wrote for readers beyond the classroom. For Western cultural integration, the lecturers relied on complementary strategies:

> *"In teaching western cultures, I use real media like youtube video. Also, I use podcast as direct examples. So students understand how Western people speak in everyday life. Inb the class, they can do Think-Pair-Share discussions about how people from other countries life. In final exam, they do the project-based learning and case study related to minahasa cultures and write it in the form of draft and make in form of video project."*

These strategies serve a different purpose from those used to introduce local culture. Authentic media, such as YouTube videos and podcasts, expose students to examples of everyday English, while Think-Pair-Share encourages them to discuss ways of life in other cultural contexts. However, the final project brings the focus back to Minahasa culture. In this way, Western cultural input becomes a resource for producing local cultural content. This pattern reflects the aims of tourism-oriented ESP, where students learn from international examples and then use English to represent their own region**.**

Student Projects as Evidence of Cultural Integration

The data from student project outputs provide direct evidence of cultural integration in practice. Analysis of student work reveals projects promoting North Sulawesi tourism sites. It is including Batu Angus in Bitung (a volcanic black rock coastline), the Bolaang Mongondow beaches (Lolak Beach), Selat Lembeh promoted with the slogan 'Dive into Nature's Secret Garden' and local food tourism including Moraya Cafe & Grill featuring traditional dishes.

These projects demonstrate meaningful integration of local cultural content. Students describe attractions, activities, and facilities using internationally oriented tourism English. They use genre conventions tourist brochures, promotional posters, guiding scripts that belong to Western tourism communication norms, while the content is entirely local.

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The Selat Lembeh project is structured as a professional tourism brochure. It including sections on main attractions, activities, facilities, and visitor information all standard Western tourism promotion genres. The content showcases rare macro marine life, traditional fishing practices, and local seafood culture. The Batu Angus project uses the tagline 'Fire meets the Peaceful Sea' an English promotional phrase that captures local geological uniqueness while employing global destination marketing conventions.

Challenges in Cultural Integration

Despite positive perceptions and active practices, lecturers identified several challenges.

Lecturer 1 noted a vocabulary challenge:

"Explaining abstract local cultural concepts into English requires advanced vocabulary."

Lecturer 3 described a student enthusiasm challenge:

"The challenge is that students are very excited. They want to go directly into the field when I give project assignments. They want to visit distant tourism destinations to explore and this make me worries."

Lecturer 2 identified a broader resource challenge:

"There are several challenges in integrating local and Western cultures. It related to balance the material, student understanding, and limitations of learning resources."

The lecturers reported challenges at three levels. At the language level, explaining abstract local concepts in English demands advanced vocabulary. At the practical level, students' enthusiasm for distant field sites worried the lecturer, and learning resources were limited. At the curricular level, balancing the two cultures and making sure students understood the material rested on the lecturers' own judgment. Cultural integration therefore brings clear benefits, but it depends on support that the course does not yet provide.

DISCUSSION

The findings describe consistent relationship between lecturers' perceptions, pedagogical practices and documentary evidence. The lecturers view cultural integration positively. They considered it an important part of English for Tourism instruction. This finding supports the principles of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT). The concept emphasizes the importance of connecting learning with students' cultural backgrounds (Gay, 2018). The lecturers believed that integrating local culture increases student motivation, confidence, and contextual understanding. This finding consistent with previous studies showing that local cultural content promotes engagement and strengthens students' connection to learning (Ratri et al., 2024; Darma et al., 2025). In addition, intercultural learning is more effective when cultural content is integrated systematically into language instruction rather than being treated as supplementary knowledge. The integration allows students to develop both linguistic and intercultural competencies simultaneously (Lee et al., 2023). The Indonesian context provides a particularly relevant setting for cultural integration because of the country's rich linguistic and cultural diversity. Tourism students are expected to engage not only with international visitors but with diverse domestic cultures. Therefore, balancing local and global cultural perspectives becomes increasingly important for preparing graduates to

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communicate effectively in both national and international tourism environments.

The findings also show that cultural integration was implemented through project-based learning activities. Students produced tourism brochures, promotional videos, and guiding presentations based on local tourism destinations. These activities reflect active forms of cultural integration. The students use English to communicate local cultural knowledge. Similar strategies identified by Herdi et al. (Herdi et al., 2023). He found that project-based activities provide meaningful opportunities for integrating culture into language learning. The findings also support Thresia (2015) who argued that local culture-based tasks can strengthen communication skills and cultural awareness. Project-based learning enabled students to engage with authentic tourism communication tasks. Through brochures, promotional videos, and guiding presentations, students used English for real-world purposes while simultaneously representing local cultural knowledge. This finding suggests that project-based learning create opportunities for experiential learning where language, culture, and professional preparation are integrated within a single learning process. The integration is relevant in tourism education because future graduates are expected to communicate cultural information effectively to diverse audiences.

The data analysis from student projects illustrates how cultural integration was enacted in practice. Students employed globally recognized tourism genres such as brochures, destination promotions, and guiding presentations while presenting local destinations and cultural attractions. This demonstrates that cultural integration involved not only the inclusion of local content. It also relates to the ability to communicate that content through globally accepted tourism communication conventions. The combination reflects the practical application of intercultural competence in tourism-oriented language education.

The other finding was about the balance between local and Western cultures. The lecturers did not view these cultures as competing elements. They considered both essential for tourism communication. Local culture provides relevant content, while Western cultural knowledge helps students understand international communication practices. This finding supports the concept of intercultural communicative competence (ICC). It emphasizes the ability to interact across cultural boundaries (Byram, 2021). This finding is also supported by recent Indonesian research show that intercultural competence develops through continuous engagement with diverse cultural perspectives and reflective learning experiences. Such competence enables language learners to understand cultural differences, negotiate meanings, and communicate more effectively in multicultural settings (Anugrah & Ardhy, 2024). Also, communicative competence has become a key learning outcome because university graduates are increasingly expected to communicate effectively in multicultural and international environments (Elba & Ritacco-Real, 2023). In the tourism context, students need to communicate local cultural knowledge while understanding the expectations of international visitors (Jhaiyanuntana & Nomnian, 2020).

The findings indicate that English for Tourism functions not only as language learning course but also as a site of cultural mediation. Students are expected to communicate information about local destinations, traditions, and cultural practices to international audiences. In this context, English serves as a bridge between local knowledge and global communication. The ability to explain local culture through English

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reflects important aspect of intercultural communicative competence, namely the capacity to mediate between different cultural perspectives (Byram, 2021). Therefore, tourism-oriented English instruction should prepare students not only to understand other cultures but also to represent their own cultural identities in international communication.

The analysis of the semester learning plan shows that the curriculum provides opportunities for cultural integration through topics such as guiding, tourism promotion, accommodation, and booking procedures. However, it does not specify any cultural learning outcomes. Local and Western cultures are not explicitly identified, and neither the learning objectives nor the assessment tasks refer to intercultural competence. As a result, the cultural content of the course depends largely on what lecturers choose to include. The plan allows cultural integration, but it does not require it.

This reliance on lecturers' initiative has several implications. First, cultural integration may vary across lecturers. The three lecturers in this study emphasized North Sulawesi destinations and the importance of balancing local and Western cultures. However, other lecturers could interpret the same plan differently, potentially reducing cultural content to occasional examples. The similarities observed among the three lecturers may reflect their shared regional context and commitment to cultural integration. Nevertheless, without classroom observation, it is difficult to determine how consistently these views are reflected in teaching practice.

Second, the absence of explicit cultural outcomes makes cultural learning difficult to assess. Quizzes, case-based learning, the mid-term examination, and the final project could incorporate cultural content, but the plan does not require them to do so. Consequently, students may be assessed primarily on their language skills, while their cultural learning remains unrecognized.

Third, this arrangement places considerable responsibility on lecturers. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) describe ESP practitioners as not only teachers but also course designers and materials providers. The lecturers in this study took on these additional roles by identifying local content, designing field projects, and finding English equivalents for cultural concepts. These tasks become more challenging when learning resources are limited, as Lecturer 2 noted. Gay (2018) similarly emphasizes that culturally responsive teaching requires deliberate planning rather than goodwill alone. These findings suggest that cultural integration needs clearer curricular support if it is to become a consistent and assessable part of English for Tourism instruction.

This pattern simillar with Rima et al. (2024) reported, namely that curriculum documents often support culturally responsive teaching in principle but give little practical guidance. The challenges raised by the lecturers, especially limited resources and the difficulty of rendering culture-specific concepts in English, point in the same direction. They show a need for locally relevant teaching materials and vocabulary support (Rustam et al., 2025). These findings suggest that cultural integration should be written into the curriculum itself. Rather than leaving it to individual initiative, curriculum developers could add learning outcomes on intercultural competence, local cultural representation, and tourism communication, and then connect those outcomes to assessment rubrics for the guiding, brochure, and video tasks. Such a step would not remove the lecturers' freedom to choose content. It would give that freedom a shared direction and make the results easier to evaluate.

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To summarize, the findings suggest that meaningful cultural integration can be achieved when positive lecturer perceptions are supported by appropriate teaching strategies and flexible curriculum structures. In the context of English for Tourism, cultural integration serve educational and professional purposes by helping students connect local cultural knowledge with international tourism communication practices. The findings contribute theoretically to the literature on intercultural communicative competence and culturally responsive teaching in ESP contexts. Previous studies have examined cultural integration in general EFL settings, whereas this study demonstrates how local and Western cultures can be integrated simultaneously within a tourism-oriented ESP course. The findings suggest that cultural integration in ESP is not only additional pedagogical component but an essential element of professional communication preparation. The findings suggest that English for Tourism courses should move outside language-focused instruction by incorporating locally relevant cultural content. The integration may help students connect professional communication skills with their own cultural knowledge and future tourism careers.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how three English for Tourism lecturers at State University of Manado perceive the integration of local and Western cultures and how these cultures appear in pedagogical documents. The findings show that the lecturers hold strongly positive perceptions of dual cultural integration. They see local culture as essential for contextual relevance, student motivation, and cultural preservation, and Western cultural content as essential for global communication competence in the tourism sector. Balancing the two was considered necessary for effective instruction.

The semester learning plan provides a framework for cultural integration but does not specify which cultural content should be included. The lecturers therefore draw on North Sulawesi's tourism destinations and cultural practices to enrich the course. Student projects, including brochures, promotional videos, and guiding presentations, demonstrate how local content is expressed through genres commonly used in the tourism industry. In this process, students act as cultural mediators, introducing North Sulawesi's cultural heritage and tourism resources to wider audiences through English. However, the lecturers identified two practical challenges: finding appropriate English vocabulary to explain local cultural concepts and dealing with limited resources for fieldwork. The curriculum provides little guidance on either issue.

This study contributes to ESP research by providing a contextualized account of cultural integration in an English for Tourism course. It also extends Indonesian ELT research by examining lecturers' perceptions alongside evidence from pedagogical documents and student projects, rather than focusing on student outcomes alone. The findings further highlight the practical value of cultural integration in tourism education. By promoting destinations such as Bunaken and the Lembeh Strait in English, students practice communication tasks relevant to the tourism industry while introducing local destinations to wider audiences.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. The study was conducted at one university and involved only the three lecturers responsible for the course, so the findings reflect English for Tourism instruction at State University of Manado and should not be generalized to all tourism-oriented ESP courses in Indonesia. It also focused on lecturers'

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perceptions and pedagogical documents, and students' perspectives were not explored in depth.

Three recommendations emerge from this study. First, curriculum developers should explicitly include cultural integration in the semester learning plan, while institutions should support its implementation through locally relevant teaching materials and professional development for lecturers. Second, lecturers can help students develop the vocabulary and tourism-related expressions needed to explain local cultural concepts in English. Collaboration with local tourism institutions could also provide more authentic learning experiences. Third, future research should explore students' perspectives, involve participants from more universities, and examine whether cultural integration in English for Tourism courses contributes to graduates' performance in the tourism industry.

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