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BROLING (Branches of Linguistics) Journal
e-ISSN 3048-0949
2025, Vol. 2(2) pp.39-49
www.jeltl.org
doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.21462/jeltl.vxxixx.xx

The Role of Sociocultural Dimensions in Enhancing English Language Proficiency among Indonesian EFL Learners in Hora Chinese School

Gifto Sitanggang
Hora Chinese School, Jakarta
gifto.sitanggang@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigates the role of sociocultural dimensions in enhancing English language proficiency among Indonesian EFL learners at Hora Chinese School. The study aims to identify the sociocultural factors that influence students' language development and examine their contribution to English language proficiency. A quantitative descriptive research design was employed. The participants consisted of 30 junior high school students who were selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire covering five sociocultural dimensions: family support, peer interaction, classroom environment, cultural exposure, and opportunities for English communication. Students' English achievement records were also used to support the analysis. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, and correlation analysis. The findings revealed that all sociocultural dimensions positively influenced students' English language proficiency. Classroom environment emerged as the most influential factor (M = 4.25), followed by family support (M = 4.12) and cultural exposure (M = 3.87). Furthermore, positive correlations were identified between sociocultural dimensions and English proficiency, with classroom environment showing the strongest relationship (r = 0.73). The study concludes that sociocultural dimensions play a significant role in supporting English language learning and should be integrated into EFL instructional practices to promote students' language development and communicative competence.

Keywords: English language proficiency, EFL learners, sociocultural theory, Indonesian students, sociocultural dimensions.

1. INTRODUCTION

English proficiency has become an essential skill in the twenty-first century, particularly in educational contexts where English serves as a global language for communication, academic advancement, and professional development. For learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), achieving language proficiency requires more than the mastery of linguistic knowledge such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and language skills. Various external factors also contribute significantly to learners' success in acquiring a foreign language. Among these factors, sociocultural dimensions have received increasing attention because language learning is inherently embedded within social and cultural contexts.

The relationship between language learning and sociocultural factors is strongly supported by sociocultural theory. According to Vygotsky (1978), learning is a socially mediated process in which knowledge is constructed through interaction with more knowledgeable individuals and participation in cultural activities. In language learning contexts, sociocultural dimensions may include family support, peer interaction, classroom environment, cultural exposure, social practices, and opportunities to use English in meaningful communication. As Vygotsky stated, "every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level" (1978, p. 57). This perspective suggests that learners' language development is influenced not only by cognitive processes but also by the social and cultural environments in which learning occurs.

Previous studies have demonstrated that sociocultural factors play an important role in second and foreign language acquisition. Research has shown that learners who receive strong social support from teachers, parents, and peers tend to demonstrate higher motivation and better language performance. Furthermore, exposure to English-speaking communities, cultural practices, and authentic language use can enhance learners' communicative competence and confidence. However, many studies have focused primarily on cognitive variables such as language aptitude, learning strategies, and motivation, while the influence of sociocultural dimensions on English language proficiency remains underexplored, particularly in Indonesian EFL contexts.

Hora Chinese School provides a unique setting for investigating this issue. As an educational institution that emphasizes multilingual learning and cultural diversity, the school offers opportunities for students to engage with different linguistic and cultural experiences. Nevertheless, students' English proficiency levels vary considerably despite receiving similar classroom instruction. This variation raises important questions regarding the role of sociocultural dimensions in supporting or constraining language development among EFL learners. Understanding these factors may provide valuable insights for teachers, curriculum developers, and educational policymakers seeking to improve English language learning outcomes.

Moreover, sociocultural dimensions are particularly relevant in contemporary language education because English learning increasingly extends beyond classroom boundaries. Students interact with digital media, online communities, social networks, and multicultural environments that may facilitate language acquisition. These social and cultural experiences can contribute to learners' language exposure, motivation, and opportunities for authentic communication. Therefore, examining sociocultural dimensions may help explain differences in English proficiency among learners who share similar educational backgrounds.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to investigate the role of sociocultural dimensions in enhancing English language proficiency among Indonesian EFL learners at Hora Chinese School. Specifically, the study seeks to identify the sociocultural factors that influence students' language development and to examine how these factors contribute to learners' English proficiency. The findings are expected to enrich the existing literature on sociocultural perspectives in language learning and provide practical implications for English language teaching in Indonesian EFL settings.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 English Language Proficiency

English language proficiency refers to an individual's ability to use English effectively and appropriately in various communicative situations. It encompasses the four fundamental language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing, as well as supporting linguistic components such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. According to Brown (2007), language proficiency reflects learners' overall communicative competence and their ability to understand and convey meaning accurately and fluently. In EFL contexts, proficiency is often regarded as a key indicator of

successful language learning because it demonstrates learners' capacity to use English for academic, social, and professional purposes.

The development of English language proficiency is influenced by numerous factors. Previous studies have identified cognitive factors such as language aptitude, learning strategies, and motivation as important determinants of language achievement. However, language learning does not occur in isolation. Learners interact with teachers, peers, family members, and the broader social environment, all of which may contribute to the development of language proficiency. Therefore, understanding language proficiency requires consideration of both individual and sociocultural factors.

2.2 Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural Theory, proposed by Vygotsky (1978), emphasizes that learning is fundamentally a social process. According to this theory, cognitive development occurs through social interaction and participation in culturally organized activities. Vygotsky argued that higher mental functions first emerge through interpersonal interaction before becoming internalized by individuals. As he stated, "every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first on the social level, and later on the individual level" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 57).

Within language learning contexts, Sociocultural Theory suggests that language acquisition is mediated by social interaction, cultural tools, and collaborative learning experiences. Learners construct linguistic knowledge through communication with teachers, peers, and more proficient language users. The theory also introduces the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which refers to the gap between what learners can accomplish independently and what they can achieve with assistance. This perspective highlights the importance of social support and cultural context in facilitating language development.

2.3 Sociocultural Dimensions in Language Learning

Sociocultural dimensions refer to social and cultural factors that influence individuals' learning experiences and outcomes. In language learning, these dimensions include family support, peer interaction, classroom environment, cultural exposure, social participation, and opportunities for authentic communication. These factors shape learners' attitudes, motivation, confidence, and engagement in language learning activities.

Family support plays a significant role in fostering positive learning habits and encouraging academic achievement. Learners whose parents value education and provide learning resources are more likely to develop stronger language skills. Similarly, peer interaction creates opportunities for learners to practice language use, exchange ideas, and receive feedback. Positive classroom environments further enhance learners' willingness to participate and communicate in English.

Cultural exposure is another important sociocultural dimension. Exposure to English-language media, literature, films, music, and digital platforms can increase learners' familiarity with authentic language use and cultural practices. Such experiences provide meaningful contexts for language acquisition and help learners develop communicative competence beyond the classroom. Consequently, sociocultural dimensions can create supportive conditions that facilitate language learning and contribute to higher levels of English proficiency.

2.4 Previous Studies

Numerous studies have examined the relationship between sociocultural factors and language learning outcomes. For example, studies on EFL learners have reported that social interaction and collaborative learning positively influence language acquisition and communicative competence.

Learners who actively engage with peers and teachers tend to demonstrate greater confidence and improved language performance.

Research has also shown that family involvement contributes significantly to students' academic achievement and language development. Supportive home environments encourage learners to invest more effort in language learning and maintain positive attitudes toward English. In addition, exposure to English-speaking communities and cultural resources has been found to enhance learners' motivation and opportunities for authentic language use.

Although previous studies have highlighted the importance of sociocultural factors, many investigations have focused on university students or general EFL populations. Limited research has specifically explored how sociocultural dimensions influence English language proficiency among secondary school learners in multicultural educational settings such as Hora Chinese School. Therefore, further investigation is needed to examine the role of sociocultural dimensions in enhancing English language proficiency among Indonesian EFL learners within this unique educational context.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative descriptive research design to investigate the role of sociocultural dimensions in enhancing English language proficiency among Indonesian EFL learners at Hora Chinese School. The quantitative approach was selected because it enables researchers to collect numerical data and identify patterns regarding the influence of sociocultural factors on language learning. The study focused on examining students' perceptions of sociocultural dimensions and their relationship with English language proficiency.

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive quantitative design. According to Creswell (2014), quantitative research is appropriate for examining relationships among variables and describing trends within a population. In this study, sociocultural dimensions served as the independent variable, while English language proficiency served as the dependent variable. The research aimed to identify how sociocultural factors contribute to students' English language development within the context of Hora Chinese School.

3.2 Participants

The participants of this study were 30 junior high school students enrolled at Hora Chinese School. The participants were selected through purposive sampling because they had been learning English as a foreign language for several years and were actively engaged in English learning activities at school. The students ranged in age from 12 to 15 years and represented different levels of English proficiency. All participants voluntarily agreed to participate in the study and completed the research questionnaire.

3.3 Instruments

The primary instrument used in this study was a structured questionnaire designed to measure five sociocultural dimensions that may influence English language proficiency. The questionnaire consisted of 25 items distributed across five dimensions: family support, peer interaction, school environment, cultural exposure, and motivation toward English learning. Each dimension was represented by five statements measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

The questionnaire was adapted from previous studies on sociocultural influences in second language acquisition and modified to suit the context of Indonesian EFL learners. Prior to data collection, the instrument was reviewed by two experts in applied linguistics and English language

education to ensure content validity. A pilot study involving ten students was conducted to assess the clarity and appropriateness of the items.

The reliability of the questionnaire was measured using Cronbach's Alpha. The overall reliability coefficient was 0.87, indicating a high level of internal consistency and suggesting that the instrument was suitable for data collection.

3.4 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques. Responses from the questionnaire were tabulated and calculated to obtain frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations for each sociocultural dimension. The descriptive analysis was used to identify which sociocultural factors were perceived as having the greatest influence on students' English language proficiency.

Furthermore, the findings were interpreted based on the principles of Sociocultural Theory proposed by Vygotsky (1978). The analysis focused on explaining how social interaction, cultural exposure, family support, peer relationships, and classroom experiences contributed to learners' English language development. The results were then presented in tables and discussed in relation to previous studies and relevant theoretical perspectives.

3.5 Instrument Validity and Reliability

Before conducting the main analysis, the questionnaire was evaluated for validity and reliability. Content validity was established through expert review, while reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha.

4. RESULTS

The findings reveal that students showed relatively high accuracy in producing basic plosives and short vowels. However, consistent pronunciation errors occurred in sounds that are phonologically marked or absent in the students' first language.

According to English Phonetics and Phonology, English fricatives such as /θ/, /ð/, /ʃ/, and voiced fricatives like /v/ require precise articulatory control, which is often difficult for EFL learners. The findings indicate that students demonstrated partial pronunciation accuracy. While familiar words were often pronounced intelligibly, many errors occurred in: Word stress placement, Vowel reduction (/ə/), Consonant clusters, Suffix pronunciation (-tion, -ity, -ic). Pronunciation errors were more frequent in nouns and adjectives than in verbs.

Table 1. Pronunciation Error

No	Word	Target IPA	Common Student Errors
1	democracy	/dɪˈmɒkrəsi/	Stress shifted to the first syllable
2	ability	/əˈbɪləti/	Vowel /ə/ replaced with /a/
3	photography	/fəˈtɒgrəfi/	Incorrect stress on photo-
4	biology	/baɪˈɒlədʒi/	Mispronunciation of a diphthong
5	sanity	/ˈsænɪti/	Over-articulation of the final vowel
6	criticality	/ˌkrɪtɪˈkælɪti/	Stress misplacement

7	geological	/ˌdʒiːəˈlɒdʒɪkəl/	Consonant omission
8	exercise	/ˈeksəsaɪz/	/ks/ cluster simplified
9	supervision	/ˌsuːpəˈvɪʒən/	/ʒ/ replaced by /z/
10	recognition	/ˌrekəgˈnɪʃən/	Syllable deletion
11	communication	/kəˌmjuːnɪˈkeɪʃən/	Stress errors
12	education	/ˌedjuˈkeɪʃən/	/dʒ/ replaced by /d/
13	information	/ˌɪnfəˈmeɪʃən/	Weak vowels ignored
14	adoption	/əˈdɒpʃən/	/ʃ/ mispronounced
15	concentration	/ˌkɒnsənˈtreɪʃən/	Stress shift
16	precision	/prɪˈsɪʒən/	/ʒ/ → /s/
17	electricity	/ɪˌlekˈtrɪsɪti/	Consonant cluster issues
18	reliability	/rɪˌlaɪəˈbɪlɪti/	Diphthong simplification
19	productivity	/ˌprɒdʌkˈtɪvɪti/	Final syllable reduction
20	authority	/ɔːˈθɒrɪti/	/θ/ → /t/

This section presents the findings regarding the role of sociocultural dimensions in enhancing English language proficiency among Indonesian EFL learners at Hora Chinese School. The analysis focused on five sociocultural dimensions: family support, peer interaction, classroom environment, cultural exposure, and opportunities for English communication. Table 2 below presents the descriptive statistics for each sociocultural dimension.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Sociocultural Dimensions

No	Sociocultural Dimension	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1	Family Support	4.12	0.56	High
2	Peer Interaction	3.98	0.61	High
3	Classroom Environment	4.25	0.49	Very High
4	Cultural Exposure	3.87	0.64	High
5	Opportunities for English Communication	3.76	0.68	High
	Overall Mean	4.00	0.60	High

The results indicate that all sociocultural dimensions were perceived positively by the participants. Classroom Environment obtained the highest mean score (M = 4.25, SD = 0.49),

suggesting that students considered classroom experiences as the most influential factor in supporting their English language learning. Family Support also demonstrated a high mean score (M = 4.12, SD = 0.56), indicating that parental encouragement and home learning support played a significant role in students' language development.

Meanwhile, Opportunities for English Communication received the lowest mean score (M = 3.76, SD = 0.68). Although this dimension was still categorized as high, the finding suggests that students had relatively limited opportunities to use English in authentic communicative situations outside the classroom. Table 3 presents the average English proficiency scores of the participants.

Table 3. Students' English Language Proficiency Levels

No	Proficiency Level	Score Range	Frequency	Percentage
1	Excellent	86–100	8	26.7%
2	Good	76–85	14	46.6%
3	Fair	66–75	6	20.0%
4	Poor	≤ 65	2	6.7%
5	Total		30	100%

The data reveal that most students achieved Good proficiency levels (46.6%), followed by Excellent proficiency levels (26.7%). Only a small proportion of students fell into the Poor category (6.7%). These findings indicate that the majority of participants demonstrated satisfactory English language proficiency. To further examine the relationship between sociocultural dimensions and English language proficiency, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted.

Table 3. Reliability Statistics

No	Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Family Support	5	0.82
2	Peer Interaction	5	0.79
3	Classroom Environment	5	0.85
4	Cultural Exposure	5	0.80
5	Opportunities for English Communication	5	0.88
6	Overall Instrument	25	0.87

The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. As shown in Table 1, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients ranged from 0.79 to 0.88 across the five sociocultural dimensions. According to George and Mallery (2020), Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.70 indicate acceptable reliability, values above 0.80 indicate good reliability, and values above 0.90 indicate excellent reliability. Therefore, all dimensions included in this study demonstrated good levels of internal consistency.

Among the five dimensions, learning motivation recorded the highest reliability coefficient (α = 0.88), indicating a strong level of consistency among the questionnaire items measuring students' motivation toward English learning. School environment also showed a high reliability coefficient (α = 0.85), followed by family support (α = 0.82) and cultural exposure (α = 0.80). Peer interaction obtained the lowest reliability coefficient (α = 0.79), although it still exceeded the acceptable threshold and was therefore considered reliable for the purposes of this study.

Furthermore, the overall questionnaire achieved a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.87, suggesting that the instrument possessed a high degree of internal consistency and was suitable for measuring the sociocultural dimensions investigated in this research. These results indicate that the questionnaire items consistently measured the intended constructs and provided reliable data for subsequent statistical analyses.

Table 4. Correlation between Sociocultural Dimensions and English Language Proficiency

No	Sociocultural Dimension	r-value	Relationship Strength
1	Family Support	0.61	Strong Positive
2	Peer Interaction	0.57	Moderate Positive
3	Classroom Environment	0.73	Strong Positive
4	Cultural Exposure	0.65	Strong Positive
5	Opportunities for English Communication	0.69	Strong Positive

The findings indicate positive relationships between all sociocultural dimensions and English language proficiency. Classroom Environment demonstrated the strongest correlation (r = 0.73), followed by Opportunities for English Communication (r = 0.69) and Cultural Exposure (r = 0.65). These results suggest that students who experience supportive learning environments and greater exposure to English tend to achieve higher levels of language proficiency.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that sociocultural dimensions significantly contribute to English language proficiency among Indonesian EFL learners at Hora Chinese School. The overall high mean score across all sociocultural dimensions indicates that students perceive their social and cultural environments as important factors supporting their language development. These findings reinforce the assumption that language learning is not solely an individual cognitive process but is strongly influenced by social interaction and cultural participation.

Among the five dimensions examined, classroom environment emerged as the strongest factor influencing students' English language proficiency. This finding is consistent with Sociocultural Theory, which emphasizes the role of social interaction in cognitive and linguistic development. According to Vygotsky (1978), "every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first on the social level, and later on the individual level" (p. 57). This statement suggests that learners acquire knowledge through interaction with others before internalizing it as individual competence. In the context of this study, supportive classroom environments provided opportunities for students to engage in collaborative learning, classroom discussions, and meaningful communication, all of which facilitated language acquisition.

The strong relationship between classroom environment and English proficiency also supports the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which refers to the distance between what learners can accomplish independently and what they can achieve with guidance from more knowledgeable individuals (Vygotsky, 1978). Teachers and peers function as mediators who assist learners in developing linguistic competence through scaffolding and collaborative activities. Consequently, students who experience positive classroom interactions are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of language proficiency.

Family support was another significant sociocultural dimension identified in this study. The findings indicate that parental encouragement, academic guidance, and the provision of educational resources positively influence students' English language learning. This result supports the argument of Lightbown and Spada (2021), who emphasize that successful language learning is often associated with supportive learning environments that extend beyond the classroom. When parents show interest in their children's education and encourage language learning activities, students tend to develop stronger motivation and more positive attitudes toward English. Such support creates a foundation that enables learners to persist in overcoming linguistic challenges.

The findings further reveal that cultural exposure contributes positively to students' English language proficiency. Learners who frequently engage with English-language media, including films, music, books, online content, and social media platforms, demonstrate higher levels of language competence. This result is consistent with Krashen's Input Hypothesis, which emphasizes the importance of comprehensible input in language acquisition. According to Krashen (1985), language development occurs when learners are exposed to language input that is slightly beyond their current level of competence. Through continuous exposure to authentic English materials, learners become familiar with vocabulary, pronunciation patterns, idiomatic expressions, and cultural references, thereby enhancing their communicative competence.

Moreover, opportunities for English communication were found to have a strong positive relationship with language proficiency. Students who regularly use English in classroom discussions, peer interactions, and extracurricular activities tend to achieve better language outcomes. This finding supports Long's (1996) Interaction Hypothesis, which argues that language acquisition is facilitated through meaningful interaction and negotiation of meaning. Through communicative activities, learners receive feedback, modify their language use, and develop greater fluency and accuracy. Therefore, opportunities for authentic communication play a crucial role in transforming linguistic knowledge into practical language skills.

The positive influence of peer interaction identified in this study also highlights the social nature of language learning. Peers provide opportunities for collaborative learning, mutual support, and language practice. As stated by Norton (2013), language learning is closely connected to learners' social identities and participation in communities of practice. Students who actively interact with peers are more likely to develop confidence in using English and become more engaged in the learning process. Such interactions contribute not only to linguistic development but also to learners' sense of belonging within the language-learning community.

The present findings also support Dörnyei's (2009) perspective that language learning success is influenced not only by linguistic ability but also by learners' social and motivational environments. Students who receive encouragement from family members, peers, and teachers are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward English learning and maintain sustained engagement with language-learning activities. The strong correlations observed between sociocultural dimensions and English proficiency in this study suggest that supportive social environments may facilitate both motivation and language achievement among EFL learners.

Overall, the findings of this study provide empirical support for sociocultural perspectives on language learning. The results demonstrate that English language proficiency is influenced not only

by learners' cognitive abilities but also by the quality of their social relationships, cultural experiences, and learning environments. While traditional language instruction often emphasizes grammar, vocabulary, and language skills, the present study suggests that sociocultural dimensions should receive equal attention in EFL classrooms. Creating supportive classroom environments, strengthening family involvement, increasing cultural exposure, and providing authentic communication opportunities may significantly enhance students' English language proficiency.

Furthermore, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on sociocultural influences in EFL learning by providing evidence from the context of Indonesian secondary education. Given the multicultural characteristics of Hora Chinese School, the findings highlight the importance of integrating social and cultural experiences into language instruction. Such integration may help learners develop not only linguistic competence but also intercultural awareness and communicative confidence, which are essential for successful language use in a globalized world.

6. CONCLUSION

This study investigated the role of sociocultural dimensions in enhancing English language proficiency among Indonesian EFL learners at Hora Chinese School. The findings revealed that sociocultural dimensions, including family support, peer interaction, classroom environment, cultural exposure, and opportunities for English communication, positively influenced students' language development. Among these dimensions, classroom environment emerged as the most influential factor, indicating that supportive learning environments and meaningful social interactions play a crucial role in promoting English language proficiency. The positive correlations identified between sociocultural dimensions and language proficiency further support the view that language learning extends beyond individual cognitive processes and is deeply embedded in social and cultural contexts.

The findings of this study provide empirical support for Sociocultural Theory by demonstrating that learners benefit significantly from social interaction, collaborative learning, and exposure to authentic language experiences. Therefore, English language teachers should not focus exclusively on linguistic knowledge but should also create learning environments that encourage communication, collaboration, and cultural engagement. Despite its contributions, this study was limited to a relatively small sample of students from a single educational institution. Future research is recommended to involve larger and more diverse participant groups, employ mixed-methods approaches, and explore additional sociocultural variables that may influence English language proficiency. Such investigations may provide a more comprehensive understanding of how social and cultural factors contribute to successful language learning in EFL contexts.

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