



## English Language Learning in Language Academic Preparation Program (LAPP): an Autoethnography

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### Abstract

This autoethnographic study examines the lived experiences of learning English for Academic Purposes (EAP) within the Language Academic Preparation Program (LAPP), a key component of the Program Persiapan Studi Lanjut (PPSL) at UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau. Drawing upon personal reflections and research journals, the study investigates how culturally responsive pedagogy, local wisdom, and immersive experiences shape academic language development. By engaging in activities such as traditional ceremonies, local arts performances, culinary practices, and educational field visits, the program contextualized English learning in ways that enhanced learner engagement and reinforced cultural identity. The findings suggest that EAP instruction becomes more effective and transformative when it integrates local cultural content with authentic learning contexts. Furthermore, the study demonstrates that autoethnography provides a valuable lens for capturing the emotional, intellectual, and pedagogical dimensions of language education. The main contribution of this research lies in proposing an alternative model of EAP instruction that is not only academically rigorous but also culturally grounded, offering new insights for the development of contextually relevant language education programs in Indonesia and beyond.

**Keywords:** Autoethnography, Language Academic Preparation Program, Live Experience

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## INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly globalized academic environment, the demand for English proficiency has grown significantly, especially for students aiming to pursue higher education internationally. Language Academic Preparation Programs (LAPPs) have emerged as pivotal platforms for equipping students with the necessary linguistic and academic skills. According to Wette and Furneaux (2018), "preparation programs are instrumental in bridging the gap between general English proficiency and the specific academic demands faced by students in higher education institutions".

English Language Teaching (ELT) within LAPPs, therefore, is not only about language acquisition but also about fostering academic literacy, critical thinking, and intercultural competence. Recent studies highlight that "effective ELT in academic preparation must integrate disciplinary language skills with cultural and academic conventions to ensure students' success" (Matsuda, 2021). Consequently, the role of the

English language teacher becomes multifaceted, involving the navigation between linguistic instruction and academic enculturation.

Autoethnography, as a method of inquiry, provides a unique lens to explore personal experiences within educational settings. It enables educators to critically reflect on their practices, challenges, and growth. Bochner and Ellis (2016) emphasized that "autoethnographic research offers rich, nuanced insights into the lived realities of teaching and learning, allowing for deeper understanding and transformative practice". In the context of LAPPs, an autoethnographic approach can shed light on the complexities of teaching English for academic purposes, especially from the insider's perspective.

Moreover, the integration of technology and multimodal resources in ELT has reshaped academic preparation programs in recent years. As stated by Bond et al., (2020), "digital tools and multimodal practices have become integral to academic English teaching, enhancing learner engagement and accessibility". Such developments necessitate continuous adaptation and critical reflection from educators within LAPPs.

While significant research has been conducted on English Language Teaching (ELT) within academic preparation programs, much of it tends to focus on curriculum design, language assessment, and student outcomes (Agustin et al., 2021). However, there is limited exploration of the teacher's personal and professional experiences, particularly through autoethnographic methods. As Ishihara et al. (2018) points out, "there is a pressing need for research that captures the subjective experiences and reflexive practices of language teachers in diverse educational contexts".

Furthermore, most existing studies on LAPPs adopt quantitative or large-scale qualitative approaches, often overlooking the nuanced, lived realities of teachers navigating the intersection of language instruction, academic literacy, and cultural adaptation (Pu & Xu, 2022). While the importance of teacher agency and identity has been acknowledged (Kayi & Hayriri, 2015), there remains a lack of in-depth, self-reflective research that documents how teachers adapt pedagogical strategies in response to the evolving needs of LAPP students.

In addition, the rapid integration of digital technologies and multimodal pedagogies into academic English teaching has transformed classroom practices (Toyama & Hori, 2025). However, studies that explore how individual teachers personally experience and negotiate these shifts within LAPPs are still scarce. As highlighted by Bonfield et al. (2020), "there is an emerging need to examine how teachers' lived experiences interact with technological, institutional, and pedagogical changes in the language education landscape".

Therefore, this study seeks to address these gaps by employing an autoethnographic approach to investigate the complex realities of teaching English in a Language Academic Preparation Program, offering a deeply personal yet analytically rigorous perspective that has been largely missing from the current literature.

### **English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in Higher Education**

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) has become a critical component of higher education, particularly in contexts where English functions as the medium of instruction or as a gateway to international study. EAP extends beyond general language proficiency, aiming to equip learners with the linguistic, cognitive, and rhetorical skills necessary for academic success. As Murray (2001) emphasizes, EAP "focuses on the communication skills required in academic settings, integrating disciplinary knowledge with language use". This means that EAP not only teaches vocabulary and grammar but also cultivates critical reading, academic writing, and oral presentation abilities within specific academic contexts.

One of the defining characteristics of EAP in higher education is its situated nature. Students are prepared to engage with disciplinary texts, conventions, and genres

that mirror the practices of academic communities. Andrade (2025) argues that “academic preparation programs must foster critical thinking, research literacy, and intercultural awareness alongside language development”. In this sense, EAP is not merely a language course but a holistic program that aligns students’ linguistic skills with the intellectual demands of academia.

Furthermore, the increasing globalization of education has intensified the need for EAP programs. International students entering English-medium institutions often face challenges in navigating academic discourses unfamiliar to their cultural and educational backgrounds. (Ruan et al. (2025) highlight that “teacher identity and agency in EAP classrooms play an essential role in guiding students to adapt to new academic norms and expectations”. Teachers, therefore, act not only as language instructors but also as cultural mediators who help students bridge linguistic and disciplinary gaps.

Recent scholarship also underscores the importance of reflective practice and adaptability in EAP pedagogy. According to Warriner (2009), “reflexive teaching allows instructors to tailor academic English instruction to the evolving needs of diverse learners”. This suggests that EAP instruction must be flexible and responsive, accommodating students’ academic goals while respecting their linguistic and cultural identities.

Finally, digital transformation has reshaped EAP in higher education. As Tang (2024) observe, “technology-enhanced learning and multimodal practices are now integral to EAP instruction, fostering engagement and accessibility”. Online platforms, digital tools, and blended learning models have expanded opportunities for interaction, collaboration, and academic literacy development, making EAP more dynamic and relevant to the contemporary higher education landscape.

### **The Role of Language Academic Preparation Programs (LAPP)**

Language Academic Preparation Programs (LAPP) play a pivotal role in equipping learners with the linguistic, cognitive, and cultural skills required for success in higher education. These programs are designed to bridge the gap between students’ general English proficiency and the advanced communicative competencies demanded by academic institutions. Schmidtke et al. (2025) emphasize that “preparation programs are instrumental in bridging the gap between general English proficiency and the specific academic demands faced by students in higher education institutions”. In this sense, LAPP provide not only language training but also academic enculturation.

LAPP often prioritize English for Academic Purposes (EAP), which encompasses academic writing, research skills, and presentation abilities. (Sperling, 1996) notes that “effective academic preparation must integrate disciplinary language skills with academic conventions to ensure students’ success”. Such integration ensures that students are not simply learning English in isolation but are acquiring the discourse practices necessary for participation in scholarly communities.

Another critical function of LAPP is addressing the diverse backgrounds of students who enter higher education with varying levels of preparedness. Weng (2023) argue that “language instructors in preparation programs must navigate the complexities of cultural diversity, academic literacy, and learner identity to guide students toward adaptation”. In this context, teachers serve as both linguistic guides and cultural mediators, helping students adjust to new academic norms and expectations.

Reflective and personalized pedagogy is also central to the success of LAPP. According to Dey Roy (2024), “teachers’ reflexive practices enable them to adapt pedagogical strategies to meet learners’ evolving needs and academic goals”. This underscores the importance of flexibility in academic preparation programs, as students’ needs are shaped by their disciplines, cultural identities, and future aspirations.

Finally, technological advancement has significantly influenced the structure and delivery of LAPP. Archer (2022) point out that “digital tools and multimodal practices have

become integral to academic English teaching, enhancing learner engagement and accessibility". The use of online platforms, blended learning models, and digital resources allows LAPP to remain relevant and responsive to the rapidly changing landscape of global higher education.

### **Challenges and Pedagogical Practices in EAP Instruction**

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) instruction in higher education presents unique challenges that require context-sensitive pedagogical strategies. Unlike general English teaching, EAP must address the specific linguistic and academic conventions of scholarly communities, which often vary across disciplines. Muchiri et al. (1995) points out that "EAP teaching requires attention to the situated nature of academic discourse, making it necessary for teachers to balance general language instruction with discipline-specific demands". This dual focus creates complexity for both instructors and learners.

One of the primary challenges is the diversity of student backgrounds. Learners enter EAP classrooms with differing levels of English proficiency, academic preparedness, and cultural knowledge. Li (2022) highlights that "international students often struggle not only with linguistic competence but also with adapting to new academic conventions and expectations". As a result, instructors must employ differentiated instruction and scaffolded learning to accommodate these diverse needs.

Teacher identity and agency also play an important role in navigating pedagogical challenges. Weng (2024) argue that "EAP instructors must continually negotiate their professional roles, moving between being language teachers, academic mentors, and cultural guides". This multifaceted role requires adaptability and reflective practice, ensuring that students are supported academically and personally.

Another major issue is the question of validity and authenticity in teaching materials. Skerrett (2013) stresses that "teaching academic English without connecting it to real academic practices risks reducing it to decontextualized drills rather than meaningful preparation". To address this, instructors often design tasks that simulate real academic activities, such as research presentations, literature reviews, or seminar discussions, to foster authentic engagement with academic discourse.

Technological advancements have further shaped pedagogical practices in EAP instruction. While digital platforms and online resources expand access to learning, they also create new challenges in ensuring meaningful participation. Hafner and Pun (2020) observe that "multimodal and technology-enhanced practices have become central to EAP pedagogy, though their success depends on teachers' ability to integrate them effectively into academic tasks". Thus, teachers must balance innovation with pedagogical clarity to maximize the benefits of digital tools.

### **Teacher Identity, Reflection, and Agency in ELT**

Teacher identity, reflection, and agency are increasingly recognized as crucial dimensions in English Language Teaching (ELT), particularly in academic preparation contexts. The professional identity of teachers shapes their pedagogical choices, classroom practices, and interactions with students. Agharezaie and Meihami (2025) emphasize that "teacher identity in ELT is not fixed but negotiated through ongoing interactions within institutional, cultural, and pedagogical contexts". This dynamic nature of identity highlights the importance of reflexivity in understanding teachers' roles and responsibilities.

Reflective practice has long been valued as a pathway to professional growth and pedagogical improvement. Luitel and Dahal (2021) argue that "reflection enables teachers to critically examine their practices, challenges, and transformations, fostering deeper understanding and innovative approaches". Through reflection, teachers become aware of their assumptions, adapt their teaching strategies, and align their methods with both student needs and institutional goals. In contexts such as Language Academic Preparation

Programs (LAPP), this reflective stance allows teachers to navigate the complexities of academic English instruction while maintaining authenticity.

Teacher agency is another essential component of effective ELT practice. Zhang and Nuñez (2025) notes that “teachers exercise agency by adapting pedagogical strategies to negotiate global norms of English with local classroom realities”. This ability to mediate between institutional demands and learner needs positions teachers as active decision-makers who contribute to shaping the educational process rather than merely implementing pre-designed curricula.

In addition, identity and agency are closely connected with intercultural competence. James (2014) suggest that “EAP instructors often operate at the intersection of language and culture, guiding students to develop the skills needed for academic success while fostering cross-cultural understanding”. This dual role requires teachers to embrace their professional identities as both linguistic experts and cultural mediators.

Finally, digital transformation has introduced new dimensions to teacher identity and agency. Almusharraf and Engemann (2020) observe that “the integration of digital tools in ELT reshapes not only teaching practices but also how teachers perceive themselves as facilitators of multimodal learning environments”. This shift demands continuous reflection and adaptation, as teachers align their professional roles with evolving technological landscapes.

### **Autoethnography as a Research Method in Language Education**

Autoethnography has emerged as a valuable research method in language education, offering a means to connect personal narratives with broader cultural and pedagogical contexts. Unlike traditional qualitative methods that emphasize external observation, autoethnography situates the researcher within the inquiry, drawing on lived experiences as both data and analysis. Chew-Helbig (2022) highlight that “autoethnography provides nuanced insights into the lived realities of teaching and learning, fostering transformative practice”. This makes it particularly relevant for language education, where identity, culture, and personal experience are central to teaching and learning.

In language education research, autoethnography allows teachers to critically reflect on their own practices, challenges, and growth. According to Yazan (2019), this method “enables educators to explore their learning experiences, struggles, failures, and successes in relation to socio-cultural contexts”. By articulating such experiences, teachers contribute to a deeper understanding of classroom dynamics and the interplay between pedagogy and culture. This reflexive element makes autoethnography distinctively suited for examining English Language Teaching (ELT), especially in contexts where local traditions and global academic demands intersect.

Autoethnographic inquiry also emphasizes the importance of authenticity and emotional resonance. Pitard (2017) argues that through autoethnography, readers can “experience something new—learning, discovering, and co-creating meaning with the writer”. In this way, the method not only documents experiences but also engages readers in a dialogic process of meaning-making, bridging the personal and the scholarly.

Concerns about reliability and validity in autoethnographic research are often addressed through transparency and reflexivity. Riedler (2016) points out that credibility depends on whether the narrative convinces both the author and the reader that the account reflects real experiences. In language education, this means grounding reflections in concrete teaching practices and classroom realities. Such grounding enhances trustworthiness while allowing the narrative to resonate across similar contexts.

Finally, autoethnography contributes to broader debates about teacher identity and agency. Ahn (2020) stresses that “teacher narratives provide critical insights into how educators negotiate institutional constraints and cultural expectations”. By positioning

teachers' voices at the center of research, autoethnography empowers practitioners to shape language education discourse from within.

### **Technology, Multimodality, and Innovation in EAP Learning**

The integration of technology and multimodal resources has significantly reshaped English for Academic Purposes (EAP) learning in recent years. Traditional models of EAP, which relied heavily on textbooks and classroom lectures, have been supplemented—and in some cases replaced—by digital tools and innovative practices that support interactive, flexible, and student-centered learning. Rahmanu and Molnár (2024) emphasize that “digital tools and multimodal practices have become integral to academic English teaching, enhancing learner engagement and accessibility”. These developments have expanded the boundaries of EAP instruction, enabling learners to access authentic academic resources and collaborative platforms beyond the classroom.

Multimodality in EAP involves the use of various modes of communication—textual, visual, auditory, and digital—to facilitate academic literacy. Shin (2006) notes that “the increasing reliance on multimodal texts in academic communication requires EAP instruction to prepare learners for diverse literacy practices”. This means that students must not only master academic writing but also learn to interpret graphs, presentations, and digital resources, reflecting the multimodal realities of contemporary academia.

Technology also enables blended and online learning models that make EAP instruction more flexible. According to N. Murray (2022), “the incorporation of online platforms in academic preparation programs provides opportunities for self-paced learning while supporting interactive tasks that mirror real academic practices”. Such approaches allow learners to engage with EAP content at their own pace while still benefiting from peer collaboration and instructor feedback.

However, the adoption of technology and multimodality is not without challenges. Teachers must develop new skills to effectively integrate digital resources into their pedagogy. Gao and Cui (2024) argue that “teacher identity and agency are being reshaped by the demands of digital teaching environments, requiring ongoing reflection and adaptation”. This highlights the dual responsibility of EAP instructors to not only teach academic English but also to mediate students' engagement with technology.

Finally, innovation in EAP extends to the use of authentic tasks that replicate real academic practices. Gul et al. (2025) points out that “innovative pedagogies rooted in authenticity empower students to connect classroom learning with actual academic communication”. Digital simulations of academic conferences, online peer reviews, and collaborative research projects exemplify how technology and multimodality can create meaningful, practice-oriented learning experiences.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

Autoethnography is a subset of social anthropology. According to Gunn & Løgstrup (2014), within social anthropology, researchers immerse themselves in a community or environment, engaging actively through questioning, data collection, hypothesis development, and experimentation, rather than relying solely on passive observation. Autoethnography specifically concentrates on a single dimension of personal experience, examining how it evolves in relation to socio-cultural influences by reflecting on one's own journey, including challenges, achievements, and personal growth (Yazan, 2019). Starr (2010) explains that reading an autoethnographic account allows readers to engage in a novel experience—encouraging them to feel, learn, discover, and participate in meaning-making.

### **Data Collection Instrument and Procedure**

Throughout his participation in the Language Academic Preparation Program (LAPP), the researcher maintained a detailed research journal. As noted by Fox et al.

(2007), such a journal serves as a thorough documentation of the research journey, incorporating reflective insights on the process. Over the course of three months, with sixteen hours of instruction per week, the researcher consistently recorded his thoughts and emotional responses related to teaching activities. These journal entries were reviewed daily and expanded with additional reflections, ultimately forming the core dataset for this study.

Concerns regarding reliability, validity, and generalizability are often raised in qualitative research. Ellis et al. (2011) provide a useful framework for understanding how these principles apply to autoethnographic inquiry. In this context, reliability refers to the authenticity and credibility of the researcher's narrative. To ensure this, the researcher must support interpretations with concrete evidence from personal experience and continually ask, as Bochner (1994) suggests, whether the narrative truly reflects what occurred. Validity, meanwhile, is closely linked to the concept of *verisimilitude*—the extent to which the story evokes a sense of realism and emotional truth in readers. A valid autoethnography should allow readers to enter the writer's subjective world (Lee, 2001) and feel a genuine connection to the experience.

Furthermore, generalizability in autoethnographic work is achieved when readers find parallels between their lives and the author's narrative, drawing meaning from both the similarities and differences. This idea is supported by Ellis et al. (2011) and Croker (2009), who emphasize the importance of helping readers understand unfamiliar perspectives through relatable storytelling. To enhance credibility and broader applicability, the researcher also consulted fellow academics who had taken part in the same LAPP under the PPSL framework. Their oral feedback helped refine the interpretation of journal entries, ensuring that the final analysis remained grounded in authentic personal experiences.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In 2021, I had the privilege of participating in the *Program Persiapan Studi Lanjut (PPSL)* organized by UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau. As a professional lecturer preparing for advanced studies, I found the program to be not only academically enriching but also personally transformative. One of the most impactful components of the PPSL was the Language Academic Preparation Program (LAPP), where I immersed myself in the intensive study of English for Academic Purposes (EAP).

The EAP component of the program was designed to bridge the gap between general English skills and the specific academic demands we would face in postgraduate study. Through a well-structured curriculum, we developed academic writing, critical reading, presentation skills, and research communication. What set this program apart, however, was its integration of local wisdom into the learning process. Our instructors creatively used local contexts, issues, and traditions as the basis for discussion and analysis. For instance, we were asked to write argumentative essays and deliver presentations on topics drawn from Malay culture, local environmental issues, and Islamic educational values. This approach not only strengthened our English proficiency but also deepened our appreciation for our cultural identity.

### **Tourist Attraction**

One of the most memorable moments during the program was when we were taken on an educational visit to a local tourist attraction. We visited the historic Istana Siak Sri Indrapura, a majestic palace that once belonged to the Sultanate of Siak. The experience was both culturally enlightening and pedagogically meaningful. As part of our EAP assignment, we were asked to observe, take notes, and later present our reflections in English. This task encouraged us to use English in an authentic context, blending academic learning with real-life exploration. The trip also strengthened our camaraderie as participants and offered a refreshing break from the rigors of classroom learning.

This combination of language learning, cultural exploration, and academic development created a holistic learning experience. I found myself becoming more confident in using English in academic contexts while also developing a stronger appreciation for my cultural identity. The program did not simply prepare me to study abroad—it prepared me to represent my culture and values in a global academic setting.

Throughout the program, I felt a growing sense of confidence in using English for academic communication. The combination of academic rigor, cultural relevance, and immersive learning experiences made the LAPP a cornerstone of my professional and academic preparation. More importantly, it reminded me that language learning is most effective when it connects with our identity, community, and real-world experiences.

### **Traditional Ceremonies**

Rather than relying solely on Western examples or abstract academic texts, we were encouraged to explore local issues and cultural practices through an academic lens. This approach made the content more relatable and helped us express complex ideas while staying grounded in our own cultural identity. As part of this initiative, we had the unique opportunity to observe a traditional ceremony (*upacara adat*) held by the local community.

We attended a traditional “Tepuk Tepung Tawar” ceremony — a sacred and symbolic ritual often performed to bless a person who is about to embark on an important journey, such as studying abroad. Witnessing the ritual firsthand, with its deep symbolism, poetic language, and communal values, allowed us to reflect on our cultural roots. Our instructors later asked us to write analytical reflections and descriptive essays about the ceremony in English, combining cultural immersion with academic skill development.

The integration of traditional knowledge and English academic skills made the learning process both deep and dynamic. It challenged us not only to learn how to think and write critically in English, but also to view our own heritage as a source of academic insight. Through this culturally responsive pedagogy, I gained confidence in using English in scholarly contexts without detaching from my cultural background.

### **Traditional Arts**

Another particular highlight was the day we were invited to attend a performance of traditional Malay-Riau arts. The event featured “Zapin” dance, syair (traditional poetry) recitations, and kompiang music—a rhythmic ensemble typically performed in community gatherings. As we watched the graceful movements of the dancers and listened to the poetic language of the performers, we were not just entertained—we were immersed in the living culture of the region.

Following the performance, our instructors tasked us with writing a descriptive reflection and a critical analysis in English. We were encouraged to explore how traditional arts reflect social values, cultural identity, and communal harmony. This exercise challenged us to apply our academic English skills in a culturally grounded context. It was not just a writing assignment—it was a moment of cultural appreciation, linguistic development, and intellectual engagement.

What struck me most was how the LAPP not only helped us become more proficient in academic English, but also affirmed the importance of our own heritage in academic spaces. By connecting EAP learning with local arts and traditions, the program helped us understand that scholarly communication in English does not require abandoning our cultural identity; rather, it can serve as a bridge between the local and the global.

### **Culinary Gems**

At other moment we were also invited to experience traditional Riau-Malay foods as part of a cultural immersion activity. We gathered in a communal setting where various local dishes were served, including gulai patin, asam pedas baung, leman, rendang ayam kampung, and traditional snacks like kue bangkit and lopek bugi. It wasn't just a culinary

experience — it was a cultural lesson. We learned about the historical and social significance of each dish, how they are prepared, and their role in local customs and hospitality.

After the meal, we were assigned a writing task: to describe the cultural and communal importance of food in Riau and reflect on how culinary traditions can be discussed in academic writing. This exercise challenged us to apply our English academic skills in a new and meaningful context, while also fostering a deeper appreciation for our cultural roots.

This fusion of academic rigor and cultural relevance made the learning experience in LAPP truly memorable. It reminded me that mastering English for academic purposes does not mean setting aside my identity—it means learning how to share it with the world. Through food, language, and learning, I gained not only new skills, but also a renewed sense of who I am and what I bring to the academic table.

## **DISCUSSION**

This autoethnographic study provides a rich and reflective account of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) instruction within the Language Academic Preparation Program (LAPP) as a main part of Program Persiapan Studi Lanjut (PSSL) at UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau. Through immersive and culturally grounded pedagogical practices, the program not only enhanced participants' English proficiency but also reinforced their cultural identity—a dual focus often overlooked in traditional EAP settings.

One of the central themes emerging from the findings is the integration of local wisdom into EAP instruction. Participants were not merely learning English in isolation; rather, they were engaging with the language through culturally familiar content such as traditional ceremonies, regional issues, and community values. This approach supports Matsuda's (2021) argument that effective academic English instruction must go beyond generic skill-building to include disciplinary and sociocultural contexts. By using local traditions such as the *Tepuk Tepung Tawar* ceremony and traditional Riau-Malay arts as subjects of academic tasks, the program positioned English as a tool for articulating and preserving local knowledge.

In line with Bochner and Ellis (2016), who advocate for reflective and experiential learning through autoethnography, this study underscores the transformative power of personal experience in language education. The reflective activities—such as writing essays on cultural practices, presenting on historical sites, and analyzing culinary heritage—allowed participants to engage in critical thinking and academic communication within a familiar cultural framework. This method not only improved academic English skills but also helped bridge the gap between global academic standards and local identities.

The program's use of authentic learning environments further reinforced this pedagogical approach. Field visits to places like *Istana Siak Sri Indrapura* and interactions with traditional arts and foods served as meaningful contexts for language use. As Bond et al. (2020) have observed, learning environments that are multimodal and immersive enhance both engagement and retention. The cultural immersion activities in LAPP served this purpose, enabling participants to use English in real-life, meaningful situations while strengthening their academic expression.

Additionally, this study demonstrates how culturally responsive pedagogy can empower learners and educators alike. Instead of adopting a Western-centric model, LAPP embraced a contextually rooted approach that validated the learners' backgrounds. This reflects Ishihara et al. (2018) call for more reflexive practices in language education, where the teacher's and learners' identities are central to the pedagogical process. The findings affirm that language education, particularly in preparation programs, benefits significantly from being situated within the socio-cultural realities of learners.

Lastly, the use of autoethnography in this study highlights the importance of teacher reflection and agency in understanding and improving instructional practices. By documenting and analyzing personal learning experiences, the author contributes to the underrepresented narrative of local educators in EAP research. This aligns with Kayi-Aydar (2015) argument that teacher identity and voice should play a greater role in shaping language education policy and practice.

## **CONCLUSION**

This autoethnographic study has revealed the multifaceted and transformative nature of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) learning within the Language Academic Preparation Program (LAPP) at UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau. Through the lens of lived experience, the research highlights how integrating local wisdom, cultural immersion, and reflective practice can create a more meaningful and empowering academic English learning environment. The findings suggest that EAP instruction becomes more effective and personally resonant when it is culturally contextualized. Experiences such as participating in traditional ceremonies, observing local arts, exploring historical sites, and engaging with regional culinary heritage allowed learners to connect English learning with their cultural identity. This culturally responsive pedagogy positioned the English language not as a barrier to global engagement but as a bridge between local values and academic aspirations. Moreover, this study underscores the importance of authentic and immersive learning contexts. Real-world experiences—such as field visits, cultural performances, and communal discussions—provided a powerful backdrop for developing critical thinking, writing, and speaking skills in English. These activities not only enhanced linguistic competence but also fostered a deeper appreciation for cultural diversity and self-awareness. Autoethnography, as a method, proved effective in capturing the emotional, intellectual, and pedagogical dimensions of the learning journey. It enabled a reflective space for understanding how language learning intersects with identity, community, and professional development. The narrative also offers valuable insight into how teachers and learners alike can navigate and negotiate the complexities of English language education in culturally diverse contexts. In conclusion, the LAPP at UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau demonstrates that language preparation for academic purposes need not follow a one-size-fits-all model. Instead, it can—and should—be enriched by local traditions, reflective practice, and learner identity. By embracing cultural context as a core component of instruction, programs like LAPP not only prepare students for academic success but also cultivate confident, culturally grounded global scholars.

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