



THE ROLE OF ENGLISH AS FOREIGN LANGUAGE FLUENCY IN SHAPING LEARNERS' POLITICAL VIEWS TOWARDS LIBERALISM

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) fluency on learners' political views, particularly towards liberalism. It explores the intersection of language learning, cultural perspectives, and political ideologies. The research focuses on fluent EFL learners expressing their political opinions on social media platforms, particularly on a TikTok post by @itsindahg, examining the connection between English fluency and the adoption of liberal ideology. The findings aim to contribute to our understanding of how language fluency may shape political beliefs and inform educational practices in EFL contexts. The methodology employed is rooted in a qualitative approach, analyzing the discourse of EFL learners to uncover patterns and themes that suggest a correlation between language fluency and political ideology. The findings suggest that learners with higher levels of English fluency demonstrate a greater propensity towards liberal views. This tendency is attributed to their enhanced ability to navigate and assimilate the cultural and ideological nuances embedded within the English language.



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INTRODUCTION

The process of learning a language goes beyond simply learning its vocabulary and syntax; it digs into the vast tapestry of culture that surrounds its native speakers. According to Kramsch (2014), language acquisition entails gaining insight into the cultural perspectives and values of persons who use the language. This cultural aspect of language acquisition has long been acknowledged as an important aspect of language learning due to how it allows learners to see the world through the unique cultural lenses of native speakers.

However, the cultural interaction that comes with learning a new language presents an important question: what are the connection between fluency in a foreign language like English and their political views? Leveridge (2008) emphasizes language teachers' responsibilities to educate their pupils about the cultural context of language usage, to use culturally appropriate teaching methodologies, and to research linguistically-based cultural inequities. This technique is intended to promote understanding and minimize misconceptions or prejudices. It becomes clear that, in certain ways, English teachers actively shape their pupils' open-mindedness.

Mackey (1975: 108-124) outlines three major elements influencing the learning process, one of which is social impact. Given the importance of political beliefs in social life, it is critical to investigate how language fluency may influence a learner's political ideology. According to Choudhury (2014), Wei highlights the inextricable link between language and culture. Culture and politics are intrinsically linked, according to Amenta and Polletta (2019), since culture contains the ideas, beliefs, and assumptions that support laws and practices across all sectors.

Individuals that connect with "politically woke" or "Liberal" ideas frequently use English or a combination of English and Bahasa Indonesia to convey their messages on social media, according to an informal observation done by the researcher from Januari 2023 to October 2023. They commonly share posts from international accounts where English is the primary medium of communication. This occurrence raises important issues concerning the role that language skill may play in forming political ideas.

One noteworthy example is the emergence of TikTok profiles such as @Itsindahg, which are full of liberal content and draw both admirers and haters. Notably, opponents of these viewpoints frequently utilize Indonesian exclusively, whilst supporters frequently use English or a bilingual approach. This juxtaposition raises the intriguing question of whether exposure to this particular worldview is related to achieving fluency in English.

Moreover, in a country where more than 80% of the population practices Islam, Islamic law has a strong influence on Indonesia's legislative landscape. As a result, the country's ideals are generally moderate, if not conservative. Scholars such as Lindsey, Pausacker, Menchik, Crouch, and van Bruinessen (as mentioned in Butt, 2018) have observed a distinct conservative trend in Indonesian Islam as well as a growing influence of conservatism on politics. This trend has coupled with an increase in hostility toward liberal ideologies. If English fluency has a role in creating these political processes, it raises serious concerns, particularly among conservative Muslims.

In light of these observations, the researcher intends to look into the role of English as a Foreign Language Fluency in changing learners' political views, while also understanding the intricate interplay between language acquisition, cultural viewpoints, and political ideologies.

RESEARCH METHODS

A. Research Design

The descriptive qualitative research method will be used in this study to investigate the research questions. Lambert and Lambert (2012) explained that this method is appropriate for investigations aimed at understanding the context of events, who was involved, what was involved, and where things happened. Given the nature of the research question, "Does fluency in English influence one's political ideology?" this method is deemed most appropriate for effectively answering the question. Descriptive qualitative research allows the researcher to gain a rich and nuanced perspective on the phenomenon being studied. In this case, it allows the researcher to investigate and comprehend the complex relationship between English fluency and political ideology. Using this method, the researcher can gain valuable insights and reach a comprehensive conclusion on the subject.

B. Source of Data

In defining the population of interest, Majid (2018) emphasizes the importance of targeting the intended research or treatment population. For this study, the analysis began with 579 comments from 336 individuals on the TikTok account @itsindahg. Out of these, comments from 190 individuals who used English and/or a combination of Indonesian and English were

selected for further scrutiny. This refined focus identified 53 individuals as highly fluent in English writing.

The next step involved distributing questionnaires, which were completed by 19 participants. From this group, six individuals were willing to participate in interviews, five of whom identified as liberals and one as a conservative. The selection of these participants was carried out through a purposive sampling method, ensuring a meticulous examination of their English writing fluency and political views.

The participants were chosen specifically from comments on videos by @itsindahg, a prominent and controversial liberal figure in Indonesia. Indah's significant following—comprising hundreds of thousands of followers and millions of views—coupled with her influence on political discourse, including engagements with 2024 presidential candidates, made her platform an ideal source for identifying the target population. TikTok was strategically chosen for its popularity among Indonesian youth, particularly Generation Z, providing a rich demographic pool relevant to the study.

This deliberate and purposeful selection process enhances the representativeness and accuracy of the study's findings. By focusing on individuals who meet specific eligibility criteria, the researcher could conduct a targeted and concentrated analysis, leading to a deeper understanding of the relationship between English fluency and liberal ideology.

C. Research Instrument

Atmowardoyo (2018) highlights the value of collecting data through a variety of research instruments, such as exams, questionnaires, interviews, and observation. The researcher will use three tools to collect data for this investigation:

1. Observation

This study comprises a systematic observation of TikTok accounts that interact with a specific account, @itsindahg, which disseminates liberal political information. This observation focuses on determining whether persons who exhibit support or engagement with such content mostly use English and/or a combination of Indonesian and English in their interactions as well as to examine and determine each individual's fluency level by using the text structure measure by Storch (2009). This qualitative observational component is critical in collecting real-time linguistic practices and online political debate, giving light on EFL learners' language preferences and engagement with liberal ideals in the digital domain.

Table 1. Qualitative Analysis of Structure

Qualitative Analysis of Structure	Analysis	Score (scale: /9)
Introduction		3
Text Cohesion		3
Conclusion		3
Total Score		9
Overall Analysis		

Storch (2009)

Fluency classification based on the total score:

0-3: Limited Fluency

4-6: Moderate Fluency

7-9: High Fluency

2. Questionnaire

According to Warwick and Lininger (1975), as cited by Krosnick (2017), questionnaires can be completed for a variety of reasons, including the desire for self-expression, social interaction, intellectual stimulation, self-awareness, altruism, or emotional release. Given this, it is reasonable to expect that respondents in this study will be motivated to express their opinions freely and accurately. As a result, the researcher used closed-ended questions to determine the respondents' English language classification and their political leanings by making it into six different sections of questionnaire:

a) EFL Criteria

This section is intended to determine whether or not the participant is an EFL learner. The questions are based on the EFL classification by Els et al., (1984) as cited in Setiyadi (2020).

Table 2. EFL Criteria Checklist Box

No.	EFL Classification	Checklist Box
1	Guided Learning	
2	Tutored Learning	
3	Formal Learning	
4	Foreign Language Learning	
5	Learning	

Els et al., (1984) as cited in Setiyadi (2020)

b) Liberal Criteria

This section consists of questions regarding the participants' political ideology leaning intended to determine whether or not the participant is a liberal. The questions are carefully curated based on the five liberal core values by Heywood (2021)

- 1) Individualism
- 2) Freedom
- 3) Reason
- 4) Justice
- 5) Toleration

Each value has five of its own questions with the scoring scale based on responses as the followings:

- 1) 4 points for each A response
- 2) 2 points for each B response
- 3) -2 points for each C response
- 4) -4 points for each D response

After the individual has responded to all the questions and their answers have been scored according to the scale above, the total points were calculated to determine where they fall on the liberal scale for each value:

- 1) 16-20 points: Very Liberal
- 2) 8-15 points: Liberal
- 3) 2-7 points: Moderately Liberal
- 4) 0 points: Neutral
- 5) -2 to -7 points: Slightly Conservative
- 6) -8 to -15 points: Conservative
- 7) -16 to -20 points: Very Conservative

After each value has been scaled, the overall total of the score then will indicate their general attitude towards liberalism:

- 1) 80-100 points: Very Liberal
- 2) 40-79 points: Liberal
- 3) 8-39 points: Moderately Liberal
- 4) 0 points: Neutral
- 5) -8 to -39 points: Slightly Conservative
- 6) -40 to -79 points: Conservative
- 7) -80 to -100 points: Very Conservative

3. Interview

Semi-structured interview is used by the researcher to collect qualitative data for the study. This method is chosen seeing as according to Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik (2021), semi-structured interviews often entail the use of an interview guide that includes questions geared at addressing the research objectives. The researcher has complete control over the order of questions in the interview, making analysis easier. The interview aims to gain a more in-depth understanding of the participants' liberalism and English fluency. This will be a useful method for delving into complex issues and comprehending the motivations and beliefs that shaped the participants' political ideologies.

Table 3. Semi-structured Interview Guidelines

Period	Aspects
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefly reiterate the purpose of the research and the focus on the relationship between English fluency and political views towards liberalism
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm the interviewee's status as an EFL learner based on the questionnaire
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reassure confidentiality and consent for recording
Background Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm the interviewee's English writing fluency
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore any specific experiences or contexts where English fluency has played a role in their political awareness
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inquire about the interviewee's general attitudes towards liberalism and any previous exposure to liberal ideologies
Language Fluency and Political Views	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss how being a fluent EFL learner has influenced their understanding of liberal concepts and values
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore any instances where English fluency has shaped their political opinions or interpretations of liberalism
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Probe for examples where English fluency has impacted their engagement with liberal discourse
Influence of Language Learning on Political Ideologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate how language education and exposure to English materials have influenced their political beliefs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss any specific ways in which language learning has shaped their views on liberalism
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the role of language fluency in their adoption or rejection of liberal ideas

Period	Aspects
Personal Experiences and Perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage the interviewee to share personal anecdotes or reflections on the connection between language fluency and political views
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Probe for specific instances where English fluency has influenced their perception of liberalism
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss any challenges or benefits of being a fluent EFL learner in relation to their political ideologies
Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarize key insights gathered during the interview
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite the interviewee to share any final thoughts or additional perspectives on the topic
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express gratitude for their participation and valuable contributions to the research

D. Data Collection Procedure

According to Bogdan and Biklen (2006), as cited in Ma (2015), qualitative data is frequently collected through close interaction with study participants in their natural setting. The researcher will collect data in this study by closely observing the participants' social media activity first. This data collection methodology allows the researcher to gain a better understanding of the subjects and phenomena being studied. Furthermore, the researcher will administer the questionnaires to @itsindahg's followers in order to get through the criterion sampling process with closed-ended questions followed by an interview for those matched the criteria for what would be considered as fluent EFL learners and Liberal. However, prior to the interview, the researcher carefully went through the following stages:

1. The researcher creates a number of closed-ended questionnaires based on the sampling criteria, which later be used to determine whether or not the participants will be in the research.
2. The researcher observed and analyzed user comments for its fluency.
3. The researcher develops a list of semi-structured interview questions, which are based on research problems and will be responded to by respondents in accordance with the needs of this research.
4. The researcher plans and schedules individual interviews with each EFL learner that matched with the sampling criteria.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

A. The Connection between English Fluency and Liberalism

1. Observational Result

The researcher meticulously observed the material and interactions on the TikTok account @itsindahg between January 1, 2023 and December 17, 2023. This thorough investigation revealed fascinating patterns and insights into the linguistic dynamics and user participation in the competitive setting of online political discussion. The data presented below provide a comprehensive picture of @itsindahg's language choices, the various linguistic dynamics in user comments, the potential impact of language

comprehension on critiques, and the larger participant engagement with liberal content in English.

a) Language Use on @itsindahg's TikTok Account

It was discovered that the TikTok account (@itsindahg) primarily uses the English language in broadcasting liberal content. Notably, there is a minor infusion of Indonesian language in some situations. This language distinction shows the account owner's effort to reaching a larger audience while also embracing the global scope of online political discourse.

b) Language Dynamics in User Comments

Observing user responses on @itsindahg's TikTok clip revealed an unusual facet. Those who agreed with her liberal beliefs primarily used English in their comments. Dissenting voices, and even those resorting to mocking, on the other hand, were mostly in Indonesian, with infrequent English responses. This linguistic differential highlights the possibility of language-driven division within the comments, implying a wide range of linguistic affiliations among individuals who engage with liberal content.

Table 4. Language Dynamics in User Comments

Category	Total Count	English	Mix (English & Indonesian)	Indonesian	Non-Verbal (Emojis)
Agree	175	114	9	43	9
Neutral/Off Topic	94	40	19	35	-
Disagree	67	4	4	59	-

Upon further examination, the researcher noted that during the period of observation, one of the most widely circulated videos from @itsindahg, posted on July 25th, 2023, had amassed over 579 comments contributed by 336 individuals. The video, which addressed government intervention in personal matters, particularly interfaith marriage, sparked significant engagement, with 52.08% of individuals expressing agreement with the arguments presented by @itsindahg. Another 28% were categorized as neutral or off-topic, while the remaining 19.92% voiced support for the government's decision to prohibit interfaith marriage.

Additionally, analysis revealed that out of the 175 individuals who expressed agreement with @itsindahg, a majority (65.14% or 114 individuals) conveyed their sentiments in English. A smaller percentage (5.14% or 9 individuals) utilized a combination of English and Indonesian, while 24.57% (43 individuals) opted for Indonesian. A small fraction (5.14%) employed emojis or non-verbal language to express their views.

Conversely, comments categorized as neutral or off-topic were predominantly communicated in English, with 42.55% (40 individuals) opting for this language. Around 20.21% (19 individuals) used both English and Indonesian, while the remaining 37.23% (35 individuals) expressed themselves solely in Indonesian.

In contrast, individuals expressing disagreement predominantly used Indonesian, with only 5.97% (4 individuals) opting for English. Another 5.97% utilized a combination of English and Indonesian, while the vast majority (88.06% or 59 individuals) conveyed their dissent exclusively in Indonesian.

c) **Critiques and Language Comprehension**

A notable discovery concerns the sort of criticism directed against @itsindahg. A significant number of critics, mostly in Indonesian, demonstrated insufficient knowledge of the content, occasionally wandering off-topic. This discovery raises questions regarding the extent to which linguistic obstacles contribute to viewpoint difference, underlining the importance of detailed language analysis in comprehending online political discussion.

d) **Participant Engagement and Language Fluency**

Following thorough scoring of the 158 individuals who expressed their comments exclusively in English, along with the 32 individuals who utilized a combination of both English and Indonesian, using the text structure measure developed by Storch (2009), it emerged that only 53 individuals, constituting 27.89%, demonstrated a high level of fluency in English writing. Conversely, the majority of participants, totaling 137 individuals or 72.11%, fell within the moderate fluency category.

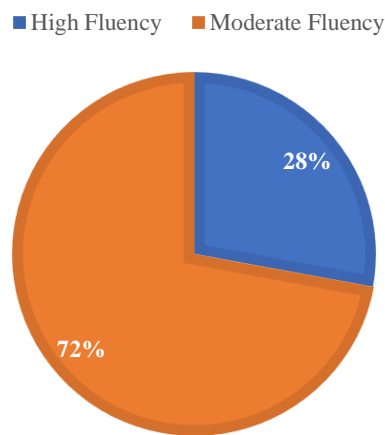


Diagram 1. EFL Writing Fluency Analysis Result

Furthermore, observing participants' TikTok behaviors revealed a pattern in which many shared or reposted English-language content, showing a level of comprehension and engagement with the language. This activity implies that users actively participate in sharing content in English, despite potential language difficulties, indicating a larger linguistic aptitude among individuals participating in the online liberal discussion.

These observational findings shed light on the complex linguistic dynamics that exist inside the digital environment, stressing the role of language in forming and expressing the diversity of opinions in online political debates.

2. Questionnaire Result

Upon analyzing the data collected from a sample of 190 individuals, it was observed that 53 individuals exhibited high fluency in English writing. However, only 19 of these individuals responded by completing the questionnaire distributed by the researcher. Subsequent analysis of the questionnaire responses revealed that the majority of the respondents (17 individuals) were identified as holding very liberal political views. Notably, the other two individuals identified as slightly conservative are also the ones

who expressed disagreement with statements made by Indah G in their comments. This suggests a correlation between political view and response patterns within the sample, warranting further investigation into the underlying factors influencing these dynamics.

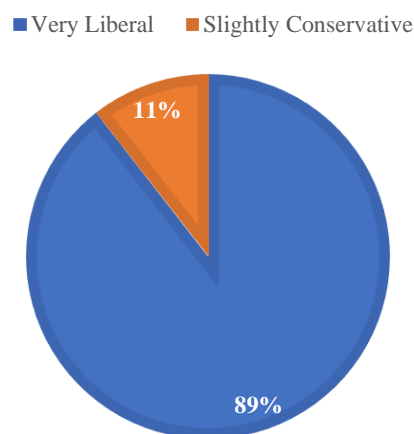


Diagram 2. Political View Leanings Analysis Result

An intriguing finding surfaced during the analysis wherein one of the respondents, LY, was determined as slightly conservative. However, despite this categorization, LY demonstrated a moderately liberal viewpoint regarding the fourth core value of liberalism, specifically pertaining to justice. Notably, LY also exhibited a neutral stance concerning reason, which constitutes the third value of liberalism. This discovery underscores the nuanced nature of ideological beliefs and the potential for individuals to hold divergent perspectives within the framework of a complex ideology like liberalism. Such findings resonate with theoretical propositions, such as those explained by Bell (2014), which highlight the dynamic interplay between various ideological components within individual belief systems.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the two respondents who voiced disapproval of Indah G's content were classified as slightly conservative as opposed to strongly conservative. This stands in sharp contrast to the respondents who expressed agreement or neutrality in their remarks, who were primarily classified as extremely liberal. This disparity raises the possibility of a relationship between their level of fluency and conservatism.

3. Interview Result

a) Access to Diverse Perspectives

English fluency grants individuals access to a broad spectrum of perspectives and ideologies, often not readily available in their native language. This exposure to diverse viewpoints can significantly influence learners' political inclinations towards liberalism. For instance, AR emphasized how social media platforms in English introduced them to liberal values they hadn't encountered before, stating, *"I have to admit that English contents sometimes have biases in them. Like it only relates to people in the west."* This statement highlighted that English contents on social media often have biases and predominantly relate to people in the West. This

exposure to Western perspectives through English content served as a catalyst for encountering liberal values that may not have been prevalent in their local environment. Furthermore, AR also acknowledged that initially, it was challenging to be open to these Western ideas presented in English content, stating, *"It was too for me, at first."* This resistance to unfamiliar ideologies suggests a shift in perspective brought about by exposure to diverse viewpoints facilitated by the language. AR further described the shift towards liberalism as a long process rather than a sudden realization, stating, *"Nope, it's not like an electrical switch that we can just turn on and off just like that. It's a long process."* This gradual evolution in political views indicates a continuous engagement with new ideas and perspectives encountered through English language content on social media platforms. This exposure to liberal discourse through English-language media expanded AR's understanding of societal issues and contributed to a gradual shift in their political ideology.

b) Educational Influence

English fluency not only facilitates access to diverse perspectives but also plays a significant role in shaping learners' political views through formal education. In some cases, educational institutions that teach English as a foreign language (EFL) incorporate liberal values into their curriculum, thereby influencing students' ideological development. For instance, BY noted, *"There was a course called 'Cross Culture Understanding' that I had to take and I think the fact that we are taught to be more open toward differences and to see those differences in other cultural lenses can have an impact on our attitude toward it."* This integration of liberal themes into English language education by promoting tolerance, empathy, and respect for cultural diversity exposes learners to progressive ideas and encourages critical thinking about social and political issues, contributing to their adoption of liberal ideologies.

c) Global Awareness and Activism

Fluency in English empowers learners to engage with global issues and participate in activism, thereby shaping their political views towards liberalism. Through exposure to English-language media and online content, individuals gain access to a wide range of global perspectives and become aware of social and political movements worldwide. As TY highlighted, *"Largely I think it's because of the media I consume every day. These American-centered media, they tend to be more liberal."* This exposure to diverse viewpoints, as stated further by TY, *"I thought why do Americans love to ruin everything but contents like these that actually opened up my mind and allowed me to see things from different perspective,"* fosters empathy and solidarity with marginalized communities worldwide, motivating individuals to advocate for progressive causes such as human rights, environmental justice, and gender equality.

d) Cultural Exchange and Tolerance

Fluency in English fosters cultural exchange and promotes tolerance by facilitating interactions with individuals from diverse backgrounds, ultimately shaping learners' political views towards liberalism. Through exposure to English-language media, literature, and online communities, individuals gain insights into different cultures and perspectives, challenging ethnocentrism and fostering a sense of empathy and understanding towards others. As TY highlighted their experience about how

English-speaking contents changed their perspective on racism, *"I only looked for contents from English-speaking creators... I remember one of them said the "N" word and the internet went wild for that. I even defended him... Some of them try to educate the people who defended him like me by explaining why it is bad."* When asked if it changed their mind, TY answered, *"I think it did..."* This exposure to diverse cultures encourages individuals to embrace diversity and advocate for inclusivity, shaping their political views towards liberalism.

e) Empowerment and Self-Expression

Fluency in English empowers learners by providing them with a platform for self-expression and amplifying their voices on global issues, leading to a shift towards liberalism in their political views. Through English-language media, social networks, and online communities, individuals can articulate their opinions, share their experiences, and advocate for social change on a global scale. As RE noted, *"Yes, I started to become more comfortable engaging with contents that have gay stuff in it."* This change in attitude towards gay contents happened due to RE's exposure to liberal contents that made them to become more comfortable with their identity as a gay man. This ability to express oneself freely and participate in public discourse encourages individuals to become more politically engaged and advocate for progressive values. As further stated by RE, *"...I started to become more active in joining discussion about liberal issues, especially in the comment sections of a post or something like that. But also, one of the reasons why I decided to study law."*

B. The Adoption of Liberalism in Fluent EFL Learners

1. Early Exposure and Educational Background

Participants across the interviews predominantly acquired English fluency through formal education, with schools serving as primary environments for language learning. However, variations existed in participants' exposure to English outside the classroom, with some engaging in additional lessons or online interactions. TY, for instance, noted, *"I was taking it very seriously. The learning English to move to Norway thing. So, I tried to practice it whenever I could. That includes leaving comments on YouTube, or to talk to strangers on Facebook."* This highlights the role of diverse learning environments in shaping fluency levels.

Furthermore, educational institutions played a crucial role in shaping participants' language fluency and political perspectives. BY's experience in an English literature program called "Cross Cultural Understanding" suggests a curriculum-based approach to language learning, fostering a deeper understanding of English fluency's role in shaping political views. BY's exposure to English lessons in academic institutions reflects the formalized nature of language education. These experiences underscore the significance of institutional frameworks in facilitating language acquisition and potentially influencing ideological shifts.

2. Impact of Social Media and Online Content

Participants highlighted the significant influence of social media and online content on both their English fluency and political perspectives. RE emphasized the role of digital platforms in language exposure, stating, *"I started to become more active in joining discussion about liberal issues, especially in the comment sections of a post or something like that."* This underscores the informal learning opportunities provided by online media, which complement formal educational settings and contribute to language acquisition.

3. Personal Experiences and Changes in Perspective

Participants revealed how personal experiences, including formal education and exposure to diverse viewpoints, contributed to shifts in their political perspectives. RE recounted participating in a Model United Nations (MUN) event, where they were required to represent a stance contrary to their beliefs. Reflecting on this experience, RE expressed, *"I got a bit upset because I had to represent America and had to pretend as if I was pro LGBT rights."* This highlights how immersive learning environments can challenge individuals' existing beliefs and prompt them to reevaluate their positions on contentious issues.

4. Language as a Gateway to Information

The interviews highlighted the pivotal role of language fluency in accessing a wide range of information and perspectives. Participants emphasized how fluency in English enabled them to engage with diverse content, from academic papers to social media discussions, ultimately shaping their political views. BY noted, *"By accessing information, I don't mean just to get the information but to be able to understand that information."* This underscores the importance of language comprehension in critically evaluating and synthesizing complex ideas.

5. Social and Cultural Factors

The interviews revealed how social and cultural backgrounds intersect with language fluency to shape individuals' political views. Participants shared insights into their upbringing, religious beliefs, and community dynamics, highlighting the multifaceted influences on their perspectives.

BY discussed the conservative environment in which they were raised, stating, *"I was raised in a pretty conservative environment."* This upbringing influenced their initial political stance, indicating the significant impact of familial and societal norms on ideological orientation. Similarly, TY reflected on the conservative attitudes prevalent in their Belgian community, remarking, *"My family still isn't [liberal], and a lot of people from my town aren't."*

6. Challenges and Benefits

Participants discussed both the challenges and benefits associated with language fluency in shaping their political views, shedding light on the nuanced dynamics of linguistic empowerment.

On the one hand, language fluency exposed individuals to a broader array of information and perspectives, fostering critical thinking and ideological exploration. As BY articulated, *"Being able to understand English, it helps me not just getting information from inside our country but also abroad."* This sentiment was echoed by TY, who noted, *"To have an open mind is a benefit. It reduces hatred and makes me feel more peaceful somehow."*

DISCUSSION

A. The Relationship Between English Fluency and Liberalism

In this discussion, the researcher delves into the exploration of the connections between English as a Foreign Language (EFL) fluency and liberalism, as revealed through the interview findings. The central research question guiding this investigation is: "What are the connections between EFL fluency and liberalism?" Through the analysis of participant responses, the researcher uncover the intricate relationship between language fluency and the adoption of liberal ideology.

Fluent EFL learners demonstrated a strong correlation between their fluency in English and exposure to diverse perspectives, which in turn influenced their political views. Participants highlighted that their ability to engage with English-language content broadened their understanding of liberal ideologies. As stated by TY, "It's pretty clear that me being exposed to so many English contents made me realize that liberalism is not as evil as what people have been telling me." This exposure to a wide range of English sources facilitated a nuanced understanding of liberal principles and values.

Furthermore, the findings from the interviews underscored the role of critical thinking and analytical skills in the relationship between EFL fluency and liberalism. Fluent EFL learners demonstrated a capacity to critically engage with English media, question prevailing narratives, and form independent opinions. BY emphasized the impact of critical thinking in shaping their political views, stating, "I already had a positive attitude toward it even before the CCU course... most of the teachers... tend to guide us away from it." This suggests that language fluency enhances learners' ability to critically assess information and challenge conventional beliefs, fostering a predisposition towards liberal ideologies.

Conversely, educational institutions emerged as a significant factor in shaping the connection between EFL fluency and liberalism. Participants highlighted the role of academic courses in promoting cultural understanding and openness towards diverse perspectives. BY noted the influence of a course on cross-cultural understanding in shaping their attitude towards liberalism, indicating the impact of formal education on ideological development. This suggests that educational environments that prioritize language learning and cultural exchange contribute to the alignment of EFL fluency with liberal values.

Moreover, fluent EFL learners who embraced liberal ideologies demonstrated a propensity for social engagement and activism, facilitated by their language proficiency. Participants shared instances where their English fluency enabled them to connect with liberal causes and engage in social initiatives. TY recounted a transformative experience on social media that inspired them to support humanitarian efforts, highlighting the role of language fluency in fostering social awareness and activism. This underscores the link between EFL fluency and active participation in liberal movements.

B. The Emergence of Liberalism Among Fluent EFL Learners

The researcher delves into the exploration of how the liberal ideology emerged in fluent English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. The research question guiding this investigation is: "How did the liberal ideology emerge in fluent EFL learners?" Through the analysis of interview findings, we uncover the sequences or phases that fluent EFL learners go through in transitioning from conservative to liberal political views.

Based on the result of the interview, the initial phase in the adoption of liberalism among fluent EFL learners is marked by exposure to diverse English-language content. Respondents highlighted the role of consuming English media in shaping their political perspectives. As stated by BY, *"It's pretty clear that me being exposed to so many English contents made me realize that liberalism is not as evil as what people have been telling me."* This exposure to a variety of English sources, including news, social media, and online platforms, served as a catalyst for challenging preconceived notions and exploring alternative ideologies.

Furthermore, fluent EFL learners undergo a phase of critical thinking and reflection, where they analyze and question the information presented in English-language content. TY emphasized the impact of engaging with English media, stating, *"I mean if it weren't for me being able to understand English, I wouldn't have had found that account, let alone follow and*

understand their posts." This critical engagement with English content prompts learners to reevaluate their beliefs and consider alternative perspectives, laying the groundwork for a shift towards liberalism.

Moreover, educational institutions play a pivotal role in shaping the adoption of liberalism among fluent EFL learners. Respondents highlighted the influence of courses such as "Cross Culture Understanding" in shaping their attitudes towards differences and cultural lenses. BY noted, *"The fact that we are taught to be more open toward differences and to see those differences in other cultural lenses can have an impact on our attitude toward it."* This suggests that formal education fosters a climate of openness and tolerance, contributing to the emergence of liberal ideologies.

Ultimately, fluent EFL learners progress towards adopting liberalism through social engagement and activism. BY shared a transformative moment when a liberal meme account on Instagram initiated a fundraiser to support Afghans, stating, *"That just touched me. I mean if it weren't for me being able to understand English, I wouldn't have had found that account, let alone follow and understand their posts."* This exemplifies how social media platforms and online communities facilitate connections with liberal causes, inspiring learners to actively participate in social initiatives.

C. Fluent EFL Learner's Resistance to Liberalism

In this part of the discussion, the researcher delves into the case of BG, a fluent English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learner who maintained a steadfast conservative political view amidst a cohort of participants who transitioned towards liberalism. Through an examination of the interview findings, the researcher seeks to unravel the unique circumstances that shape BG's unwavering conservatism in the context of language fluency.

One key factor that distinguishes BG from other participants is the influence of their cultural and social context. BG highlighted that everyone in their immediate environment speaks Indonesian, indicating a lack of exposure to diverse cultural perspectives or English-language content. Unlike other participants who engaged with a variety of English sources, BG's limited exposure to alternative viewpoints may have reinforced their conservative beliefs and hindered the exploration of liberal ideologies.

Furthermore, the role of educational background emerges as a significant factor in BG's resistance to liberalism. While other participants highlighted the impact of educational institutions in shaping their political views, BG noted that English was primarily learned through school courses. The absence of exposure to liberal-leaning educational environments or courses on cultural understanding may have contributed to a lack of ideological diversification and reinforced conservative values in BG's worldview.

Moreover, unlike participants who actively engaged in social activism and connected with liberal causes, BG's interview responses did not indicate significant involvement in social initiatives aligned with liberal ideologies. The absence of exposure to diverse social networks or online communities advocating for liberal values may have limited BG's opportunities for ideological exploration and contributed to the preservation of conservative beliefs.

BG's unwavering conservatism may also be attributed to deeply held personal values and beliefs that align with conservative principles. The absence of transformative experiences or encounters that challenged their existing worldview may have reinforced BG's commitment to conservative ideologies. This suggests that individual convictions and value systems play a crucial role in shaping political perspectives, regardless of language fluency.

CONCLUSION

The findings from this research highlight the pivotal role of educational environments, social media, and online content in shaping learners' political ideologies. Participants emphasized how exposure to English studies and engagement with diverse English-language content broadened their perspectives on liberalism. The influence of social media platforms in providing informal learning opportunities and exposing learners to a variety of political viewpoints was also evident in the study.

Moreover, the research uncovered a phase of critical thinking and reflection among fluent EFL learners, where engagement with English media prompted individuals to reevaluate their beliefs and consider alternative perspectives, ultimately laying the groundwork for a shift towards liberalism. Formal education, particularly courses emphasizing cross-cultural understanding, was identified as a key factor in fostering openness and tolerance among learners, contributing to the emergence of liberal ideologies.

The study also revealed the impact of social engagement and activism in facilitating the adoption of liberalism among fluent EFL learners. Transformative experiences on social media platforms, such as supporting humanitarian efforts or participating in fundraisers, underscored the link between language fluency and active participation in liberal movements.

Overall, the research findings suggest that language fluency plays a crucial role in providing access to diverse perspectives, facilitating ideological growth, and challenging preconceived notions. The complex interplay between linguistic competence, socio-political engagement, and personal well-being in the digital age underscores the multifaceted nature of the relationship between EFL fluency and liberalism.

As concluded in this research, it is evident that English as a Foreign Language serves as a powerful tool in shaping learners' political views towards liberalism, offering opportunities for critical engagement, ideological exploration, and social activism. Moving forward, further studies could explore the long-term effects of language fluency on political ideologies and the potential implications for societal change.

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