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# BRINGING CULTURE TO LIFE: UTILIZING WOOD CARVING IN SPEAKING CLASS

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## Abstract
Sentani tribe in Papua had diverse cultural heritages that have now been neglected. One of them is wood carving. Despite its aesthetic and socio-cultural values, wood carving (*ohomo*) has not been acknowledged by most of the young Sentani generation. Thus, preservation is needed so that wood carving can be acknowledged, appreciated, and disseminated. One way of preserving this unique wisdom is by using it as a medium for teaching the English language. This will also help the learning process to be more contextual and challenging. By focusing on learning to speak, the objective of this study is to explore the strategies for teaching speaking using wood carving. This descriptive-qualitative study was conducted in Jayapura Regency Papua between May and July 2022. Data on wood carvings were collected between May and July 2022 from several informants, namely tribal chiefs, wood carvers, Sentani elders, and parents in East Sentani (Waena and Asei Island) and Central Sentani (Hobong and Yoboi). Teaching materials of wood carvings were tried out to 20 students of Senior High School Grade X from 4 different schools in Jayapura Regency via formal class and field trip. By infusing wood carving in learning to speak, the study found two important things, namely (1) the students were enthusiastic and motivated in speaking, and their confidence, as well as self-esteem, were improved; (2) the students appreciated wood carving as their cultural heritage and proud of their identity. Teachers' creativity in infusing culture and their commitment to teaching played a significant role in reinforcing students' appreciation of their culture and improvement in their speaking ability.

**Keywords:** cultural preservation, Sentani cultural heritage, speaking ability, wood carving

## Introduction
Sentani is one of hundreds of tribes in Papua who live on the beaches and islands in Lake Sentani Jayapura Regency Papua, the easternmost region of Indonesia. Sentani is home to both tangible and intangible cultural heritages rooted and celebrated in the life of its people, namely folktales, oral poems, dancing,



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painting, wood carving, traditional games, and many more. Ironically, today, those cultural heritages have not been acknowledged by most Sentani young people and even some are not practiced anymore (Pepuho & Hendambo, personal communication, June 1, 2024; Yektiningtyas & Siswanto, 2023). This study is, therefore, done to offer a way of preserving the cultural richness. The same concern has also been raised, and some means of preserving the wealth have been offered in a growing body of studies, some of which are referred to here. Modouw (2021) highlighted the importance of local excellences comprising socio-cultural and bio-natural diversities in formal education. In line with this view, Awoitauw (2020), Yektiningtyas and Silalahi (2020) argued that using contextual materials in education would motivate students to learn about their ancestors' indigenous knowledge and tradition. What these authors intend to unfold is that the students may get a twofold benefit of using local cultural heritage as media in learning. Classrooms such as this one may not only allow the students to learn their lessons but also present them with more chances to acquire their own culture. Specifically, this has been proven to be true for learning and acquiring language, as some researchers have dubbed it. Choudhury (2014), Kim (2020), and Marhamah et al. (2017) emphasized that learning language through culture would help students foster their vocabulary mastery and sharpen their critical thinking, while for non-native students learning other cultures would develop their empathy, social sensibility, and cultural diversities. This co-nurturing practice, however, would be unlikely to take place in classrooms taught by unsympathetic teachers who underestimate the value of culture as a potential medium for creating cultural understanding, as Kim (2020) has stated.

Around the 1990s, some language teachers in Papua expressed that integrating or using culture in language learning was beneficial and effective. This view was then empirically proven. Yektiningtyas and Br. Ginting (2020) found that students in Jayapura were enthusiastic about learning mathematics, environment, history, and languages (English, Indonesian, and local languages) using contextual materials such as folktales, dances, folksongs, and arts. In an attempt to support this, the Jayapura local government issued a regulation, Jayapura Regent number 21-year 2021, on the use of local languages and traditions in education in 9 customary areas of Jayapura Regency.

With regards to learning language, speaking is considered one of most difficult language skills for new learners, even for high school studentsSpeaking is considered one of the most difficult language skills for new learners, even for high school students, which has been the case for those in Jayapura Regency. To some English teachers (SY, TA, IY, and SK, personal communication, December 10, 2021), teaching speaking needs more effort, as was also pointed out by Jurianto et al. (2015). These new English language learners frequently find it difficult to convey ideas, lack confidence, lack vocabulary, and inadequate knowledge of grammatical structure. These language issues, coupled with local traditions where Sentani young people are not allowed to freely express their ideas to their parents, which has been practiced since their birth, make it difficult to acquire speaking skills in a new language, English, for example; furthermore, learning activities or projects assigned to the students also play a crucial role here. The more challenging the project is, the more motivated the students are. In fact, some teachers still use ask and answer questions for the speaking activity or memorize the dialogs, while

the students need more difficult projects to explore (Syafryadin, 2020). Related to the previous research findings on the students' enthusiasm for learning contextual materials, this study focuses on infusing wood carving in English language learning in senior high schools, especially in learning to speak. Being the generation who were born in a digital era and consume technology much more compared to the previous generations, in the learning process, the students will be led to manage wood carving using technology, such as by utilizing some comic strip maker applications provided in the application store in their gadgets, using Microsoft PowerPoint to create their own story and mobile phone/camera to create videos. Using wood carving in learning to speak will hopefully encourage the students to technologize wood carving in speaking in a unique way, improve their reasoning ability, critical thinking, and vocabulary mastery, and motivate them to recognize their ancestors' cultural heritages. This learning strategy, as Awoitauw (2020), Kim (2020), and Modouw (2021), emphasized, can be used as a friendly medium of learning the English language as well as preserving and disseminating local excellence. The objective of this current paper is to explore strategies for teaching speaking using wood carving.

## Literature Review

### *Socio-cultural background of wood carving*

Sentani people like carving. In the Sentani language, wood carving is called *ohomo*, which comes from two words, i.e., "*o*" (wood) and "*homo*" (to carve). In the past, they carved their house poles, musical instruments (*tifa* and *khelambut*), hunting tools (spears, arrows, and bows), gardening tools (axe handles, *onggi*, *yali*), eating tools (*hote*, *hiloi*, *yanggalu*), and many more. Pepuho, Ongge, and Ohee, the Sentani elders (personal communication, July 4, 2022), said that tribal chiefs and common people have different motifs. They also conveyed that each sub-tribe in Sentani has specific motifs. Ongge added that in the past when there was a murder, the murderer could be easily identified by seeing the carving motifs on the spear or arrow. The basic motif of wood carving, as it was elaborated by Puraro and Hendambo (personal communication, June 25, 2022), is a circle shape (*fouw*) imitating the shape of circles on the lake surface. Ongge (personal communication, July 4, 2022) had a different perception. To him, the motif of circles imitated motifs of a turtle's back. This *fouw* was then transformed into some figures, i.e., flora (sago leaves, jungle flowers, *gnetum gnemon* leaves) and fauna (snake, fish, crocodile, lizard, bat, stork, squirrel). Those flora and fauna reflect Sentani's biodiversities, which are scarcely found nowadays (Yektiningtyas & Silalahi, 2020). Following are a few the motif samples.



Figure 1.
Motif of *fouw* on a house pole



Figure 2.
Transformation of fouw in the form of sago leaves on a hote (traditional plate)



Figure 3.
Fouw in old Sentani statues (Doc. Angela Flassy)

Three colors are used, namely red (*hasai*), black (*nogomom*), and white (*kleumam*). Old Sentani people preferred natural colors: red from the earth or special flowers, black from charcoal, and white from lime betel. Ongge and Ohee (personal communication, July 4, 2022) explained that red symbolizes the life dynamics of the Sentani people, which can be seen through their hard work, persistence, and discipline. White symbolized safety and harmony of life (*yoyo mama*). Black symbolized evil. In Yektiningtyas (2013)'s view, this is closely related to the old religion of Sentani people who believed in the supranatural power, namely *onomi* (white magic) given to good people and *pelo* (black magic) given to the bad ones. Different from bark painting, which can be done by both males and females, wood carving can only be done by males using traditional tools, namely wooden chisel and wooden hammer. Some wood carvings are painted white, black, and red using natural dyes, and some are not painted. In fact, some other carvers, in the interviews in August 2022, said that foreign tourists preferred wood carving with natural dyes. Since people want to be more instant and practical, some carvers prefer using chemical dyes instead of natural ones.



Figure 4. Classical unpainted tifa



Figure 5.Painted tifa

Unfortunately, recently, not many people do the wood carving. There are only some old Sentani people who still carve for both traditional needs and souvenirs for living. Many Sentani people do not pay attention to wood carving anymore, and even the young generation does not understand its significance. There are some transformations of wood carving applied in some buildings, like hotels, malls, museums, campuses, schools, department stores, etc., in Jayapura. Ironically, not many people know that the motifs are from Sentani nor understand the meanings that these motifs convey. Figures 6 and 7 are examples of wood carvings shown in public spaces in Jayapura.




Figure 6. Figure of tifa in Sentani airport, Jayapura



Figure 7. Facade with fouw motifs of Sentani in Kampung Harapan Stadium, Jayapura

***The use of culture in education***

Curriculum 2013 of Indonesia, as it was pointed out by Modouw (2021), underlines the importance of adopting and adapting local context in education, i.e., natural and socio-cultural resources as potential learning materials to develop students' critical thinking indigenous knowledge as well as to build character and personality. In the wood carving context, it is an authentic heritage carved by native Sentani with their knowledge of philosophy, mythology, and local wisdom embedded in their works. Even though it looks simple, wood carving is not easy to be imitated by non-native people. Pepuho, Ohee, and Ongge (personal communication, June 25, 2022) elaborated on the mythical folktales circulated among Sentani people about the mystical consequences of imitating the motifs. Emotional ties of native students with the wood carving sharpen their learning enthusiasm and socio-cultural awareness. For non-native students, learning a language using wood carving teaches them about cultural diversity, social respect, tolerance, and plurality, as highlighted by Kumaravadivelu (2008), who echoed the importance of global cultural consciousness. This is also related to Cheng (2012), Mukheimer (2011), Weninger and Kiss (2013), who emphasized the idea of intercultural citizenship and global cultural consciousness as the goals of language learning. Relating to Soekarno's statement (2012) that teaching English needs content; otherwise, it just contains grammar and patterns of symbols, teachers are expected to be creative and innovative in providing interesting materials to encourage their students.

From the body of literature, it is shown that the use of culturally rich materials can positively affect students' performance in class as well as their appreciation and awareness of their culture. The study of Nasirahmadi et al. (2014) proved that students taught with culturally rich short stories outperformed those taught without culturally rich materials. Although the use of wood carvings as authentic materials can be challenging for both students and teachers, they can provide students with 'real-world' language (Geisa, 2022). Even though some studies on the use of culture in language learning are available (Lwin, 2015; Mzimela, 2016; Nhung, 2016; Viswanath & Mohanty, 2019; Yektiningtyas & Br Ginting, 2020), to our knowledge, none of these touched on using carving, especially wood carving from Sentani in teaching learning English.

The tribal chiefs, Pepuho, Ohee, and Ongge (personal communication, August 16, 2022), underlined that only after the opening of the first Festival of Lake Sentani in 2008 did Sentani people become aware of the importance of conserving their cultural heritages, which were about to be extinct. These cultural heritages include the language, folktales, oral poems, traditional proverbs, folksongs, dances, carvings and bark paintings. They now welcome researchers and academicians' research on their heritages. They realized that education without infusing local cultural content may threaten the tribal existence. They were also worried about the advancement of globalization and technology that would mislead the Sentani young generation into becoming a generation without local identity, as stressed by Atalan (2018), Kashima et al. (2011), Yektiningtyas and Modouw (2017). These authors shared a view that globalization brings new social habits, which in turn threaten the existing ones. In response to this negative trend, tribal chiefs/elderly people of Sentani and teachers/lecturers agreed to collaborate to develop materials, including learning modules and videos containing local cultural heritages to be used in

English classrooms. This endeavor, at least, would make some contributions in preparing the students who attend classrooms taught with materials that are infused with Sentani cultural heritages to face and participate in democratic societies in a world that is, according to Kim (2020), globalized and intercultural. As they enter this world, they do not just embrace the coming cultures imposed on them; they also bring along their own cultural heritages to create a multicultural society.

***Problems of teaching speaking***

Different studies have shown that speaking difficulties in EFL contexts are due to different factors (Al-Khresheh, 2024; Diaab, 2016; Suliman, 2020; Zhang, 2023). These range from psychological factors to teachers' roles. Now, as English is the global language, the ability to speak it is the most essential skill in English (Bahadorfar & Omidvar 2014). Having a good command of spoken English is required in most aspects of our lives nowadays, including almost all sectors, such as the economy, tourism, education, and health. As stated by Brown and Yule in Bahadorfar and Omidvar (2014), children will be judged in their real-life situations through their English-speaking ability. Though necessary, learning to speak is challenging, too, particularly for new learners. It is, therefore, hard for such learners, even harder for those students coming from a society such as Sentani as referred to above, whose children are not freely permitted to express themselves and their ideas. They become passive and afraid of making mistakes, which causes them to be reluctant to talk. The language factors, topped with the cultural barriers the students bring along, have become one of the major issues the teachers face when handling speaking skills, as expressed by some teachers (IY and SK, personal communication, 2022). No matter how hard and how well the teachers have tried, their efforts do not necessarily meet the needs of students. The problems that the students have are not only language issues and cultural barriers, as indicated above, which cause them to have what Mukimin et al. (2015) call low self-esteem, but also unsupportive friends, uninteresting and unchallenging materials as well as boring (uncreative) as revealed in the interview sessions with the students in January 2022. Even things get worse when teachers still teach speaking through drills or memorizing dialogs (Bahadofar & Omidvar, 2014). Such rote learning activities would not allow students to expand their horizons. With the advancement of technology, today's purpose of teaching speaking needs to be focused more on the students' effective communication skills, particularly in English, in their social lives.

Teachers are now challenged to design authentic and contextual materials that can motivate and improve their students' learning process, as the students prefer such materials, as indicated in Yektiningtyas (2019) above. In a study done in Ethiopia, authentic materials were used to teach and motivate grade 9 students (Geisa, 2022). Although authentic materials can be challenging for teachers and students, a study by Rahimi and Ong (2023) also shows that teachers' cognition and practices greatly affect students' learning engagement. As highlighted by Harrison (1990), English teachers play key roles in teaching culture-embedded English language. It is the teachers' responsibility to prepare cultural materials by considering his/her classes' situation. A teacher is expected to be creative in combining all the things such as materials, media, projects, and others. This also agrees with Goh and Burns (2012), who state that the teacher must be competent in

activities in the classroom in teaching speaking. The class must be enjoyable by providing interesting activities.

In addition, the teachers also have the responsibility to guide the students and motivate them as well. In August 2020, the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia issued a Decree Number 719/IP/2020 concerning Guidelines for Curriculum Implementation in education units in special conditions. It is now called an emergency curriculum. Education units are allowed to use the curriculum which suits their students' needs and situations. Furthermore, bringing something close to the students, such as local content materials, can be a good way to do classroom activities because they have prior knowledge about the material since they can find it in their daily lives. Teaching high school students as Generation Z students is not easy since they are energetic and tend to have new and challenging materials. Harmer (2007) even called them the most exciting students. Teachers must use strategies to make the students interested in learning and helping them to develop their ideas in speaking. This study initiates to bring Sentani wood carving that can be found in their daily life to the contextual learning activities to bridge the active students as Generation Z and overcome their passiveness and boredom.

## Method

This study is the development of previous research conducted in 2013 entitled "*Malo* and *Ohomo*: Local Wisdom of Sentani People in Papua Revealed in Bark Painting and Carving," funded by PNBP Universitas Cenderawasih Academic Year 2013/2014. The study found the motifs, characteristics, history, myth, and process of making carvings and paintings and their relation to Sentani local wisdom, namely hard work, cooperation, honesty, discipline, respecting others, independence, and persistence. This study uses a qualitative design (Creswell, 2013). This qualitative study mainly refers to the principles of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) because this study aims to reveal the understanding of teachers and students about the phenomenon of local wisdom values contained in wood carvings of the Sentani people related to the socio-cultural values faced and experienced by teachers in teaching foreign languages. This study is said to be interpretive because the researchers take an active role in interpreting the experiences of the participants and try to understand or study the opinions expressed, or motifs made in the carvings analysis and give examples of them with descriptions or personal narratives of participants in the English learning process focused on speaking skill for Senior High School students in Jayapura Regency.

Data on wood carvings obtained in 2013 were enriched between May and July 2022 from several informants, namely tribal chiefs, wood carvers, Sentani elders, and parents, in East Sentani (Waena and Asei Island) and Central Sentani (Hobong and Yoboi) through close observation and interview. They provided us with information like types, characteristics, history, mythology, the process of making wood carvings, local people's opinions and perspectives about wood carvings, significances, functions, and future existences. We also asked about the possibilities of using wood carvings as teaching-learning materials. The new data on wood carvings were collected. Only in those villages could some decorated traditional houses with carvings (Figure 8) be found, and some wood carvings were still made (Figure 9).



Figure 8. House with ohomo



Figure 9. A carver preparing ohomo

Data were analyzed and purposively selected to be used in the teaching-learning process of writing and speaking in Senior High Schools in Jayapura Regency. Since some sacred motifs cannot be touched and discussed, this study only focused on the carvings with common motifs. Besides, the informants' opinions and perspectives on the carvings were transcribed and rewritten into some texts. Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were conducted with tribal chiefs, Sentani elders, the carvers, representatives of the *Sekolah Adat Sentani* (Sentani Customary School), representatives of parents, representatives of High School English teachers, as well as representatives of high school students to obtain a valid and representative interpretation of the data and the utilization of the carvings in English language learning. We then created lesson plans for a speaking class - descriptive, recount, and report texts - utilizing wood carvings to be tried out in virtual classes for 20 grade X students representing 4 High Schools in Jayapura Regency in August 2022. All participants agreed to be involved in the research and were informed that they had the freedom to withdraw at any time. The materials used in this study were the real form of wood carvings, videos of making wood carvings, pictures of wood carvings, and some transformations of wood carvings. To make it more specific, the types of wood carvings used in the learning process were *Tifa* (traditional drum as the representative of musical instruments) and *hote* (traditional plate as the representative of eating tools). Reflection and evaluation were done to determine the students' responses and to improve the learning materials.

## Findings and Discussion

From the discussion and FGD with the tribal chiefs, the elders, and parents about the existence of the carvings and their desire for their preservation, as well as teachers, students and cultural practitioners who are eager to infuse contextual materials in the teaching-learning process, this study offers some strategies in teaching-learning speaking by considering the students' backgrounds who have good gross motor and as generation Z who tend to be very active physically and free in expressing ideas (Modouw, 2021). The following are the results of tryout classes and students' responses to learning to speak by using wood carvings.

### *Findings*

*Strategies of teaching speaking using wood carving*

The learning process was tried out and attended by 20 students representing 4 Senior high school students in Jayapura Regency, and it was divided into two parts: formal classes and field trips.

*Formal classes*

Several activities were done to implement the speaking class using wood carvings. In the first activity, the teacher displayed a picture of a *tifa* (traditional drum) and *hote* (traditional plate) and the real ones. It was found that not all students in Jayapura knew that Sentani has its own carving, which is usually called *ohomo*. When the students were asked several questions, i.e., "Do you know what they are?", "Can you see the motifs?", "From the motifs, can you guess where they are from?" Their answers were varied. They responded to the questions joyfully without burden. Most of them said that they were probably from Asmat since they knew that Asmat in Papua is famous for carvings. In contrast, the rest said that they could be from Sentani Jayapura or some other tribes. Some of them said that they had seen those kinds of *tifa* but did not realize that those carvings were from Sentani. Thus, bringing the wood carving to the classroom can be good media to introduce one of Sentani's cultures to the students (Modouw, 2021; Soekarno, 2012).

In the next activity, the teacher shared a comic with the students containing a conversation between two girls who were talking about a *tifa*. One of the girls was describing it. She told the class the meaning of the *tifa,* the carving itself, and other things related to it. The students showed their enthusiasm since the very first time they got the comic. The teacher also provided some vocabulary to help them comprehend the story, but most of the words used were simple, and it worked. They could finish the comic only in a few minutes. When the teacher asked them about the comic, most of them gave positive responses. They liked the comic because it was interesting, colorful, and not only a black and white text, which often made them bored to read. Some questions related to the comic strips were orally given afterward. The students could answer them well. The teacher gave them several questions such as "What was the story about?", "What is wood carving?", "What is the meaning of the colors on wood carving and the process of making wood carving like *tifa* and *hote?*" The teacher gave them several minutes to answer the questions. After that, the teacher asked the students to prepare a task to describe *tifa* and *hote*. The students used the questions as a guide to complete the task. They were allowed to search for more information to enrich the part of identification on the internet. Finally, the teacher directed three students to present their works orally and submit them to the teacher. Most of the students did the project well. They could make their own works utilizing the comic strips delivered.




Figure 10. Comic strips

*Field trip*

In the second part of the tryout class, the students and the teachers had a field trip. They went to Asei Island, the only place in Sentani that still produces wood carvings. This field trip aimed to give the students the experience of directly interacting with the local people and the carvers at Asei Island to get more information about Sentani's culture, especially Sentani's carvings. They also took photos and made videos of their activities there. The final project for the field trip was a reportage video of the trip or vlogging (video and blog). So, before going on the field trip, the students had their own video concept. They also consulted their teacher first about it. The trip ran well. All students were actively filming their trip using their tools (mobile phones and video cameras). This sharpened the students' writing and speaking skills, especially in narrating and reporting special events. At the end of the trip, the teacher asked about their feelings, and they said that they enjoyed the trip and that they felt that they were not learning because it was not in a classroom, and they got the information not only from the teacher. This encouraged students to be autonomous learners who always search and explore various sources to complete the knowledge they get from their teachers because teachers are not the only sources in the learning process.

The last project given to the students related to wood carving was describing orally the examples of wood carving transformation. Transformation means that traditional patterns are applied to different media. The teacher asked the students to see their surroundings and find the transformation and public displays of the carvings. There are many transformations of wood carvings found in Jayapura that the students used to ignore. This project aimed to build the students' awareness of their cultural heritage. The students were requested to write a report about the transformation of the carvings in Jayapura. They were asked to prepare a presentation in Microsoft PowerPoint so they could put the pictures they had on the slides and present them in the virtual meeting. From this project, not only did the students learn the English language, but they also were given opportunities to experience themselves in exploring the carvings, i.e., the various motifs, philosophy, local knowledge, and socio-cultural values revealed in the transformations of carvings. This empirical experience developed the students' positive atmosphere, creativity, innovation, and social awareness. This is related to the importance of adopting local excellence in learning the language (Goh & Burns, 2012; Modouw, 2021; Soekarno, 2012). The following is the result of students' observation of the transformation of the carvings in Jayapura.



Figure 11. Wood carvings transformation: Students' observation of the carvings in Jayapura Regency, 2021

***Discussion***

Students' excitement and enthusiasm for learning could be seen in the first meeting when the teacher and the students brainstormed about the carving and showed the real carving as the topic of the day to check the students' prior knowledge on the topic. This could be observed at the time when the teacher asked them about the origin of the carving students, and they all responded in different ways. They were actively guessing the origin of the wood carving. Some of them even opened their gadget and searched on some sites on the existence of carving. Some students said they had seen the carving, but they forgot when and where. A student said that he once saw a carving similar to the carving in a hotel in Sentani and Jayapura. The students being active and enthusiastic, as also shown in Lazar (2002), Soekarno (2012), and Yektiningtyas (2019), and was related to their emotional ties to the students and the material they learned. When the teacher finally confirmed the right answer to the students and shared a comic strip about wood carving with the students, the learning activity not only improved the students' vocabularies but also gave an opportunity for them to sharpen their cultural knowledge, especially about Sentani's culture and develop their independence and confidence. Furthermore, the students also showed their curiosity about the topic. In fact, they told the teacher that they wanted to get more information about the topic because it was close to their daily life. Besides, comic strips as the learning media also successfully attracted the students' interest in learning the material. Finally, guiding questions related to the comic strips were helpful for the students in elaborating vocabulary based on the comic strips. It helped the students in conveying ideas to speak. Interestingly, some students also created comic strips on different carvings, like canoes and paddles, manually using the application. This showed that simple material like comic strips have engaged the students' creativity and confidence in pouring their ideas. This is related to the arguments of Al-Khresheh (2024) and Zhang (2023) on the importance of factors that inhibit students from speaking and finding solutions. Positive vibes, as well as creative and contextual materials, improve their motivation and confidence to speak (Rios et al., 2024).

Having a field trip to Asei Island, meeting the local people, interacting with and interviewing some carvers and watching the process of making *ohomo* gave a new experience for the students. They came to the island with well-prepared. They have various questions they want to ask the artists and recording tools. Besides, they also had the concept of their video because the final project of the field trip was making a reportage video of their journey to Asei island. In completing this project, the students felt more challenged because they had to pass a long process, starting from making the video concept, executing the concept, and editing the video. Their ability to speak in English was highly required to accomplish the task. After being checked by the teachers, their videos were uploaded to YouTube. Seeing the videos, Ohee and Deda (personal communication, July 4, 2022), as the tribal chiefs, were happy and considered it as a social dissemination and promotion of Sentani cultural heritages. Thus, as the field trip has shown, the students are Generation Z, and they always want to have freedom in learning by expressing their own creativity and innovation (Harmer, 2007). This project has inspired some

students to become vloggers who disseminate cultural heritages in English. Sari (2017) conveyed that vlog is a good means to improve students' motivation and confidence in speaking. Surprisingly, during the field trip, a student drew a carving motif he had learned in the field. Two students also asked about the possibility of printing the motifs on the T-shirt. This showed their pride in their cultural heritage, and they wanted to disseminate it to their friends by wearing a T-shirt with an *ohomo* motif on it. This desire needed to be supported so that they could start their creative economy from an early age. It has been proven that for them, learning English is no longer a burden. They can actively enrich the materials from the teachers with other sources from the field and the internet and implement them in their own ways, like writing on their social media and creating videos. Teachers are merely the facilitators who provide interesting topics, and the students have to explore without being dictated and fed (Goh & Burns, 2012; Harrison, 1990). This present study extends the previous studies that teachers' efforts to create engaging and creative learning experiences for students do pay off (Geisa, 2022; Nasirahmadi, 2014; Rahamini, 2023; Rios et al., 2024).

The opportunity given to the students to observe the transformation of the carvings around them and deliver their findings in a report text made them enthusiastic. Having this kind of task helped the students to do reflection. Besides, reporting the task in the form of a presentation helped them improve their speaking skill as well as their confidence and self-esteem, as it was also expressed by Mukimin et al. (2015). Interestingly, this project also successfully improved the students' awareness of their culture. Several students said that after following this lesson, they realized that actually there were many *ohomo* motifs that they could find in public places, but they did not notice them. After getting the task, they became more aware when they went outside and saw *ohomo,* and they would proudly tell others that it was Sentani's carving. In other words, as was strengthened by Atalan (2018), Kashima et al. (2011), Kim (2020), Suryani (2020), Yektiningtyas and Modouw (2017), that students' tasks built pride in their culture and identity and motivated them to influence their friends to do the same.

## Conclusion

Sentani used to be rich with cultural heritages that were flourishing in the past, but now they are not acknowledged by most of the young generation. Wood carving, as one of the Sentani cultural heritages, was once viewed as an old thing to be infused in language learning. However, it was brought into English-speaking classes for Senior High School students and revealed some important and interesting findings. Firstly, wood carvings can be considered relevant material for the students. Wood carvings can be used as a medium for teaching speaking and as refreshing and innovative materials to encourage students to learn in more challenging and creative ways. They gain confidence and self-esteem. Secondly, using wood carving improved their critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and innovation. Thirdly, infusing cultural objects such as wood carving in teaching speaking encourages the students to respect their own cultural heritage and to be proud of themselves and their identity. Finally, teachers' creativity in infusing culture and their commitment to teaching seemed to play a big role in reinforcing students' appreciation of their culture and improvement in their speaking ability.

Based on the students' positive response, the use of such cultural material as *ohomo* in teaching other language skills and components could be considered.

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