

**Advocating Silent Learners in Language Education: An Ecological System Perspective****Dodi Widia Nanda*¹**

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¹ Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Dharma Indonesia, Dharmasraya, Indonesia**ABSTRACT**

Silent learners, students who participate minimally in classroom discussions pose challenges for equitable language education. Despite possessing sufficient comprehension, these students often remain unrecognized due to anxiety, cultural norms, or personality traits, potentially limiting their learning outcomes. This study aims to explore the experiences of silent learners in English language classrooms through an ecological systems perspective, examining how various environmental layers influence their engagement. A qualitative descriptive design was employed, involving 15 undergraduate students identified as consistently quiet and five English lecturers from Universitas Dharma Indonesia. Data were collected through classroom observations over six weeks, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis, capturing both verbal and non-verbal interactions. Thematic analysis was applied to organize findings according to microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem layers. Results revealed that students participated more confidently in small-group discussions and written tasks, while supportive teacher and peer interactions enhanced comfort and engagement. Parent-teacher communication and aligned home-school strategies further promoted learners' confidence. Institutional policies emphasizing oral participation often limited engagement, whereas digital platforms and multimodal assessment provided alternative avenues. Cultural norms favoring assertiveness influenced expectations and participation patterns, and longitudinal blended learning interventions increased confidence over time. The study underscores the interconnectedness of ecological layers in shaping silent learners' engagement. Practical implications include diversifying participation formats, leveraging family and peer support, and adopting culturally responsive teaching and inclusive assessment practices. These strategies can guide educators and policymakers to create equitable learning environments where silent learners' contributions are recognized and nurtured, ultimately supporting confidence, participation, and language development.

Keywords: silent learners; ecological system theory; language education; inclusive pedagogy; multimodal participation

INTRODUCTION

In many language classrooms around the world, participation is still commonly understood as speaking. Students who raise their hands, answer questions, join discussions, and speak confidently are often seen as active learners. In contrast, students who remain quiet are sometimes viewed as passive, less motivated, or less competent. This view can be unfair because silence does not always mean lack of knowledge. Some learners may understand the lesson but choose not to speak because of anxiety, fear of making mistakes, limited confidence, cultural habits, peer pressure, or previous classroom experiences. Therefore, the issue of silent learners is not only a matter of classroom behavior. It is also an issue of equity, inclusion, and learner advocacy.

At the global level, language education has increasingly emphasized communication, collaboration, learner voice, and active engagement. English, in particular, is often taught through communicative activities that require students to speak, negotiate meaning, and interact with others. However, this communicative expectation can create pressure for learners who are not ready to participate orally. For some students, speaking in English in front of classmates can be emotionally difficult. Foreign language speaking anxiety may emerge from the interaction between personal feelings, classroom atmosphere, task difficulty, teacher expectations, and peer responses (Kasbi & Elahi Shirvan, 2017). In this situation, silence should not be treated as a simple weakness of the learner. It needs to be understood as a complex response shaped by many layers of the learning environment.

The global discussion on inclusive education also reminds educators that every learner matters. Inclusion is not limited to students with visible barriers. It also includes students whose needs are hidden, misunderstood, or ignored. Silent learners may belong to this hidden group. They are physically present in the classroom, but their voices, feelings, and learning needs may remain unnoticed. UNESCO (2020) argues that education systems must recognize learners who are excluded because of background, ability, identity, or other conditions. In language classrooms, one form of exclusion can happen when only spoken participation is valued, while other forms of engagement such as written reflection, digital response, pair discussion, careful listening, or non-verbal contribution are not equally recognized.

In the Indonesian higher education context, the need to support different forms of student engagement is also relevant. *The Merdeka Belajar–Kampus Merdeka* policy encourages universities to provide flexible, meaningful, and student-centered learning experiences (Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi, 2024). More recently, the national quality assurance framework in higher education has emphasized standards, institutional quality, accreditation, and continuous improvement in university learning processes (Kementerian Pendidikan Tinggi, Sains, dan Teknologi, 2025). These policy directions show that higher education institutions are expected not only to deliver content, but also to create learning environments that are responsive to student needs. For English language education programs, this expectation is especially important because students are being prepared to become future educators who will later manage diverse learners in their own classrooms.

Locally, this issue is important for Universitas Dharma Indonesia (UNDHARI), especially in the English Education Study Program under the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education. The program has existed since 2011 and aims to prepare professional English educators who are competent, skilled in communication and teaching, and guided by noble character (Universitas Dharma Indonesia, 2020). This vision shows that English learning at UNDHARI is not only about mastering grammar, vocabulary, or speaking skills. It is also about building confidence, professional identity, pedagogical sensitivity, and inclusive teaching awareness. However, in real classroom practice, some students may still experience difficulty in speaking, participating, or expressing ideas in English. If these silent learners are not understood properly, they may be left behind even though they have the potential to grow.

The core problem of this study is that silent learners are often interpreted from a narrow perspective. Their silence is commonly seen as an individual problem, such as shyness, low motivation, or weak English ability. This interpretation may lead teachers or lecturers to focus only on pushing students to speak more. While encouragement is important, it may not be enough. Silent learners are influenced by classroom interaction, peer culture, lecturer feedback, assessment systems, institutional expectations, family background, digital learning practices, and changes over time. In other words, silence is not produced by the student alone. It is produced within an educational ecology.

Ecological Systems Theory provides a useful lens to understand this issue. Bronfenbrenner (1979) explains that human development is shaped by interactions between individuals and their environments. Later, Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) describe development as a bioecological process involving the learner, context, time, and repeated interactions. In language education, this theory helps researchers see learning not as an isolated mental process, but as something shaped by classroom relationships, school or university policies, cultural values, and historical changes. Chong et al. (2022) also argue that ecological thinking is valuable in second language research because language learning is strongly affected by the contexts in which it occurs.

Previous studies have discussed student silence, speaking anxiety, willingness to communicate, and classroom participation in English language learning. Many of these studies have shown that students may remain silent because they feel anxious, lack confidence, fear negative evaluation, or experience limited language competence. However, there are still several gaps. First, many studies focus more on psychological causes than on the wider ecological system around the learner. Second, limited attention has been given to how silent learners can be advocated for through coordinated support from lecturers, peers, curriculum, assessment, digital platforms, and institutional policy. Third, research on silent learners in the specific context of English language education at Universitas Dharmas Indonesia is still limited. As a result, there is a need for a contextual study that does not only describe why students are silent, but also explores how their learning environment can be improved.

Based on this gap, the present study aims to explore silent learners in English language education through an ecological systems perspective. The study seeks to understand how different ecological layers shape students' silence and participation, including the microsystem of classroom interaction, the mesosystem of relationships between lecturers and students, the exosystem of institutional rules and learning facilities, the macrosystem of cultural and educational values, and the chronosystem of changes over time. By using this perspective, the study is expected to provide practical advocacy strategies for lecturers and institutions to support silent learners more fairly. It is expected to contribute to a more inclusive understanding of classroom participation. It argues that advocating silent learners does not mean forcing every student to speak in the same way. Rather, it means creating a learning ecology where students can gradually build confidence, express understanding through multiple forms, and participate without fear of being judged. It is expected to contribute to a more inclusive understanding of classroom participation. It argues that advocating silent learners does not mean forcing every student to speak in the same way. Rather, it means creating a learning ecology where students can gradually build confidence, express understanding through multiple forms, and participate without fear of being judged.

ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS THEORY IN EDUCATION

Language learning is increasingly understood as a complex interaction between individual abilities and environmental influences. Silent learners, students who contribute minimally in classroom discourse, challenge conventional assumptions that verbal participation is the main indicator of engagement. Recent studies emphasize that learners' silence often reflects affective, cognitive, and socio-cultural dynamics rather than lack of competence (Li & Zheng, 2021). These insights extend the understanding of classroom participation, suggesting that engagement should be assessed through multiple modalities, including written responses, digital interactions, and small-group discussions.

Ecological Systems Theory (EST) provides a robust framework for analyzing how various environmental layers affect silent learners. Bronfenbrenner's nested systems, from microsystem to chronosystem, capture the interplay between immediate classroom interactions

and broader societal and cultural norms (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Contemporary research confirms that silent learners' behavior is strongly influenced by classroom climate, teacher-student relationships, and peer dynamics within the microsystem (Zhang et al., 2022). Such studies argue that overlooking these factors can lead to misinterpretation of learners' potential, often labeling them as passive or disengaged without considering the context.

Beyond the classroom, the mesosystem highlights the importance of cross-context interactions, such as parent-teacher communication and institutional support networks. Recent findings indicate that aligned strategies between home and school enhance learners' confidence and motivation to participate (Kurniawan & Hartono, 2023). Silent learners benefit from structured feedback loops and collaborative guidance, which allow them to navigate social and academic expectations safely. This underscores that silence is not merely an internal characteristic but a relational phenomenon shaped by surrounding systems.

Exosystem influences, such as institutional policies, assessment frameworks, and access to learning technologies, further shape participation patterns. Policies emphasizing oral responses or penalizing non-verbal engagement can inadvertently marginalize silent learners (Sari et al., 2020). Conversely, integrating digital platforms, online forums, and multimodal assignments can create alternative avenues for expression, highlighting the need for inclusive pedagogical designs. This suggests that ecological interventions must account for institutional and systemic structures that mediate learners' opportunities to participate.

At the macrosystem level, cultural expectations and societal norms exert significant influence. In many Asian educational contexts, including Indonesia, students are culturally conditioned to respect authority and avoid speaking out in public, which can exacerbate classroom silence (Wijayanti & Haryanto, 2022). Standardized assessments that prioritize verbal responses fail to capture the full spectrum of learner competence, reinforcing inequities. This emphasizes that advocacy for silent learners requires awareness of cultural values and professional development to equip educators with culturally responsive strategies.

Finally, the chronosystem perspective reminds educators that participation evolves over time. Longitudinal studies show that learners' comfort and willingness to engage fluctuate with pedagogical innovations, blended learning, and repeated supportive interactions (Chen & Lim, 2021). Recognizing temporal patterns is essential for designing sustained interventions, monitoring progress, and tailoring advocacy strategies. Taken together, these six ecological layers provide a comprehensive, evidence-based rationale for rethinking engagement, assessment, and advocacy in language education, ensuring silent learners are acknowledged and supported across multiple contexts.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design grounded in Ecological Systems Theory (EST) to explore the experiences of silent learners and the environmental factors affecting their participation. The qualitative descriptive approach allows researchers to capture rich, nuanced accounts of students' lived experiences while maintaining practical relevance for classroom practice (Sandelowski, 2019). This design is particularly suitable for understanding how multiple ecological layers such as microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem influence learners' engagement without imposing rigid theoretical interpretations.

The research was conducted at the English Education Study Program at Universitas Dharma Indonesia (UNDHARI), within the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education. This location was chosen due to its diverse student population, active classroom interaction patterns, and emphasis on communicative English teaching, which provides an ideal setting to observe silent learners. Additionally, UNDHARI's commitment to preparing inclusive and competent

English educators made it a relevant site for examining ecological factors in language learning (Universitas Dharmas Indonesia, 2020).

Participants included 15 undergraduate students identified by English lecturers as consistently demonstrating minimal verbal participation, alongside 5 lecturers responsible for teaching these students. Students were recruited through purposive sampling, ensuring that only those fitting the operational definition of "silent learner" were included. Lecturers were recruited based on their experience teaching these students and willingness to provide insights into classroom dynamics and institutional practices. This recruitment approach ensured that the sample was both relevant and information-rich (Etikan et al., 2016).

Ethical considerations were central to this study. All participants provided informed consent, were assured of voluntary participation, and informed that they could withdraw at any stage without penalty. Measures were taken to protect anonymity and confidentiality, including the use of pseudonyms in transcripts and reports. Data security was maintained by storing digital files in password-protected folders accessible only to the research team. Ethical protocols were designed to respect participants' autonomy and minimize any potential discomfort during interviews or observations (Israel & Hay, 2020).

Data collection involved multiple complementary techniques. First, classroom observations captured real-time interaction patterns, noting both verbal and non-verbal behaviors across different teaching activities. Second, semi-structured interviews with students and lecturers explored perceptions, motivations, and challenges related to silent participation. Third, document analysis reviewed institutional materials such as assessment policies, syllabus documents, and learning management system logs to contextualize observed behaviors. Observations lasted for six weeks, with each session ranging from 45 to 90 minutes, while interviews were scheduled for approximately 30–45 minutes per participant. Triangulating these sources enhanced the credibility and depth of the findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Finally, all collected data were organized according to Bronfenbrenner's ecological layers and analyzed thematically. Coding focused on patterns within the microsystem (classroom interactions), mesosystem (home-school connections), exosystem (institutional rules), macrosystem (cultural values), and chronosystem (temporal changes). This multi-layered approach allowed the study to produce a holistic narrative of silent learners' experiences, providing actionable insights for educators aiming to advocate for inclusive participation in language classrooms (Chong et al., 2022; Zhang & Li, 2021).

RESULT

1. Microsystem Findings

The microsystem, representing the immediate classroom environment, had a significant impact on silent learners' engagement. Students consistently reported feeling more at ease in small-group discussions and during written tasks compared to whole-class oral questioning. As one student noted, "I can share ideas better when speaking to a friend or in pairs rather than in front of everyone" (Student S3). This highlights that comfort and familiarity in interpersonal interactions directly influence participation levels.

Subthemes emerged around peer support and teacher scaffolding. Positive peer relationships acted as a safety net, reducing anxiety and encouraging contributions. Teachers who acknowledged non-verbal participation, such as nodding or note-taking, also fostered confidence. One lecturer explained, "I notice some students are quiet, but they contribute in written reflections; validating that helps them participate later" (Lecturer L2).

Another subtheme involved task format flexibility. Silent learners engaged more when activities allowed multiple modes of expression, such as digital forums, role-play, and reflective journals. This suggests that rigid oral-centric tasks may unintentionally suppress

contributions, especially in high-anxiety students. Table 1 illustrates observed patterns in participation across different microsystem activities.

No	Activity Type	Participation Observed	Notes
1	Whole-class oral	Low	Anxiety, fear of negative feedback
2	Small-group discussion	High	Peer support encourages speech
3	Written reflection	High	Confidence in expression
4	Digital platform forum	Moderate	Some anonymity reduces pressures

TABLE 1. Microsystem Engagement Patterns

Data suggest that teacher awareness of microsystem dynamics can significantly improve engagement. Silent learners are not disengaged but respond differently to various interactional contexts. These findings reinforce recent research emphasizing the need for diverse classroom activities that account for student comfort and interaction preferences (Chen & Lim, 2021; Zhang & Li, 2021).

Finally, repeated observations showed that inclusive practices, such as rotating group leaders or providing structured speaking turns, gradually increased participation over time. Silent learners demonstrated that with supportive microsystem conditions, verbal engagement can improve without forcing participation. Thus, microsystem interventions are essential first steps in advocating for silent learners in EFL classrooms.

2. Mesosystem Findings

The mesosystem captures interconnections between different settings, particularly home-school interactions. Findings revealed that parent-teacher communication strengthened silent learners' confidence. When teachers provided guidance to parents on how to support English language development at home, students reported feeling more prepared and less anxious in class. One student remarked, "When my mom asks about what we learned and I explain it to her, I feel more confident speaking in class" (Student S7).

A major subtheme was alignment of strategies between school and home. Teachers who coordinated learning plans with parents could reinforce classroom objectives, providing consistency across contexts. As Lecturer L4 described, "We share weekly updates with parents, and this encourages students to participate because they know their efforts are recognized at home" (Lecturer L4).

Mesosystem influences were also evident in extracurricular support networks, such as study groups or peer mentoring programs. Students who engaged in informal peer learning outside class were more willing to share ideas orally. The data suggest that engagement is co-constructed across settings rather than originating solely from the classroom.

Subtheme of personalized feedback emerged. Silent learners responded well when teachers acknowledged individual progress during interactions with parents. This targeted support enhanced motivation. Additionally, semi-structured interviews revealed that some students strategically preferred home-supported preparation before class contributions.

Overall, mesosystem factors acted as mediators between institutional practices and student behavior. Students benefited from coherent messages and support structures that bridged classroom, family, and peer contexts, confirming prior studies on ecological influences on language engagement (Kurniawan & Hartono, 2023; Li & Zheng, 2021).

3. Exosystem Findings

Exosystem influences relate to indirect environmental factors, such as school policies, curriculum design, and technological resources. Data revealed that assessment policies emphasizing oral participation inadvertently disadvantaged silent learners. Several students admitted avoiding oral tasks due to fear of low grades. One student stated, “Even if I know the answer, I stay quiet because I’m scared of making a mistake and losing points” (Student S2). Alternative participation avenues were identified as a subtheme. Opportunities for digital engagement, including online discussion boards and submission of recorded presentations, provided safe channels for contribution. These avenues allowed learners to express knowledge without immediate public scrutiny. Lecturers acknowledged the effectiveness, with one noting, “Students who are silent in class are active on the LMS, it is crucial to recognize that as participation” (Lecturer L1).

Another subtheme involved institutional support structures, such as mentoring programs, tutoring centers, and flexible office hours. When these systems were accessible and encouraged, silent learners displayed improved motivation to contribute in both verbal and non-verbal forms. Observational data indicated that policy revisions toward multimodal assessment increased inclusivity. For example, incorporating written reflections and peer assessment alongside oral tasks broadened recognized participation metrics. Table 2 summarizes exosystem influences on engagement.

No	Factor	Impact on Engagement	Example/Evidence
1	Oral-centric assessment	Low Participation	Students remain silent
2	Digital Submission Options	Moderate to high participation	LMS discussion board posts
3	Mentoring programs	Increased confidence	Students attend tutoring sessions

TABLE 2. Exosystem Influence on Silent Learners

Recent research emphasizes that exosystem factors, particularly technology-mediated participation, are crucial for promoting equitable engagement among silent learners (Sari et al., 2020; Chen & Lim, 2021).

4. Macrosystem Findings

Macrosystem findings highlight the cultural and societal norms shaping classroom expectations. In this study, cultural values that favor oral assertiveness and public display of knowledge were strong predictors of how students engaged. One lecturer explained, “Students are used to respecting authority; speaking without permission can feel disrespectful” (Lecturer L3). Silent learners were therefore navigating complex cultural expectations alongside classroom demands.

Subthemes included teacher expectation biases and assessment alignment with cultural norms. Standardized tests and grading rubrics prioritized spoken responses, undervaluing other forms of participation. Students noted, “Even if I participate in group discussions, the grade mainly reflects who speaks first or loudest” (Student S5).

Cultural norms also influenced peer evaluation dynamics. Quiet students often deferred to more vocal classmates, limiting opportunities to demonstrate competence. This created a feedback loop where silent learners’ abilities were systematically underestimated, reinforcing silence.

Another observation was that professional development for teachers on cultural diversity improved sensitivity to different participation styles. When lecturers acknowledged culturally influenced communication patterns, silent learners felt safer contributing. Overall,

macrosystem influences acted as structural moderators, shaping the environment in which silent learners operate. Awareness of these norms is essential for designing effective advocacy and assessment strategies (Wijayanti & Haryanto, 2022; Zhang & Li, 2021).

5. Chronosystem Findings

The chronosystem considers temporal changes in learning and engagement over time. In this study, integration of blended learning activities across the semester led to incremental improvements in participation. Students gradually became more confident in both oral and written contributions. One student remarked, “After a few weeks, I felt more comfortable raising questions because I knew my ideas were supported online and offline” (Student S8).

Subthemes included adaptation to instructional innovation and longitudinal support effects. Students who experienced repeated scaffolding, structured feedback, and digital alternatives demonstrated increased engagement, highlighting the importance of temporal continuity in interventions.

Data also indicated progressive peer influence, as silent learners observed consistent contributions from classmates over time, they gradually mirrored these behaviors. This aligns with studies emphasizing the dynamic nature of learner participation across time (Chen & Lim, 2021; Zhang & Li, 2021). Temporal patterns further revealed that initial reluctance does not imply permanent disengagement. Chronosystem insights underscore that interventions must be sustained, adaptive, and monitored longitudinally.

Finally, the chronosystem demonstrated interplay across ecological layers. Gradual changes in classroom practices, policy flexibility, peer dynamics, and cultural understanding collectively enhanced silent learners’ engagement. These findings confirm that time-sensitive strategies are essential for advocacy, ensuring silent learners develop confidence and sustained participation

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that silent learners are situated within a complex ecological network where personal, social, institutional, and cultural factors interact. At the microsystem level, the comfort students experienced in small-group discussions and written tasks illustrates that engagement is not solely verbal. This aligns with recent research highlighting that learners’ participation is context-dependent and mediated by peer and teacher support (Zhang & Li, 2021). The meaning of these findings is clear, educators must recognize multiple pathways for participation, moving beyond conventional oral-focused assessments to include written, digital, and collaborative formats.

Mesosystem interactions, particularly parent-teacher collaboration, emerged as a critical factor in supporting silent learners. When communication channels between home and school were aligned, students demonstrated greater confidence and willingness to contribute. This underscores the argument that learner engagement is co-constructed across settings, not merely a product of classroom activities alone. Current literature suggests that consistent feedback loops and structured home support enhance both self-efficacy and language acquisition among learners with limited oral participation (Kurniawan & Hartono, 2023). Practically, this implies that policies fostering formalized parent engagement initiatives can serve as an effective support mechanism for silent learners.

Exosystem factors such as assessment policies and digital learning platforms played a dual role. Policies emphasizing oral participation inadvertently created barriers, whereas digital forums and multimodal assessment opportunities offered alternative avenues for contribution. These results reinforce prior studies advocating for inclusive assessment designs that recognize non-verbal and online participation as valid indicators of learning (Sari et al., 2020). From a policy perspective, educational institutions should revise participation metrics and grading

rubrics to reflect diverse student abilities, ensuring that assessment practices do not unintentionally marginalize certain learners.

At the macrosystem level, cultural norms that favor assertiveness in classroom discourse influenced both teachers' expectations and students' engagement. Silent learners often navigated social conventions that discouraged public speaking, highlighting the cultural dimension of participation. Literature on EFL classrooms in Asian contexts supports this finding, emphasizing that culturally responsive pedagogy is essential to accommodate differing communication styles (Wijayanti & Haryanto, 2022). For practice, this necessitates professional development programs that equip teachers with skills to recognize, respect, and scaffold culturally influenced learning behaviors.

Chronosystem findings revealed that students' participation evolved over time, particularly with the integration of blended learning and longitudinal support strategies. This demonstrates that silence is not static but can change through sustained, time-sensitive interventions. Supporting literature emphasizes that temporal continuity in scaffolding, feedback, and adaptive instructional strategies enhances learner engagement and confidence (Chen & Lim, 2021). Consequently, school policies and classroom practices should incorporate long-term planning for silent learners, ensuring that interventions are consistent and adaptive across semesters.

Overall, the study highlights the interconnectedness of ecological layers in shaping silent learners' engagement. Practically, educators are encouraged to diversify participation formats, leverage parental and peer support, and employ culturally responsive, inclusive assessment strategies. Policy implications include designing institutional frameworks that value multimodal engagement and providing ongoing teacher development on ecological and cultural sensitivities. By adopting this ecological perspective, language programs can effectively advocate for silent learners, recognizing their contributions and creating equitable learning environments that promote confidence, participation, and language development across multiple contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that silent learners' participation in English language classrooms is shaped by interconnected ecological layers. At the microsystem level, supportive teacher interactions and peer relationships enable learners to engage in small-group discussions and written tasks, highlighting the importance of differentiated participation formats. The mesosystem revealed that alignment between home and school through parent-teacher communication strengthens learners' confidence and encourages active contribution. Exosystem factors, such as institutional policies and digital learning platforms, can either hinder or facilitate participation, showing that inclusive assessment designs and accessible technology are essential. Macrosystem influences, particularly cultural norms that value oral assertiveness, affect teacher expectations and student engagement, emphasizing the need for culturally responsive pedagogy. Chronosystem findings indicate that learner engagement evolves over time, suggesting that blended learning and longitudinal support strategies can gradually enhance confidence and participation.

The study contributes to the understanding of silent learners by illustrating how ecological factors interact to shape engagement, offering evidence-based insights for advocacy and instructional practice. Educators can employ multiple participation modalities, leverage peer and parental support, and adopt culturally sensitive approaches to foster inclusive learning environments. Institutions may revise assessment policies and implement professional development to recognize diverse forms of engagement. However, this study is limited to one higher education context, focusing on a single program at Universitas Dharma Indonesia, and

uses a small purposive sample. Future research could explore diverse educational contexts, longitudinal tracking of participation changes, and the integration of digital interventions across multiple institutions. In conclusion, adopting an ecological perspective allows educators and policymakers to advocate effectively for silent learners, ensuring their contributions are recognized, fostering confidence, and promoting equitable language learning opportunities across classroom, institutional, and cultural contexts

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