

Performing British Online: Discursive Strategies of Identity and Exclusion in Jubilee's "5 British People vs 1 Fake"

Fibra Aura Tasyani¹✉, Zainur Rofiq²

¹Department of English Literature, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, East Java, Indonesia

²Department of English Literature, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, East Java, Indonesia

✉ email: arbify4@gmail.com

Received:

January 14,
2026

Revised:

January 27,
2026

Accepted:

January 30,
2026

Published:

February 1,
2026

Abstract

National identity is increasingly negotiated within digital and mediated spaces, where daily interactions become sites for the reproduction and contestation of belonging. Research on national identity and exclusion is extensive, yet there are notable gaps related to digital social experiments. This study explores the way in which British national identity is discursively constructed and policed in Jubilee's YouTube experiment "*5 British People vs 1 Fake.*" By utilizing Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach within Critical Discourse Analysis, the study analyzes the aspects of Britishness in the discourse and how Wodak's discursive strategies of identity construction are used to exclude non-British participants. The study uses a qualitative approach and requires 6 British participants in Jubilee's experiment with one faking their identity. After selecting the transcribed excerpts, the researcher identifies four discursive strategies such as constructive, perpetuation and justification, transformative, and destructive that operate across micro, meso, and macro levels of discourse. The findings reveal that everyday cultural knowledge, such as familiarity with local geography, food, schooling systems, and football, functions as an essential aspect for legitimate national membership. Through Wodak's discursive strategies, participants with transnational backgrounds are viewed as suspicious or less authentic, illustrating how hybrid identities challenge dominant notions of Britishness. The discussion situates these findings within debates on everyday nationalism and the politics of belonging, arguing that digital social experiments justify exclusionary practices disguised as entertainment. This research enhances the understanding of national identity by demonstrating how digital media settings enable subtle yet powerful forms of boundary-making and exclusion.

Keywords: *digital experiment; discourse analysis; exclusion; national identity; Wodak's discourse-historical approach.*

INTRODUCTION

National identity shows how individuals create a connection towards their nation, rooted in traditions, cultural practices and others (Ranta, 2022). Nowadays, as the internet developed, national identities have increasingly been challenged by the

widespread dissemination of diverse global cultures. This causes them to have a national identity crisis where they may lack familiarity with their own cultural background and would likely know more about other nation's cultures rather than theirs. Gryaznova (2021) suggests that globalization in the form of cultural spread undermines national identity. Other reasons are growing up in another country or changing citizenship since childhood. Many people change citizenship for several reasons such as education, work, marriage, or it could be other reasons (Charity, 2016). In a different case, the national identity crisis could also be caused by other factors such as growing up in a small environment or lack of knowledge source/access. These factors shape national identity in how individuals perceive themselves as citizens of a nation and their beliefs about national identity as a representation of their nationality.

Exploring the situation, a YouTube channel called Jubilee, frequently conducts social experiments in various fields and contexts, brings an experiment where ideas like how people are related to their nationality is involved. The experiment takes place in America requiring participants from the UK to have a group-discussion-like forum in which they are asked to guess the fake British among the participants. The Jubilee experiment challenges individuals' identity that is being questioned. National identity crisis may affect the experiment in which participants who have less knowledge about anything related to their country fail to construct their national identity. This failure raises the sense of "others" towards the participant and contributes to the practice of exclusion. Pasha et al. (2021) associates identity crisis with the exclusion practice and anti-minority sentiment, relevant with the context *othering* in Jubilee's video. National identity is not merely a marker of citizenship but also the representation of its nation, including historical and cultural tradition, moral values, ideals, beliefs, national sovereignty, and so on (He & Yan, 2008).

This study uses Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) in Critical Discourse Analysis to investigate how language shapes and challenges national identity. DHA views discourse as contextually grounded, historically contextualized, and ideologically influenced, highlighting the connection between language practices and wider sociopolitical environments (Wodak et al., 2015; Reisigl et al., 2021). The core of Wodak's DHA is the analysis of discursive strategies through which social actors define collective identities, legitimize dominant norms, and marginalize alternative subject positions. The critical viewpoint embedded in this framework acknowledges that discourse is intimately connected to power and ideology (Wray, 2018), indicating that the identification of inclusions and exclusions is dictated by those possessing dominant discursive power in certain social contexts. Therefore, when individuals negotiate their sense of belonging, they participate in social practices that utilize established cultural norms to either reinforce or contest existing social structures (van Leeuwen, 2008). This negotiation may result in exclusionary practices when someone struggles to construct or maintain their identity, creating a sentiment of being foreign or fake (Wang, 2025).

In the context of the United Kingdom, the parameters of "Britishness" are critically defined by certain linguistic indicators and forms of cultural capital, the latter referring to the gathering of knowledge and cultural attitudes that vary significantly

among social groups (Prieur, 2023). Knowledge of specific details, such as local geography, cultural symbols or traditional cuisine, also serve as a test to legitimize authentic local ownership. In addition, language and accent serve as powerful tools in this boundary work, deeply connected to identity and social evaluation (Dragojevic, 2024), where listeners often make subjective evaluations of foreign or "marked" accents, triggering judgments about cultural identification regardless of actual proficiency (Gordron et al., 2025; Yi et al., 2025). Utilizing these cultural and linguistic indicators to establish authenticity represents a form of *micro-policing* that reinforces who legitimately possesses the national identity. While previous research has examined the construction of national identity in traditional media, there is still a significant gap in understanding how this exclusion operates through spontaneous and real-time testing of linguistic and cultural knowledge in the context of digital social experiments such as those conducted by Jubilee.

In this study, the context of language functions not only as a tool of communication but also as an identifier of where a person originated apart from the fact that people can speak many languages. Accent, in particular, functions as a powerful index of belonging, frequently used to authenticate or delegitimize claims to national identity (Levon et al., 2020). These linguistic and cultural markers operate as gatekeeping mechanisms that privilege dominant, often middle-class or regionally normative experiences, while marginalizing individuals with transnational or non-standard backgrounds. While the United Kingdom possesses a vast array of regional accents, Received Pronunciation (RP) continues to be discursively constructed as the standard "prestige" accent, often reinforced through global media as the most recognizable form of Britishness (Sung, 2016; Encyclopedia Britannica, 2016). Moreover, how the American rated the "desirable" British accent the same as the British people where RP takes the 1st place (Smith, 2017). Consequently, individuals outside the UK often form their expectations of British identity based on these mediated typical accents, a factor that significantly influences the participants' judgments in the Jubilee experiment.

These processes indicate the close relationship between identity, power, and exclusion. National identity not only describes belonging, but also regulates it by establishing normative standards regarding what a true national individual should know, sound like, or consume. Yuval-Davis (2016) argues that the politics of belonging involves emotional attachment and social regulation, with boundaries perpetually established to separate insiders from outsiders. These boundaries are often enacted subtly, through common-sense assumptions rather than overt discrimination, causing exclusion to appear natural and warranted.

Research on national identity and exclusion is extensive, yet there are notable gaps related to digital social experiments. Existing studies can be broadly grouped into research on institutional discourse, particularly political and media texts. For instance, studies grounded in Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach have examined British and European identity construction in political speeches and media coverage, showing persistent "us versus them" distinctions and oppositional framings such as Britain versus

Europe (Wodak, 2018; Koller et al., 2019). These works illustrate the way constructive and destructive strategies function to stabilize national boundaries within institutional contexts. However, this research predominantly focuses on elite or mediated political discourse, leaving limited insight into how such discursive strategies are reproduced, negotiated, or challenged in everyday, informal interactions, particularly within digital settings.

Studies on Identity Negotiation, such as Jaspal & Coyle (2009), have examined how British people defend their identity under threat. The defensive aspect of this discourse corresponds with Wodak's Strategies for Justification and Perpetuation. While relevant, their data is derived from interviews that are retrospective, unlike the dynamic, group-centered negotiation found in the Jubilee video. While studies on Exclusion Practices frequently examine discrimination in educational or institutional environments. Stewart-Hall et al. (2023) investigated racial exclusion within educational institutions, while Vuong et al. (2021) looked at discrimination faced by bilingual students. These contexts differ significantly from the Jubilee experiment, where exclusion is gamified and relies on verifying cultural authenticity.

Although some recent studies on digital media and identity construction increasingly recognize platforms such as YouTube as important sites of identity work, much of this research focuses on mediated representations, narrative framing, and ideological positioning rather than spontaneous interpersonal interaction (KhosraviNik, 2017; Mihelj et al., 2021). As a result, how national identity is negotiated and contested through unscripted group interaction in digital entertainment formats remains underexplored.

To fill this gap, the current study analyzes Jubilee's "*5 British People vs 1 Fake*" using Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) to investigate how British national identity is discursively constructed and how these constructions lead to exclusionary practices. This research enhances critical discourse studies by applying DHA to digital entertainment contexts, focusing on participants' language use, interactional dynamics, and evaluative judgments. It also offers insights into how everyday nationalism is reproduced through seemingly playful formats, revealing the power relations embedded in contemporary constructions of national identity. Therefore, according to the justification above, the current study explores the aspects of British national identity constructed through participants' discourse in Jubilee's "*5 British People vs 1 Fake*" and how the discursive strategies of national identity construction contribute to the exclusion practice within the digital experiment. This study is then expected to contribute to the study of Linguistics, specifically Critical Discourse Analysis and Wodak's framework, focusing on language use in constructing national identity.

METHOD

Research Design

The current research employs a qualitative approach grounded in Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), which integrates linguistic analysis with

historical and sociopolitical context to explain how national identities are constructed and contested (Wodak et al., 2009; Reisigl & Wodak, 2016). Wodak's framework draws on the field of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) which investigates how power, ideology, and social relations are enacted and reproduced through language which is appropriate for exploring socially constructed phenomena such as national identity because it allows for in-depth, context-sensitive interpretation of language (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Fairclough, 2013). This method is applied to a digital context in how national identity is constructed, negotiated, and challenged through language use in the participants' discourse.

Participants

Jubilee experiment requires six participants containing five of whom they claim British nationality and one who is non-British. Since Jubilee is an American-based channel, the recording took place in the United States in which the participants are mostly the citizens of the United States or immigrants. While all Jubilee's videos are publicly accessible on YouTube, formal informed consent was not required since the material is already in the public domain, however, ethical research practice requires protecting participants from unnecessary exposure (Markham & Buchanan, 2012). Accordingly, the participants in the analysis are referred to by pseudonyms (P1–P6). The participants in Jubilee's experiment have explained their background through discourse in the beginning of the experiment where all participants self-identified as British, though several reported dual citizenships and having lived across more than one national setting which enriches the analysis of hybrid identity.

Data Source and Collection

The data source is primarily taken from a YouTube video entitled “5 British People vs 1 Fake” by Jubilee, featuring 5 British participants and 1 suspected fake British. Jubilee is an American-based YouTube account that has been known for its digital experiment contents, applying formats e.g. *5vs1*, *6vs1*, *odd one out*, aiming to exclude or eliminate whom the participants consider as ‘different/others.’ Considering the amount of other similar videos, the researcher chooses “5 British People vs 1 Fake” where its video thumbnail, the video cover, does not reveal the outsider. Moreover, Jubilee’s “5 British People vs 1 Fake” also presents new insights into national identity discourses beyond traditional institutional frameworks.

The data of the research subject were transcribed using an online transcription platform and was carefully reviewed for accuracy by the researcher. Some relevant non-verbal features such as emphasis, pauses, and laughter were included as a part of contribution to meaning construction in interaction (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021). However, only excerpts directly related to the construction or negotiation of “Britishness” were selected. The researcher also considers sociopolitical context (e.g., current UK debates and globalized identity discourses) and contextual information (e.g., references to cultural knowledge, accents, and stereotypes) to support interpretation.

Analytical Procedure

The analysis followed Wodak's multi-level analytical framework of Discourse-Historical Approach (Wodak & Meyer, 2016), using micro to macro level analysis method. After transcription and verification, the researcher identified related discourse of construction and negotiation of Britishness, specifically excerpts leading to exclusion. In finding, the data in a form of excerpts is shown first and followed by the analysis. The finding is arranged through classification based on the exclusion order. This classification will then be referred to Data 1-4 according to the total of the excluded participants from the experiment.

The micro-level analysis is conducted through close linguistic examination of lexical choices as well as nomination and predication strategies. The meso-level analysis categorizes the excerpts based on Wodak's four macro-level discursive strategies of national identity construction, following (1) constructive strategies, which reveals how participants define or build their identity as British; (2) perpetuation and justification strategies, showing how dominant ideas about Britishness are maintained, legitimized and reproduced; (3) transformational strategies, showing how participants change or reinterpret the definition of British identity; (4) destructive/dismantling strategies, which questions or undermines the existing notions of Britishness. Then, the macro-level analysis includes cultural and sociopolitical considerations. Lastly, the analyses are supported by the interpretation of the discourse that is relevant to exclusion.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Jubilee experiment reveals Wodak's discursive strategies used in the participants' discourse during identity construction as an excluding mechanism while maintaining the participants' national identity. During the experiment, the participants discussed several topics related to Britishness while trying to construct their identity. The discourse topics include British stereotypes, foods, culture, etc. While not employing Fairclough's three-dimensional model, this study adopts a multi-level analytical framework inherent in the Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), which integrates linguistic analysis with discursive strategies and broader sociopolitical contexts.

Data 1: Geographical Knowledge and the Negotiation of Britishness

The analysis starts with participants' doubt on P3's narratives which sound fake. In the beginning, each participant tells their own background as an introduction and opportunity to claim British identity. However, P3 becomes the targeted out-group participant for his unfamiliarity of his own living area, showing that geographical knowledge has a role in the negotiation of British identity.

Table 1. Discourse on P3

Timeline	Excerpt
[00:01:42]	P6: "Wigston, that's right near Oadby."
[00:01:45]	P3: "Yes? I believe so."
[00:01:47]	P6: "Market Harborough!"

-
- [00:01:48] P3: "Market Harborough... (?) sounds familiar. Yeah. I mean, I, I grew up in a very small bubble. My parents would take me everywhere and I grew up in India for like 14 to 18 and then go back to the UK, finish up my school there."
-
- [00:02:05] P4 (in response clip): "I feel like someone from Leicester would have automatically known where Market Harborough is. I'm from Manchester and I know where Market Harborough is. It's a tiny little town."
-
- [00:02:13] P2 (in response clip): "I don't know a lot about English geography cause I'm so in my own world and yeah, my parents would take me around everywhere so it, his story was convincing to me because that's similar to my story."
-

At the micro-level, the participants focused on discussing location or area of living which functions as a test of authentic British identity. P6 directs his utterance by first mentioning "Wigston" and "Market Harborough", indexing Leicester and its nearby region as P3's area of living. P3's unsure responses "Yes? I believe so" and "Market Harborough... sounds familiar" indicate uncertainty, which he immediately offers a biographical explanation after. By emphasizing that he grew up in a very small bubble and spent four years in India before returning to the UK, P3 constructs a story of transnational mobility that explains his limited familiarity with certain regional areas. This self-indication functions as a defensive discursive strategy, anticipating potential suspicion by framing his lack of knowledge.

In the response clip, P4 clearly expresses an implicit norm of Britishness by saying, "I feel like someone from Leicester would have automatically known where Market Harborough is." At the meso-level, this signifies a perpetuation and justification strategy in Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach. In this context, regional geographical knowledge is standardized as an accepted benchmark for national legitimacy, regardless of personal background. P4 also adds "I'm from Manchester and I know where Market Harborough is", strengthening the assumption, suggesting that this familiarity should be typical among British people. This discourse reflects British identity as grounded in territory and spatially stable, marginalizing those whose backgrounds contradict this norm.

At the same time, P3's explanation reveals a transformative strategy, as it subtly questions the assumption or belief that British identity must rely on continuous residence or local familiarity while also introducing his transnational background and educational mobility. This corresponds with other research showing that national identity is progressively influenced by mobility, migration, and hybrid life courses, rather than singular territorial socialization (Liu & Turner, 2018; Carnine, 2015). However, the interaction shows that these various expressions of identity remain vulnerable in evaluative group settings.

The contrast between P4's and P2's response clips reflects the macro-level analysis, emphasizing the inconsistent standard of this transformative discourse. P4 strengthens exclusionary standards, while P2 aligns with P3 by relating to her own experience of limited geographical knowledge because she was "in [her] own world" and often relocated due to her parents. This response temporarily disrupts the standards of localized knowledge, indicating that identities based on mobility are collectively experienced among multiple participants. Still, the overall discourse supports P4's

viewpoint, illustrating how dominant notions of Britishness are maintained through collective affirmation.

One possible interpretation is that lack of familiarity with certain geographic areas indicates individual mobility or personal experience instead of an incompetence of national identity proofing. Even though this does not necessarily reduce one's national identity, in the experiment's interactional context, geographical knowledge serves as an implicit test of authenticity, as participants themselves frame such knowledge as expected and self-evident. Therefore, exclusion arises not from a lack of knowledge, but from the social significance attributed to it in group interactions.

Data 2: Schooling Terms and Legitimate Britishness

The second targeted out-group participant is P1 with a lexical error while narrating her identity. When the participants discuss school practices, P1 accidentally uses an American term, triggering other participants' suspicions toward the fake British. Such linguistic indexicality matters in evaluative group settings to legitimate Britishness.

Table 2. Discourse on P1

Timeline	Excerpt
[00:04:41]	P1: <i>"For me, since I moved when I was 12, which is seventh grade here in the states."</i>
[00:04:46]	P5 (in response clip): <i>"She mentioned seventh grade and usually we say year seven or year eight or year nine and it just threw me off."</i>
[00:05:08]	P2: <i>"It was funny because obviously growing up in England you wear uniforms all the time."</i>
[00:05:12]	P1: <i>"Yeah."</i>
[00:05:13]	P2: <i>"It was lavender in the summertime with white socks."</i>
[00:05:17]	P1: <i>"Yeah, you have a winter and summer uniform."</i> *Aggressively nodding

This interaction highlights how institutional language and schooling practices serve as subtle markers of national belonging. In micro-level analysis, P1's statement, *"since I moved when I was 12, which is seventh grade here in the states,"* contains a localized educational term ("seventh grade") that triggers response from other participants. In the response clip, P5 directly criticizes this word choice by saying *"usually we say year seven or year eight or year nine,"* and that the American terminology *"threw [him] off."* This reaction shows how particular educational labels act as indicators of national socialization, highlighting and questioning deviations from British terminology.

The interaction shifts topic to school uniforms which is a common practice in British educational culture. P2 says *"obviously growing up in England you wear uniforms all the time"*, assuming a common understanding of British experience, showing uniforms as a taken-for-granted aspect of British childhood. P1 agrees and adds, *"you have a winter and summer uniform"*, while aggressively nodding, a non-verbal cue that relates her experience with this cultural norm. At the micro-level, this physical gesture indicates her strategy to reaffirm British identity due to earlier language error. While using *"you"* rather than *"we"*, also indicates out-group involvement.

At the meso-level, this interaction reflects a perpetuation and justification strategy in Wodak's DHA as a reinforcement of existing culture. At the macro-level, this strategy contributes to the normalization of Britishness as institutionally standardized and linguistically restricted, particularly through schooling practices. Scholars argue that institutional experiences like schooling operate as cultural boundary-making

mechanisms, where knowledge of routine practices becomes a marker of legitimate membership (Meer, 2009). P5's response justifies a narrow concept of British identity, suggesting that Americanized terminology is not relevant to authentic British upbringing. This shows that linguistic choices are interpreted as markers of authenticity in British identity discourse. This supports broader scholarship on everyday nationalism, which shows that national belonging is often reinforced through ordinary institutional references that appear neutral but carry strong exclusionary power (Fox & Miller-Idriss, 2018).

The interaction in Data 2 can be further understood through the perspective of Received Pronunciation (RP) as an ideological framework within British identity discourse. As the standard accent of British English, RP is viewed as prestigious due to the Queen of English also using it. It also functions as a marker of linguistic legitimacy and national authenticity. The exclusion of P1 was based on the use of the American English term, "seventh grade," to say "year seven" in British English, meaning that RP was not the main concern of the exclusion.

In another experiment conducted by Braber (2020), the study focuses on accent detection where the participants guessed the English accent used by another person (such as, "it's Scottish"). The participants use their accent detection abilities to help them guess the nationality based on accents. Not merely based on familiarity, the participants could also use a technique called Matched-Guise technique (Solís, 2002) to detect fake accent from the authentic one. This technique could also be used by P5 to detect the fake British because of the misuse of terminology between American and British English.

This interaction might instead be seen as a temporary linguistic adjustment to an American context rather than a marker of inauthenticity. Considering that the participants are located in the United States, the use of American educational terminology may indicate practical adjustment. Nonetheless, the later evaluation by other participants indicates that this accommodation is reinterpreted as deviation from standard British discourse, strengthening exclusion through perpetuation and justification strategies.

Data 3: Snacks and Questionable Britishness

The next excerpt shows participants discussing everyday common British snacks while P4 struggles to recognize it. When all the participants talk about a particular snack, P4 explicitly utters that he is unfamiliar with it. This shows uneven cultural exposure among British individuals due to various factors.

Table 3. Discourse on P4

Timeline	Excerpt
[00:04:41]	P1: <i>"For me, since I moved when I was 12, which is seventh grade here in the states."</i>
[00:04:46]	P5 (in response clip): <i>"She mentioned seventh grade and usually we say year seven or year eight or year nine and it just threw me off."</i>
[00:05:08]	P2: <i>"It was funny because obviously growing up in England you wear uniforms all the time."</i>
[00:05:12]	P1: <i>"Yeah."</i>
[00:05:13]	P2: <i>"It was lavender in the summertime with white socks."</i>

[00:05:17] *P1: "Yeah, you have a winter and summer uniform."* *Aggressively nodding

At the micro level, P5's question contains an implicit presupposition that the "Discos," a snack brand in the UK, is a common knowledge that should be familiar to all participants who claim to be British. P4 responses with "*What's a Disco?*" and a gesture of scratching the head, indicating ignorance as well as confusion. When P5 explains that Discos are crisps and available in various flavors, P4 again shows uncertainty by asking "*Are they here or in the UK?*", which further emphasizes the epistemic distance between himself and the assumed cultural knowledge. P5's evaluative response in the reaction clip is declarative and final which is directly linking cultural ignorance with the delegitimization of national identity.

The meso-level analysis reveals that this data clearly represents the perpetuation and justification strategy. Britishness is reproduced as an identity that requires specific everyday cultural knowledge, such as common snacks. In addition, there is a destructive/dismantling strategy element that is passively included. P4's ignorance indirectly destroys his claim to British identity, because he fails to meet the cultural standards produced by the group.

This interaction reflects the practice of everyday nationalism, where national identity is maintained through everyday cultural references that seem neutral but carry ideological meaning. In macro-level analysis, the knowledge of snacks is treated as evidence of national authenticity, which ignores the reality of mobility, migration, and transnational life experiences. This is in line with the argument that food consumption often serves as a symbolic marker of national boundaries and a tool of social exclusion (DeSoucey, 2016). This finding reinforces broader studies showing that national identity is often upheld through minimized yet influential cultural symbols, which function to marginalize individuals with hybrid or disrupted national socialization (Edensor, 2016).

Data 4: Football and Normative Britishness

This data brings a gender-based topic as a national identity marker. While the participants are decreasing, leaving only three and two of them are men, the topic shifts to football. As a woman, P2 declares herself as a non-football fan, while other participants keep questioning her with the topic.

Table 4. Discourse on P2

Timeline	Excerpt
[00:11:23]	<i>P5: "Do you know a lot about football? Like do you know any of the teams in the Premier League?"</i>
[00:11:26]	<i>P2: "No. Well, okay, I never got into football really when I was there. I only supported the team that my friends..."</i>
[00:11:32]	<i>P5: "Which ones? What teams?"</i>
[00:11:33]	<i>P2: "So, Chel, obviously Chelsea, Arsenal, Man U, were like the main ones."</i>
[00:11:45]	<i>P6: "I don't really watch too much at football, but if you grow up in England..."</i>
[00:11:50]	<i>P5: "You'll know what the Premier league is."</i>
[00:11:50]	<i>P6: "Yeah"</i>
[00:11:52]	<i>P2: "Yeah, no. Gosh. This is hard."</i>

At the micro level, the interaction is built through a series of questions and responses that index football as the expected cultural knowledge. P5 starts with the question "*Do you know a lot about football? ... any of the teams in the Premier League?*", which linguistically contains the presupposition that the knowledge is general. While P2 answered with mitigation and partial denial, as she explains that she never got into football, as well as giving social reasons ("*I only supported the team that my friends...*"). This response was soon followed by P6's generalization, "*if you grow up in England...*", which implies a causal relationship between growing up in England and football knowledge. P5's affirmation at the end is declarative and normative, closing the space for experience variation. The final expression P2 at the end shows interactional pressure and awareness of deviations from prevailing expectations.

This discourse represents the perpetuation and justification strategy. Britishness is reproduced as an identity that is inherently associated with the knowledge of football, especially the Premier League, which is treated as common sense. Through generalizations and normative statements, participants justify narrow national identity boundaries and confirm the assumption that ignorance of football is an indicator of inauthenticity. On the other hand, P2's response contains a weak transformative strategy element, because it tries to define Britishness as a social experience that is not always tied to dominant cultural interests. However, this effort was not recognized by the other participants, so the transformative strategy failed to shift the hegemonic definition of Britishness.

From a macro level perspective, this interaction reflects the ideology of *everyday nationalism* that naturalizes certain cultural practices like football, as a part of national identity. Football serves as a national symbol that is not neutral, because it is often loaded with masculine assumptions and majority experience, while gender-based variations or social background are ignored. Feminist research has shown that national sporting cultures often privilege masculine experiences and marginalize women's forms of belonging (Toffoletti, 2018). Recent studies on everyday nationalism emphasize that sport often operates as a symbolic shorthand for national belonging, where lack of interest or knowledge is interpreted as a deficit in authenticity rather than personal preference (Edensor, 2018; Cleland et al., 2020).

Extending an existing study, the findings of this study reveal that British national identity in Jubilee's *5 British People vs 1 Fake* is not expressed through explicit nationalist claims but arises from ordinary, interactional practices characteristic of everyday nationalism. Skey and Antonsich (2017) argue that everyday nationalism/nationhood relies on informal, routine practices that appear neutral but continuously reproduce boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. Participants consistently draw on assumed cultural knowledge, including awareness of local geography, school systems, food brands, and popular sports, as informal criteria for evaluating "authentic" Britishness. This corresponds with research on mundane and ordinary nationalism, highlighting how national identity is continually generated through regular, seemingly neutral actions rather than overt ideological statements (Benwell, 2016; Edensor & Sumartojo, 2018).

In the experiment, familiarity with places like Market Harborough or products like Discos crisps serves as an unspoken national repertoire. These references function as “background assumptions” that are rarely questioned but become notably prominent when violated. According to Bossuyt and Joye (2023), banal nationalism gains its power precisely because it feels natural and invisible, causing any deviations to seem suspicious instead of culturally based. In this sense, the experiment exposes how everyday nationalism operates as a gatekeeping tool that distinguishes insiders from outsiders through casual conversation rather than formal citizenship standards.

The findings also further highlight how language use and cultural competence serve as symbolic markers of national belonging. Reactions from participants to Americanized terms (like “seventh grade”) or unfamiliarity with British cultural references demonstrate how language serves as an indicator of authenticity. This reinforces studies showing that accent, vocabulary, and communication style are vital to daily acts of othering and exclusion (Devadoss, 2020).

Importantly, these boundaries are enforced subtly. Instead of openly stating that someone isn't British, participants express judgments through hesitation, disbelief, or expressions of surprise. These micro-level discursive cues illustrate what Devadoss (2020) describes as “aural flagging,” in which linguistic variation subtly indicates national distinction without overt hostility. This resonates with the DHA-based analysis, where exclusion emerges as an *effect* of discourse rather than an explicit intention, reinforcing Wodak's argument that identity construction is inherently relational and influenced by power dynamics.

In addition, the exclusion was led by linguistic error rather than foreign accent. As a non-British and the first participant to be excluded, P3 shows that he succeeded in covering his identity as non-British even though still failed in geographical recognition. Gabriela Masztalerz (2021) suggests the idea of “*accent modification*” which is a solution for non-native language speakers by adopting phonemic and pragmatic structures to reduce personal discomfort. However, in this case, P3 modified his accent to deceive other participants. Therefore, as boundary-making resources, language and accent were not involved in this exclusion as P3 easily passed through it.

Another significant aspect of the study shows how legitimate membership is negotiated through moral evaluations rather than legal status. Even though several participants hold British citizenship or dual nationality, their legitimacy is consistently evaluated through alignment with normative expectations of British cultural competence. This is what Yuval-Davis (2016) conceptualizes as the *politics of belonging*, where formal membership (such as citizenship) alone is insufficient unless individuals also conform to cultural norms that regulate access to the national community. This demonstrates a wider trend observed in research on membership legitimization, where belonging is assessed through common practices, memories, and embodied knowledge rather than formal inclusion (Edensor & Sumartojo, 2018).

The data suggest that Britishness is perceived as something that must be executed properly. In this sense, belonging is not a status expressed through daily actions that signal familiarity, comfort, and emotional attachment, but a practice. Participants who

fail to show familiarity with football culture, local geography, or everyday commodities are regarded as less credible members of the national community. This reflects Millei's (2021) findings on affective practices of everyday nationalism, where feelings of discomfort, doubt, or suspicion are key in perpetuating exclusive national standards. In Jubilee's study, these emotional reactions validate exclusion without needing overt nationalist discourse.

In this regard, it is possible to argue that preferences related to food or sports are matters of personal taste instead of national identity indicators. Not every individual raised in Britain necessarily engages with football or particular snack brands. Nevertheless, the responses from participants indicate that these cultural references are treated as collective common sense, changing ordinary practices into standard expectations. This interaction demonstrates how everyday nationalism functions by normalizing certain cultural practices as necessary for inclusion.

Additionally, by situating national identity negotiation within a digital social experiment, this study extends existing discussions of everyday nationalism into mediated contexts. Although a considerable amount of research has concentrated on institutional environments like schools or media content, this study demonstrates how platforms such as YouTube enable participatory methods of establishing national boundaries. According to Ivarsson (2019), digital environments facilitate "nationalism from below," allowing ordinary people to actively reproduce and circulate criteria of belonging.

Jubilee's format enhances this process by encouraging participants to publicly assess each other, transforming everyday judgments into actions that are performative and carry noticeable outcomes. The experiment thus becomes a condensed site where everyday nationalism, affective evaluation, and exclusion intersect. This supports the claim that digital entertainment formats are not neutral but play a significant role in shaping modern perceptions of national identity and legitimacy (Bossuyt & Joye, 2023).

This discussion strengthens the perspective that national identity is not a stable characteristic but a continuous discursive achievement influenced by power dynamics and social expectations. This study illustrates how constructive, perpetuation, transformative, and destructive strategies simultaneously function to establish group membership in a digital experiment using Wodak's DHA. The findings suggest that exclusion in Jubilee's experiment is not the result of overt hostility but arises from a discursive process. Participants initially employ strategies of perpetuation and justification to create normative expectations of Britishness. When people do not meet these expectations, their credibility is scrutinized through evaluative comments and response clips. This process converts cultural diversity into seen inauthenticity, thus legitimizing exclusion as reasonable and justified rather than discriminatory.

This study contributes to current debates by showing that exclusionary identity practices persist even in informal, entertainment-driven contexts, highlighting the need to critically examine popular digital media as influential sites of national identity construction. However, these findings only focus on particular discourse based on the exclusion order and do not cover all the discourse in the Jubilee experiment. The

researcher expects further studies to explore such discourse in digital experiments, covering various aspects that remain under-explored.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the discursive construction of British national identity in Jubilee's "*5 British People vs 1 Fake*" through the lens of Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach. By analyzing participants' interactions across micro, meso, and macro levels, the research demonstrates how Britishness is not treated as a fixed legal status but as a performative and culturally regulated form of belonging. The findings demonstrate everyday cultural references like geographical knowledge, school systems, food preferences, and sports affiliations as powerful discursive resources for establishing legitimate national membership.

The analysis additionally shows that exclusion in the experiment is executed subtly through doubt, suspicion, and comparison rather than overt rejection. instead of direct rejection. Individuals with transnational backgrounds or hybrid identities are particularly vulnerable to this exclusion, as their personal experiences often do not match the prevailing and simplified notions of Britishness. These dynamics illustrate how perpetuation and justification strategies sustain normative definitions of the nation, while destructive strategies weaken alternative or unfamiliar forms of national identity.

Situated within broader discussions regarding everyday nationalism and the politics of belonging, this study emphasizes how digital social experiments serve as modern platforms for the reproduction of national boundaries. By incorporating exclusionary judgments into entertainment formats, such media regularize the management of identity and obscure its ideological consequences. The contribution of this study to Critical Discourse Studies positively encourages further researchers to extend the use of DHA to digital and non-institutional settings, highlighting the role of mediated interactions in either construction of national identity and exclusion in everyday life or other aspects.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to the academic supervisors and lecturers who guide and give feedbacks that contribute to the development of this study. Appreciation is also extended to peers who provided constructive discussions during the research process. The author also acknowledges the use of an online transcription platform to assist in data preparation. This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

REFERENCES

- Benwell, M. C. (2016). Banal nationalism. In International encyclopedia of geography. Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118663202.wberen346>

- Bossuyt, L., & Joye, S. (2023). Tekenen van banaal nationalisme in de Vlaamse en Nederlandse adaptaties van het televisieformat SKAM. *Tijdschrift voor Communicatiewetenschap*, 51(1), 4–24. <https://doi.org/10.5117/TCW2023.1.002.BOSS>
- Braber, N., Smith, H., Wright, D., Hardy, A., & Robson, J. (2022). Assessing the specificity and accuracy of accent judgments by lay listeners. *Language and Speech*, 66(2), 267–290. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00238309221101560>
- Carnine, J. (2015). The impact on national identity of transnational relationships during international student mobility. *Journal of International Mobility*, 3(1), 11–30. <https://doi.org/10.3917/jim.001.0011>
- Charity, M. L. (2016). Urgensi pengaturan kewarganegaraan ganda bagi diaspora Indonesia. *Jurnal Konstitusi*, 13(4), 809–827. <https://doi.org/10.31078/jk1346>
- Cleland, J., Pope, S., & Williams, J. (2020). 'I do worry that football will become over-feminized': Ambiguities in fan reflections on the gender order in men's professional football in the United Kingdom. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 37(4), 366–375. <https://doi.org/10.1123/ssj.2019-0060>
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). Qualitative inquiry and research design (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- DeSoucey, M. (2016). Contested tastes: Foie gras and the politics of food. Princeton University Press.
- Devadoss, C. (2020). Sounding "brown": Everyday aural discrimination and othering. *Political Geography*, 79, 102151. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2020.102151>
- Dragojevic, M., Giles, H., Goatley-Soan, S., & Dayton, Z. A. (2024). Americans' attitudes toward British accents: The role of social categorisation, perceived group prototypicality, and processing fluency. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2024.2346575>
- Edensor, T. (2016). Reconsidering national temporalities. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 19(6), 525–542. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368431006071996>
- Edensor, T., & Millington, S. (2018). This is our city: Branding football and local embeddedness. *Global Networks*, 18(1), 172–193. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-0374.2008.00190.x>
- Edensor, T., & Sumartojo, S. (2018). Geographies of everyday nationhood: Experiencing multiculturalism in Melbourne. *Nations and Nationalism*, 24(3), 553–578. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12421>

- Encyclopedia Britannica. (2016). Birmingham | England, United Kingdom. Retrieved February 8, 2025, from <http://www.britannica.com/place/Birmingham-England>
- Fairclough, N. (2013). Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Fox, J. E., & Miller-Idriss, C. (2018). Everyday nationhood. *Ethnicities*, 18(1), 3–6. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796808088925>
- Gordon, S., & Meir, N. (2025). Understanding accentedness in heritage language English speakers: Key predictors. *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1366728925000288>
- Gryaznova, E. V., Goncharuk A. G., Plisov, E. V., Parilov, O. V., & Ageeva, E. L. (2021). The problem of Russia's cultural identity in the era of globalization. In I. Savchenko (Ed.), *National interest, national identity and national security* (Vol. 102, pp. 336–341). European Publisher. <https://doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2021.02.02.4>
- He, J. R., & Yan, J. R. (2008). Discussions from ethnic identity to national identity. *Journal of the Central University for Nationalities: Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition*, 3, 5–12.
- Ivarsson, C. H. (2019). Lion's blood: Social media, everyday nationalism and anti-Muslim mobilisation among Sinhala-Buddhist youth. *Contemporary South Asia*, 27(2), 145–159. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09584935.2018.1528210>
- Jaspal, R., & Coyle, A. (2009). Language and perceptions of identity threat. *Psychology & Society*, 2(2), 150–167.
- KhosraviNik, M. (2017). Social media critical discourse studies (SM-CDS). In J. Flowerdew & J. Richardson (Eds.), *Handbook of critical discourse analysis* (pp. 582–596). Routledge.
- Koller, V., Kopf, S., & Miglbauer, M. (2019). Discourses of Brexit. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 18(2), 241–260. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351041867>
- Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. (2020). Reading images: The grammar of visual design (3rd ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003099857>
- Levon, E., Sharma, D., & Ilbury, C. (2022). Speaking up: Accents and social mobility. The Sutton Trust. <https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Accents-and-social-mobility.pdf>

- Liu, Q., & Turner, D. (2018). Identity and national identity. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 50(12), 1080–1088. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2018.1434076>
- Markham, A., & Buchanan, E. (2012). Ethical decision-making and Internet research: AoIR guidelines 2.0. Association of Internet Researchers.
- Masztalerz, G. (2021). Accent modification and identity: A phenomenological study exploring the experiences of international students and immigrants/refugees [Undergraduate honors thesis, University of Northern Colorado]. University of Northern Colorado Digital Scholarship. <https://digscholarship.unco.edu/honors/44>
- Meer, N., & Modood, T. (2009). The multicultural state we're in: Muslims, "multiculture", and the "civic-rebalancing" of British multiculturalism. *Political Studies*, 57, 473–497. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.2008.00745.x>
- Mihelj, S., & Jiménez-Martínez, C. (2021). Digital nationalism: Understanding the role of digital media in the rise of nationalist sentiment. *Nations and Nationalism*, 27(2), 331–346. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nana.12685>
- Millei, Z. (2021). Affective practices of everyday nationalism in an Australian preschool. *Global Studies of Childhood*, 19(5), 526–538. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14733285.2019.1649361>
- Pasha, M. K., Islam, M. R., & Rahman, M. M. (2021). National identity crisis, exclusionary practices, and anti-minority sentiment: Discursive constructions of belonging and othering. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies*, 8(3), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.29333/ejecs/744>
- Prieur, A., Savage, M., & Flemmen, M. P. (2023). Distinctions in the making: A theoretical discussion of youth and cultural capital. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 74(3), 360–375. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.13002>
- Ranta, R., & Ichijo, A. (2022). Food, national identity and nationalism: From everyday to global politics. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Reisigl, M., & Wodak, R. (2016). The discourse-historical approach. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of critical discourse studies* (3rd ed., pp. 23–61). SAGE Publications.
- Reisigl, M., & Wodak, R. (2021). The discourse-historical approach: Context, social practice and ideology. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of critical discourse studies* (4th ed., pp. 44–75). SAGE Publications.

- Skey, M., & Antonsich, M. (2017). *Everyday nationhood: Theorising culture, identity and belonging after banal nationalism*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-37-57098-7>
- Smith, A. M. (2017). *U wot m8?: American and British attitudes toward regional British accents* [Bachelor's thesis, Scripps College]. Scholarship @ Claremont. http://scholarship.claremont.edu/scripps_theses/1045
- Solís Obiols, M. (2002). The matched guise technique: A critical approximation to a classic test for formal measurement of language attitudes. Noves SL. *Revista de Sociolinguística*.
- Stewart-Hall, C., Langham, L., & Miller, P. (2023). Preventing school exclusions of Black children in England: A critical review of prevention strategies and interventions. *Equity in Education & Society*, 2(3), 225–242. <https://doi.org/10.1177/27526461221149034>
- Sung, C. C. M. (2016). Exposure to multiple accents of English in the English language teaching classroom: From second language learners' perspectives. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 10(3), 190–205. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2014.936869>
- Toffoletti, K., & Thorpe, H. (2018). Female athletes' self-representation on social media: A feminist analysis of neoliberal marketing strategies in "economies of visibility". *Feminism & Psychology*, 28, 11–31.
- van Leeuwen, T. (2008). *Discourse and practice: New tools for critical discourse analysis*. Oxford University Press.
- Vuong, T. K., Chan, H. F., & Torgler, B. (2021). Competing social identities and intergroup discrimination: Evidence from a framed field experiment with high school students in Vietnam. *PLOS ONE*, 16(12), e0261275. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0261275>
- Wang, I. Y., Cheung, R. Y. M., Jiang, D., & Yum, Y. N. (2025). The association between implicit culture beliefs and intercultural sensitivity: Anticipated intergroup exclusion and stigma as underlying processes. *Social Psychology of Education*, 28(1), Article 61. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-025-10030-y>
- Wodak, R. (2015). *The politics of fear: What right-wing populist discourses mean*. SAGE Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446270073>
- Wodak, R. (2018). "We have the character of an island nation": A discourse-historical analysis of Brexit discourse. *Journal of Language and Politics*, 17(3), 359–378.

- Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (Eds.). (2016). *Methods of critical discourse studies* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Wray, A. (2018). Language, ideology and power. In *The Routledge handbook of language and identity* (pp. 87–102). Routledge.
- Yi, Q., & Zhang, J. (2025). From language attitude to sociocultural adaptation among international students: The mediation of ethnic identification. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2025.2516811>
- Yuval-Davis, N. (2016). *Power, intersectionality and the politics of belonging*. SAGE Publications.