

**INDONESIAN EFL LEARNERS' IDENTITIES: A NARRATIVE STUDY
FROM SHORT-TERM INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY
PARTICIPANTS**

UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfilment for Bachelor's degree in English Language
Education Study Program



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**ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM
FACULTY OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE EDUCATION
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2025**

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Oleh
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Sebuah skripsi yang diajukan untuk memenuhi salah satu syarat memperoleh gelar
Sarjana Pendidikan pada Fakultas Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra

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Juli 2025

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APPROVAL PAGE

Undergraduate Thesis

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PARTICIPANTS**

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STATEMENT OF AUTHORIZATION

I hereby certify this paper entitled *Indonesian EFL Learners' Identities: A Narrative Study from Short-Term International Student Mobility Participants* is my original work. I am fully aware that I cited a number of ideas and statements from various sources. All quotations are acknowledged and cited properly.

Bandung, July 2025



Muhammad Munawwar Fiqry Thalib

PREFACE

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلٰى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful whom has bless me with أَحْسَنَ (the best story) until the point I finished this thesis. Peace and blessings be upon the noble Messenger of the universe, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), his *Ahlul Bayt*, and his devoted followers until the end of time. This paper is completed as a partial fulfillment to obtain Bachelor of Education degree from English Language Education study program, Faculty of Language and Literature Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia. Throughout the writing process, it took me an enormous resources to comprehend the theories, the appropriate research methodology to be employed in this study, concepts related with the findings of this study, and the process of serving every single data into a complete academic paper. I am fully aware that this paper is imperfect. Therefore, any constructive feedbacks are very welcomed for future improvement.

Bandung, July 2025



Muhammad Munawwar Fiqry Thalib

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My motorcycle, *Bangbrang*—a strange name, I admit, inspired by my grandfather. Almost half way around the world—17.800 kilometers—together through the blazing heat, pouring rain, and cold nights. It is not the fastest, the coolest, nor the latest. But with it, *I've loved, I've laughed and cried, I've had my fill, my share of losing*. With it, I've learned that happiness is simple: accepting, being grateful, and continuing the journey with those who never leave—whether they have engines or hearts.

Lastly, myself. Life does not always unfold the way we imagine. I made one of the best decisions of my life by choosing to practice Decisional Forgiveness Without Reconciliation—letting go of emotional burdens from unresolved conflicts, without having to resolve with “them” directly. Thanks to me for believing in me. Thanks to me for hanging in there. Now, I can confidently say *When the sharpest words wanna cut me down, I'm gonna send a flood, gonna drown 'em out. I am brave, I am bruised, I am who I'm meant to be—this is me*.

This work may not change the world, but I hope it leaves a sliver benefit.

Bandung, July 2025

Muhammad Munawwar Fiqry Thalib

ABSTRACT

This study explores how Indonesian EFL learners construct and re-construct their identities based on their lived experiences participating in the Indonesian International Student Mobility Awards (IISMA). While research on L2 learners identities has been one of the most popular in the field of applied linguistics, the learners from periphery contexts, such as Indonesian EFL learners, remain underrepresented. Framed by poststructuralist concepts of identity and drawing from Benson et al.'s framework (2013), this study employed a narrative inquiry approach to investigate the lived experiences of two undergraduate IISMA 2024 participants before, during, and after their mobility. The findings revealed that motivations to join IISMA were shaped by learners' socio-economic background, personal aspirations, and imagined communities. The participants' prior English learning experiences showed that their identity as English learners began with negative associations, which later led to a false sense of positivity when entering the host country during IISMA. Through immersion in new classroom norms, social values, and linguistic diversity, participants actively reconstructed their identities as English learners and users—moving from passive recipients to pro-active individuals. This study highlights that short-term mobility may serve as transformational site for EFL learners' identities re-construction. The implications of this study calls for EFL education refinement in peripheral contexts, specifically Indonesia. Further research could employ longitudinal and/or mixed-method design.

Keywords: EFL; IISMA; Indonesia; L2 learners' identities re-construction; Narrative inquiry

ABSTRAK

Studi ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana pembelajar Bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing di Indonesia mengonstruksi dan merekonstruksi identitas mereka berdasarkan pengalaman langsung mengikuti program Indonesian International Student Mobility Awards (IISMA). Meskipun penelitian tentang identitas pembelajar bahasa kedua (L2) telah menjadi topik yang populer dalam bidang linguistik terapan, pembelajar dari konteks Indonesia masih kurang terwakili. Menggunakan kerangka berpikir poststrukturalis tentang identitas pembelajar dari Benson dkk. (2013), studi ini menggunakan pendekatan *narrative inquiry* untuk mengeksplorasi pengalaman dua mahasiswa sarjana peserta IISMA 2024 dilihat dari periode sebelum, selama, dan setelah program mobilitas mereka. Studi ini menemukan bahwa latar belakang sosial ekonomi, aspirasi pribadi, dan *imagined communities* berperan andil dalam memotivasi para partisipan untuk mengikuti IISMA. Pengalaman belajar Bahasa Inggris yang sebelumnya mereka bawa menunjukkan bahwa identitas mereka sebagai pembelajar Bahasa Inggris diawali dengan asosiasi negatif, yang kemudian berkembang menjadi rasa percaya diri semu saat mereka berada di negara tujuan selama IISMA. Melalui keterlibatan dalam norma kelas yang baru, nilai sosial, dan keberagaman bahasa, para pelajar ini secara aktif merekonstruksi identitas mereka sebagai pembelajar dan pengguna Bahasa Inggris yakni berpindah dari penerima pasif menjadi individu yang proaktif. Studi ini menekankan bahwa program mobilitas jangka pendek dapat menjadi ruang transformasi bagi rekonstruksi identitas pembelajar Bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing. Implikasi dari studi ini menyerukan perlunya pengembangan paradigma pengajaran Bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing di Indonesia. Penelitian di masa mendatang dapat menggunakan desain *longitudinal* dan/atau metode campuran.

Kata kunci: Bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing; Indonesia; IISMA; *Narrative inquiry*; Rekonstruksi identitas pembelajar bahasa kedua

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