

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the conclusions of the study, along with reflections on the study's implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

5.1 Conclusions

This study focused on exploring the identity construction and reconstruction of Indonesian EFL learners who participated in the IISMA program. Drawing on the personal stories of two undergraduate students—Ayla and Andi—the findings reveal that the formation of their identities as English learners and users was shaped by a dynamic interplay between personal aspirations, intercultural experiences, academic engagement, and sociopolitical context.

Both participants entered the IISMA with strong personal motivation, fueled by a mix of academic ambition, career goals, and socio-economic constraints. These motivations were not just individual but linked to imagined futures and a desire for social mobility, reflecting the notion of language investment (Norton, 2013) and learner agency (Darvin & Norton, 2015) as core drivers of identity development.

During their time abroad, intercultural exposure and immersion in new academic environments disrupted their pre-existing linguistic habitus and created moments of dissonance. However, rather than being passive agents, both of the participants actively navigated challenges such as language anxiety, different classroom norms, and ideological dissonance, and redefined their English learner and user identities through agentive effort. This aligns with the poststructuralist view that identity is multiple, situated, and negotiated across time and context (Sung, 2019; Norton, 2013).

The study further shows that engagement in inclusive academic environments and egalitarian classroom cultures encouraged both participants to speak more, think more critically, and feel validated as English language learners and users. These experiences triggered a shift from viewing English as a subject to a medium for communication, learning, and self-expression.

Ultimately, through IISMA, it facilitated a multilayered reconfiguration of their identities as EFL learners and users. The participants returned home not only with improved linguistic capabilities, but with stronger self-perceptions as globally-minded learners and future professionals. Their stories illustrate how short-term mobility, when met with learner agency and supportive social contexts, can serve as a powerful site for identity transformation.

This study suggests that English language learning is closely linked to learners' identity construction and reconstruction. Pedagogically, classrooms in the context of EFL should adopt more inclusive, student-centered approaches that value learners' voices and promote a proactive engagement. Additionally, it can be implied providing sufficient support for students' to overcome any form of constraints, especially for students from underprivileged backgrounds who are keen to undertake student mobility program is one of the key aspects in promoting the internationalization.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the field of language learning and learner identity research by extending the focus to periphery context—the Indonesian EFL learners context. It reinforces the importance of agency, investment, and imagined communities (Norton, 2013; Benson et al., 2013) in understanding how learners construct and negotiate their identity throughout their lived experiences studying abroad. The findings also illustrate the value of narrative inquiry in capturing nuanced identity trajectories shaped by both internal and external factors.

However, this study acknowledged a number of limitations. The study's scope was limited to two participants, thus the findings are not generalizable. While this is appropriate for narrative inquiry, gathering participants from a broader pool could provide more varied perspectives. In addition to that, both participants studied in the same host country and institution, and data were collected within a relatively short timeframe. That being said, this study did not conduct comparative experiences across multiple host countries or institutions to explore how different academic cultures shape identity differently.

5.2 Recommendations

Future research could examine identity construction and reconstruction longitudinally, across various host countries, or among participants from more diverse backgrounds whom involved in any kind of immersion (e.g. long-term/short-term study abroad programs and overseas teaching practice programs). In this vein, Tullock's (2018, as cited in Kinginger & Zhuang, 2023, pp. 5-6) essay on identity and study abroad called the need for longer-term research and an emphasis on identity formation throughout life. Only such studies can reveal if short-term sojourns with little identity development are the launching points for long-term transnational identities, as expected by Study Abroad (SA) stakeholders and advocates of international education (Tullock, 2018: 271, as cited in Kinginger & Zhuang, 2023, pp. 5-6). Mixed-method or intervention-based approaches may also offer broader insights into how agency and identity shift across time and settings in order to add insights for English language teaching and learning practices and curriculum development in the periphery context, more specifically in Indonesia.