

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This chapter concludes the study based on the analysis presented in the previous chapter. It also provides suggestions for further studies in the fields of cultural studies and intercultural communication, specifically in regard to language-culture-identity nexus.

#### 5.1. Conclusion

This self-study aimed to trace and explore how the exposure to the English language has impacted my sense of self. In particular, it seeks to uncover how my exposure to the English language contributes to shaping my sense of ‘who I am’—my identity—as an Indonesian. It is explored through my personal narratives of significant experiences using Bhabha’s (1994) notions of hybridity and third space, and Gomzina’s (2012) theory of multi-layered cultural identity. The analysis reveals that my encounter with English has put me into three phases: being fascinated with English, feeling superior because of English, and expanding the Self through English. In my journey of ‘knowing’ English, I experienced tensions and ambivalence created by the language, which, in turn, resulted in my occupation of third space (Bhabha, 1994). The third space, however, turned to a productive site as it eventually provided me a space to expand my self as an individual. Despite the inner tensions I was struggling with at the beginning, I was able to turn English as a resource to better understand my hybrid identity. Indeed, English has become a tool for me to re-define myself as an Indonesian. This study shows that there are many ways of being Indonesian and that one’s sense of belonging cannot be defined in a mutually exclusive manner; sense of belonging is not an ‘either-or’ matter. Rather, one can *be* and feel attached to many different things at the same time, which, in turn, pointed to the possession of hybrid identities.

This study confirms the idea that there is no one true way of defining who one is, as identity is multi-layered and complex. As Gomzina (2012) contends, there are a host of factors that contribute to one’s identity construction; for me, exposure to English is one of them. Yet, other interplays, such as religion, gender,

and ethnicity, are not being discussed in my narratives, and so my process of identity construction does not stop as my narratives end; on the contrary, as identity is always in the process of ‘becoming’, my identity, too, will continue to expand, “unfold[ ] and unfurl[ ] like a flower that never ceases to bloom” (Khan, Saigol & Zia, 1994, p. 19)

Through my narratives, this study proves that there are many ways to interpret one’s identity because there are many aspects that contribute to shaping who they are, hence the complexity of identity. This study also indicates that one’s identity cannot be defined through a single lens and be generalized, as identity is fluid, flexible, multi-dimensional, and constantly changing.

## **5.2. Suggestions**

This research focuses on the interplay between language and identity, particularly in how the exposure of the English language contributes to shaping one’s sense of self, my identity as an Indonesian. Future research can investigate issues related to identity from other interplays, such as religion, gender, and ethnicity. It would also be interesting to examine different and multiple identities that are possible to occur at different contexts and places, such as social identity in different social environments or professional identity in institutional settings, through interactions with different groups of people. Finding out which settings that shape one’s identity the most, the construction of identity through the process of Othering, and different identities in local and global orientations would also be of significant contributing to the understanding of Self and Other.

I also experienced some difficulties when conducting this study. First, is in recalling my memories. Hence, it took me so much time to carefully and fully remember the significant moments to maintain the ‘reliability’ and ‘accuracy’ of my narratives. I suggest that those who are interested in understanding one's identity and using narrative inquiry as the research methodology collect as many tools as possible to avoid difficulties in recalling memories. In this regard, I emphasize the importance of journaling within and outside the context of conducting research using narrative inquiry. Besides recalling memories, another bigger challenge in conducting this study is to think, interpret, reflect, and

evaluate critically on my experiences as a way to validate my own memories. Therefore, I suggest future researchers who are interested in conducting a similar study to be mindful of these challenges as they write and analyze their own narratives