

# IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION AND CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION OF AN INDONESIAN GRADUATE STUDENT IN AN AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY

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**Abstract:** This narrative study explores identity construction and classroom participation of an Indonesian female student who attended a master's program in TESOL in an Australian university. Grounded from identity and investment frameworks (Norton, 2000) and situated learning theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991), the study specifically probes into the changing identity construction across time shaped by the participant's involvement in the community of practice. Data analysis followed Polkinghorne's (1995) categorical procedure and Connelly and Clandinin's (2006) three-dimensional space of narrative inquiry. The findings portray gradual and complex identity construction mediated by the participant's agentic classroom participation. It was also found that the participant's identity evolved across time together with a movement from peripheral to full participation. This study informs that L2 learning is dependent on social, emotional, cultural, and situated practices depicted in L2 learner's classroom participation. It also highlights the need for incorporating narrative inquiry to understand multiple, subjective, and conflicting values in L2 learning and other educational contexts.

**Keywords:** classroom participation, community of practice, English-medium university, identity construction, L2 learning

## INTRODUCTION

In the last decades, second language learning theories have shifted from a structuralist perspective to poststructuralist lens, leading to a view that second language learning is a form of participation and construction

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of a self rather than seeing it as a form of linguistic-descriptive memorization (Pavlenko & Lantof, 2000). This case is true in a context of higher education in English-speaking countries, where international students participate and negotiate their identities in the university classroom activities (Lan, 2018; Morita, 2004; Sung, 2017). With this in mind, it is of importance to explore the identity construction and classroom participation of international students studying in the English-medium universities.

More importantly, classroom has been considered as a space for struggle enacted by learners. Their efforts of wanting to belong into classroom membership is viewed within the notion of investment (Norton, 2013) as it is influenced by power relations experienced by the learners. Meanwhile, identity is related to this investment (Norton, 2010). In this context, recent research portrays how EFL learners invested and constructed their identity in learning within a given classroom context. The interrelationship between identity and investment existed within learning enactment which is seen as dynamic, complex, situated, fluctuated, and negotiable (Teng, 2019b).

Empirical studies have attempted to document students' lived experiences in classroom participation and their identity construction situated in the English-medium universities. In the newly internationalized university in Taiwan, for example, Lin (2018) interviewed 82 graduate students (Taiwanese and international students) with regard to their bidirectional class interactions in the English-medium university and portrayed that the participants enacted diverse classroom participation styles, attributing their dissimilar class participation to divergent cultures and linguistic abilities vis-à-vis English language. The study contributes to the existing literature that exclusively explores Asian graduate students' unidirectional experiences in English-medium universities in English-speaking contexts. The findings suggest teachers construe learners' local cultures and linguistic abilities as it can raise "positive sense of identity" in learner's learning enactment (Teng, 2019a) and respect learners' varied variables of L2 investment (Sung, 2020).

In an earlier study, Sung (2017) narrated a female undergraduate students' L2 experiences in the English-medium university in Hong Kong

using situated learning theory (Lave & Wenger 1991) and identity and investment frameworks (Norton, 2000). On negotiating classroom participation and constructing identity, the student participant encountered multi-layered processes which allowed for identity, competence, and membership involvement during the class. Central to these findings is the fact that classroom participation and identity construction are mediated by context-specific challenges which gradually enhanced the participant's passive to active classroom participation.

In the previous studies (see Lin, 2018; Sung, 2017; Teng, 2019a), it is true that international graduate students' classroom participation and identity construction in the English-medium universities have been the research focus. However, the investigation is situated within the context of non-English speaking countries, thus neglecting the experiences of Asian graduate students as Non-Native English Speakers (NNESs) who live and study in English speaking countries. Assuredly, it has become apparent that these students struggle and negotiate their identities in the university classroom amidst the so-called status of native speakerism (Holliday, 2006). The challenges of classroom participation and identity construction in western universities may be prevalent since dichotomy between native and non-native English speakers is consistently held (Kobayashi, 2020).

Further, the previous studies on classroom participation and identity construction primarily recruited participations from Hong Kong, China, and Taiwan who speak English as a second language. Apparently, researching participants from Indonesia who pursue degrees in the western English-medium universities is worth-doing, given the fact they are multilingual speakers (Zein, 2019), use English as a foreign language in their home countries (Dardjowidjojo, 2000), and thus bring their multilingual English identities into classroom practices (Zacharias, 2012). Therefore, their lived experiences may be enlightening in terms of identity development in pre-, whilst-, and post-study as well as classroom participation with colleagues.

This study is situated within the lived experiences of an Indonesian female student studying in a master's program in TESOL in an Australian university, Andin (pseudonym). We desire to see how Andin constructs

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her identity as an international graduate student in the university classroom participation and how her identity changes over time. To enact such purposes, this study lies within a poststructuralist view of language learning using identity and investment frameworks (Norton, 2000) and situated learning theory (Lave & Wenger, 1991) that see identity as struggle, multiple, and changing over time (Norton, 2013).

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

To explore identity construction and classroom participation in the process of L2 learning, our study is premised under the ideas of Norton's (2000) identity and investment as well as Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated learning theory.

Identity has been regarded as an important issue in understanding learners' L2 learning experiences in a given context and classroom condition (Norton, 2000). Through this lens, learners' relationship with the social world can be well construed. Theoretically, identity denotes to "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (p. 5). In this regard, L2 learners constantly attempt to use the language learned within the perspective that they are bound with social, cultural, political, and historical aspects of L2 learning. They also reorganize themselves as "a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world" (p. 10). Anchored by a poststructuralist view of language learning (e.g., Block, 2007; Pavlenko, 2000), identity is conceptualized as multiple, dynamic, and changing (Norton, 2000).

To understand L2 learners' identity, the construct of investment in L2 learning is inevitable. It specifically focuses on construing the socially and historically shaped relationship between the learners and the language learned and their hesitant to practice it. Unlike the notion of motivation in language learning which "presupposes a unitary, fixed, and ahistorical language learner" (Norton, 2000, p. 10), investment portrays the dynamic and multiple relationship of the L2 learners with the social world, allowing them to expose their complex history and multiple roles as well as desires. If learners invest in a target language, they will gain

symbolic and material resources, leading to the increase of their cultural capital (Norton, 2000). As a result of understanding investment, learners can later evaluate their social identities referring to the increase of their cultural capital, and it is why investment encompasses an integral relationship with identity as investment in L2 learning and as a bridge for investment in one's identity (Sung, 2017).

The concept of investment in L2 learning is closely related to power relations in the classroom wherein such issues "play a crucial role in social interactions between language learners and target language speakers" (Norton, 2000, p. 12). Particularly, the presence of unequitable power relations in L2 learning could lead to a minimum use of the target language in practice by the L2 learners. In this condition, learners' agency (see Larsen-freeman, 2019) should be negotiated and used as many constraints hamper the construction of identity in the L2 learning. Therefore, the constructs of identity and investment in L2 learning which are rooted under a poststructuralist paradigm are useful to exploring varied constraints L2 learners encounter during identity negotiation and classroom participation in a given context.

To the best of our knowledge, L2 learners may not be cognitively engaged in learning since they might not also socially, culturally, and even emotionally yet engaged in that learning. This assumption can be explained using situated learning theory (see Lave & Wenger, 1991). According to this theory, learning is conceptualized not simply as a cognitive internalization of knowledge, but it entails a process of legitimate peripheral participation (LPP) enacted by learners who are granted legitimacy, wherein they develop from this peripheral to full participation to interact with more experienced members in a given community of practice (CoP). In this regard, L2 learners are seen as newcomers in a given classroom participation context (e.g., English-medium classroom), and legitimacy is required for them to be considered as potential members, while peripherality refers to "gaining access to sources for understanding through growing involvement" (Lave & Wenger 1991, p. 37).

The concept of CoP in the situated learning theory denotes that "learning involves the construction of identities" (Lave & Wenger 1991, p.

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53). In particular, learning is seen as not only specified to certain activities but socially constructed and negotiated. Thus, identity in learning is a process of negotiation in a membership in the forms of competence. For L2 learners as newcomers, classroom participation is enacted by struggles, efforts, and conflicting perspectives within their community of practice who have dissimilar degree of experiences and expertise (Morita, 2004).

## **PREVIOUS STUDIES: GAPS IN THE LITERATURE**

An escalating interest in researching identity construction and classroom participation among a group of international graduate students is evidenced by research studies published in the past five years. Although extensive studies of identity construction and classroom participation were done in English as a second language contexts (Sung, 2017, Sung, 2020, Teng, 2019a; Teng, 2019b) and in the Anglophone countries (Anderson, 2020; Li, 2020; Soltani, 2018) with mostly participants from Hong Kong and China, little empirical evidence is directed to revealing such issues in the Southeast Asian regions (e.g., participants from Indonesia) that embrace the concept of English as a foreign language and multilingualism. Drawing on online databases, I opt for discussing five most current research studies in the past five years on identity construction and classroom participation published in reputable international journals.

To begin with, recently published research discusses a Chinese doctoral student's experiences of L2 academic English writing in an Australian university (Wang & Parr, 2021). The study specifically explored practices and identities negotiation in the academic writing community. Drawing on a Bakhtinian perspective, Wang and Parr portrayed an ongoing negotiated practice and identity construction as a writer encountered by the student for shaping his bilingual, transcultural, and researcher-writer identity. The findings of this study offer implications for supervisors and institutions in western universities to better understand nuanced experiences of international Chinese students in contributing to their academic writing.

Second, Tian and Dumlao (2020) examined the impact of positioning, power, and resistance on EFL learners' identity construction

in their classroom participation. The study was designed within a 6-month investigation in the language and culture program of a Thailand university from August 2018 to January 2019. Tian and Dumlao recruited one teacher and 24 undergraduate students in their study. Anchored by Kumaravadivelu's Critical Classroom Discourse Analysis (CCDA), the study documented that learners' identity positioning and the dynamics of power negotiation are constructed by the classroom contexts. In particular, Tian and Dumlao revealed three emerging themes illustrating how the students enacted positioning, power, and resistance: 1) learners' choice of code as passive resistance, (2) circulating power in interaction and struggles of power, and (3) multiple positioning in classroom interactions.

Third, Okuda and Anderson (2018) probed into the role of the university's writing center in the participants' enculturation into academic discourses, practices, identities, and communities. The study was geared by the fact that the university writing center in Canadian and US universities failed in assisting international non-native students with their academic writing. Okuda and Anderson recruited three Chinese doctoral students in a Canadian university and interviewed collected written narratives from them during the 6-month study period. Drawing on a second language socialization theory, the study found that the participating students enacted timely learning approach to help them enhance their academic performances. The study also indicate that need for detailed writing assistance for international graduate students in order they can diminish learning burden at the university.

Further, Ou and Gu (2018) looked into language socialization and identity in intercultural communication experienced by a group of Chinese students when they interact with international students. Their study recruited 12 Chinese students studying in a multilingual and transnational university located in a most cosmopolitan city along China east coast. Informed by critical ethnography, language socialization, and identity concept, the study highlights three major findings from the participants: 1) unequal power relationship appears between Chinese students and their international peers, 2) such a relationship seems to be blocked by intercultural difference and taken for granted in the

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conversation, and 3) a multilingual identity is shaped by Chinese students due to intercultural communication in the university. These findings suggest that language policy in a transnational university should be designed for empowering local cultures and respecting international cultures.

Lastly, Ai (2017) narrated a Chinese student's personal story on academic identity construction as a doctoral student in an Australian university from 2010 to 2014. Two major findings were discussed in this study: supervisor-student dialogical relationship and academic community as a site of identity construction. In the former issue, Ai's study revealed agency and independence as a scholar is much influenced by supervisory activity during PhD study. In the latter, the study portrayed a move of identity from student to independent researcher. It is, somehow, affected positively by an academic community that involves a supervisory activity.

Albeit the reported studies above have informed an enthusiastic view of identity construction and classroom participation enacted by international graduate students, there is still a paucity of research that explores international graduate students from EFL countries in the Southeast Asian region (e.g., Indonesia) who pursue their degrees in English-medium universities in the English-speaking countries. To fill such void, this study explores identity construction and classroom participation of an international graduate student from Indonesia in an Australian university. Findings from the study are expected to yield social, personal, temporal, and political aspects that always affect L2 learners' learning trajectories in different sociocultural conditions. The study also sheds light on the fact that classroom participation is not a fixed and static process but entails dynamic, situated, and negotiated experiences. In addition, such a perspective leads to a paradigm shift that L2 learning is not solely a process of cognitive construction but also entails the internalization of social, emotional, personal, and cultural aspects brought by learners into the class, thus respecting their values, attitudes, prior knowledge, cultural, and linguistic capital in learning.



## **METHOD**

### **Design**

This study focuses on exploring personal stories of an Indonesian graduate student studying in an Australian university using narrative inquiry. This design is situated within the view that “human beings both live and tell stories about their living” (Clandinin, 2006, p. 44). Narrative inquiry was employed in this study under three reasons. First, second language learning is an effort of constructing ‘the self’ which includes participation from learners (Lantof & Pavlenko, 2000; Norton, 1997). Second, from poststructuralist lens identity in language learning is viewed as dynamic, complex, multiple, and situated (Pavlenko, 2002). Third, identity construction of a multilingual English learner is negotiated through classroom participation (Zacharias, 2010). These reasons lead to a specific question asking how identity is shaped, constructed, understood, negotiated, and changed during classroom participation. Therefore, we aim to see how our researched participant constructs her identities as a graduate student during the university classroom participation and to what extent her identity changes over time. On these aims, we chose a poststructuralist perspective to data gatherings and analysis, that is, rather than looking for singular meaning of the data, we opted for acknowledging multiple, dynamic, controversial, and even conflicting meanings or voices shared by the participant.

### **Participant**

This study involved one research participant, named Andin (aged 30), enrolled in a master’s program in TESOL in an Australian university. Previously, she had been teaching English at a public senior high school in Lombok, Indonesia, for nearly four years as a non-permanent teacher. In 2017, Andin was awarded the Australian Award Scholarship (AAS) to study in Australia and graduated in 2019. She shared how she struggled to survive in the Australian-based education system which is very different from the Indonesia’s education system, in terms of classroom activities. Situating under a poststructuralist paradigm, we acknowledge multiple realities, truths, and meanings of experiences shared by Andin within different conditions. Her struggle of participation in the university

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classroom in Australia and how she develops her identity in the communities of practice are the focus of our investigation. In this study, we negotiated our relationship with Andin as a researcher-participant as one of us has known her personally, and this positionality enables us to use “an insider view to elicit and understand the participant’s stories” (Nguyen & Dao, 2019). Such a relationship with the participant is thus an ongoing process, intended to work with the participant to co-construct lived stories and negotiate meanings from her experiences through interactive and dialogic communication. This research process is considered as collaborative work between the researchers and the participant as the researched (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). We did not deny the possibility of bias in this narrative data collection and analysis and our influence on the participant’s stories. To avoid these, we minimized our personal and emotional reactions to the participant’s stories. Also, as we read the stories, we focused primarily on the text and ignored participant’s verbal and nonverbal expressions during the communication (Lu, 2005).

### **Data collection**

Data in this study were generated solely through unstructured interview. Prior to collecting the data, we explained the research purposes to the participant clearly including its advantages for personal and social aspects. Issues of anonymity, confidentiality, and safety were also discussed. The recorded interviews were conducted three times around 45 to 60 minutes each using both participant’s national language and English. The interview guide which was developed from Morita’s (2004) interview protocol started with general questions asking the participant’s academic and professional backgrounds prior to coming to Australia and her interactions with course instructors and colleagues in the class. The points being elicited in the interviews cover how she participated in oral class discussions, how she negotiated knowledge understanding with colleagues in classes, and what feelings she experienced in classes. This interview was done online using Zoom application and WhatsApp voice note as it is impossible for us to hold face to face interview during COVID-19 pandemic. We did not provide structured and strict interview protocols

since we intended to portray wholeness of the participant's lived experiences. In the interview process, we perceived the participant as a narrator while we were as the listeners. We also allowed the participant to inquire, emphasize, exclude, include, and highlight any particular incidents in the storied experiences.

### **Data analysis**

At the outset, we read the interview transcripts multiple times to achieve global understanding of the storied experiences. Furthermore, we exposed the lived experiences of the participant before coming to Australia to recognize her early identity as an EFL teacher, student teacher, and scholarship recipient. After constructing the initial story of the participant, we identified emerging themes from the transcripts using "paradigmatic analytic procedures to produce taxonomies and categories out of the common elements across the database" (Polkinghorne 1995, p. 5). This was done by referring back and forth to our conceptual frameworks. The interview data were also interwoven with the three-dimensional space of narrative inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006): *temporality*, *interaction*, and *situation*. The following is the three frameworks analysis: 1) *temporality*: how the participant reconstructs her identity before, whilst, and after becoming an international graduate student during L2 classroom participation; 2) *interaction*: how the participant negotiates her identity within personal and among social conditions during L2 classroom participation; and 3) *situation*: how the participant's identity construction and changes are influenced by setting of places during L2 classroom participation. As narrative inquiry is a process of constructing mutual understanding between the researcher and the participant, in this study, we employed both member-checking and external review to establish trustworthiness in the data (Loh, 2013). We also had conversations with the participant via WhatsApp to clarify any vague sentences in the storied experiences.

### **FINDINGS**

Since the participant in the present study reflected on her experiences of classroom participation and identity construction using

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backward and forward lines of story, her narratives are analyzed following the *temporality*, *interaction*, and *situation* dimensions of narrative inquiry that are interwoven in each time frame.

### **Before coming to Australia: Self-portraits of Andin as an EFL teacher, student teacher, and scholarship recipient**

Prior to attending a graduate degree in TESOL, Andin narrated herself as an EFL teacher who determinedly believed that a good command of English should refer to either British or American norms, particularly when dealing with speaking and pronunciation. Such a tenet had been internalized in Andin's teacher professional development for nearly five years. This early identity of Andin is shared in the interview. She contended that:

#### Excerpt 1

*I held a traditional paradigm that a good command of English should refer to English from England (BrE) and America (AmE). This belief has been internalized in my mind before I went to Australia, and when I was a teacher at a senior high school for almost five years.*

Practically, she taught her students exclusively to imitate native English speakers either from UK, US, Canada, or Australia, in terms of speaking, pronouncing words, and using vocabulary. This empirically-held perspective is influenced by Andin's traditional view of what a good English looks like. This belief is shared by Andin in the interview:

#### Excerpt 2

*Finally, my traditional views of English are mostly influential to my teaching methodologies and classroom activities such as pronouncing correct words like British or American, including vocabulary use and spelling used by native speakers from UK, US, Canada, and Australia. So, I feel that English language teaching should be directed to western norms.*

Such a traditionally-held belief about English language teaching as perceived by Andin gradually changed after she received a scholarship and participated in a six-month pre-departure training program; she

embarked on understanding other possible varieties of English spreading globally, which is termed as World Englishes. In our interview with Andin, she narrated that:

Excerpt 3

*Such a paradigm (believing that English should be directed to western norms) is contested when I participated in a Pre-Departure Training (PDT) program as a scholarship recipient. I was taught about journal article writing and the issue of World Englishes. Since I learned such as issue, I began to realize that I should not follow both British and American Englishes.*

Aside from believing that English language teaching should refer to English-speaking countries norms, we found that Andi's agential values in pursuing her graduate degree in Australia was influenced by her lecturer at the undergraduate program. This interaction between Andin and her lecturer who also graduated from an Australian university helped explain a relational process that constructs one's self-projection. Besides, her understanding of the education condition of her home country has greatly influenced her decision to pursue a degree abroad. Andin, in the interview, narrated that:

Excerpt 4

*I was first inspired by my lecturer in my undergraduate program. She graduated from an Australian university with a scholarship award. I witnessed how she taught me and my friends at that time with various teaching methods and resourceful references. For example, she introduced me and my friends to Cambridge Lesson Plan which was very new for me at first. I learned many new aspects from this lesson plan. Besides, there are a lot of problems of English language teaching in many schools in my region, forcing me to be open with new approaches and pursue my study in Australia. Thus, I was the only one who graduated with TESOL degree from abroad.*

From these portraits, two emerging themes were identified; these are, the traditional view of English language teaching as an early identity and the construct of investment in the second language learning. The

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former issue signals Andin's submission to a native speaker ideology which penetrates into many other EFL teacher education institutions in developing countries. This is observable from Andin's unnegotiated view that speaking and pronouncing correct words in English should refer to native English speakers' norms. In addition, the later issue in our analysis showcases that Andin invested in her second language learning upon construing the empirical evidence from her home country's education condition, in addition to being motivated by her undergraduate lecturer. We notice the value of investment as a contributing aspect of Andin's self-identification to study abroad.

### **Negotiating identity as a first-year student in the classroom: Conflicts of a Muslim woman and the quest of competence**

In the first year of her study, Andin encountered some problems associated with her wearing *hijab* and self-competence. These complicate her full participation in the classroom activities. At the beginning of her semester, Andin shared that her classmates critically addressed questions related to prohibitions for Muslim women to go for a study outside their home and since she was wearing *hijab*, she felt that her academic performance was undervalued. It is stressed out in the interview by Andin:

#### Excerpt 5

*In my first semester, I received a critical question from my Australian friends in the class. Since I was wearing hijab and a Muslim woman, they thought about some prohibitions for Muslim women in Islam to go out from home. That was very annoying! I thought was there any other essential questions to ask? They also underestimate my academic performance as a Muslim woman who struggled to study in Australia.*

Such a perceived discrimination occurred consistently in the class and caused a peripheral participation enacted by Adin during the class. Even so, Andin struggled to compete academically and showed her academic excellence. Her efforts of attaining a positionality in the classroom activities indicate her moving from legitimate peripheral

participation to full participation. It is indicated by her classmates' acknowledgment of her academic performance.

Excerpt 6

*My Australian friends underestimated me with my hijab. It made me demotivated in my class activities. That was such an annoying thing! I felt my classroom activities every week were not joyful with their attitudes. But after few months of learning, I showed my academic performance in the class and finally they did not underestimate me anymore.*

In addition to being undervalued for her *hijab*, in the first year of her study, Andin also questioned her competence. She encountered insecurity when talking to her classmates, particularly Australian, since they spoke English fast, as expressed by Andin in the interview. She thought that the program she participated within two weeks before entering the university was inadequate. In the extract below Andin narrated her insecurity:

Excerpt 7

*At first, I was afraid of meeting other international graduate students from all over the world in my class. Moreover, I was afraid of talking to my Australian friends because they usually spoke very fast. Previously, I attended a two-week special program for scholarship recipients prior to entering the university. It was aimed for us to adapt ourselves with Australian higher education environment such as classroom atmospheres and social interactions with students and academics. The program was little bit helpful for me but not enough for me.*

Clearly, Andin's competing identity in her first year of study is seen from her positionality as a Muslim woman who is portrayed differently by her community of practice: the TESOL classroom. This identification results in an underrated attitude enacted by the old timers, leading to a peripheral participation from Andin during the class. Despite this, Andin realized that she owned an equal opportunity as the other international students in the class to fully participate and show her academic performance. Her efforts of wanting to belong in a membership in the

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community of practice is gradually attained, as indicated by her old timers' acknowledgment of her academic performance. Interestingly, Andin's previous identity as an EFL teacher is also contested upon entering her first-year study. It is signaled from her insecurity of meeting other international students in the classroom. In particular, Andin felt depressed of speaking to her Australian encounters due to their fast speaking.

### **Negotiating participation in the classroom activities: Barriers, knowledge construction, and identity development**

Although Andin succeeded in gaining her full participation during the first year of study, she still encountered multiple barriers in participating in the classroom activities. On coming into the class which is very diverse, Andin faced unprecedented challenges in understanding other varieties of English spoken by her Indian and Chinese friends. It was due to her minimal exposure to 'other' Englishes in her previous schooling. The extract below expresses how Andin listened to such a strange English:

#### **Excerpt 8**

*When I first arrived in Australia and entered my classroom which was very multicultural, I heard my Indian and Chinese talking in English very differently, and it sounded strange to my ear at that time. I was never taught such varieties of Englishes in my primary and secondary schools. That's why I found it difficult to understand their speaking.*

Central to Indian and Chinese English styles, Andin admitted that she particularly was baffled when listening to the oral presentations in the class. Oftentimes, Andin misunderstood her Indian and Chinese friends' explanation. Likewise, she found ways such as doing confirmation for several times to understand the presentation. This confirmation allows for an initial knowledge construction between Andin and her classmates. Andin shared in the interview:



Excerpt 9

*When my Indian and Chinese were presenting their topics in the class, I was asked to respond to their explanation. At that time, I often misunderstood their explanation. It was such a confusing. But then, I did confirmation to understand it exactly.*

Interestingly, Andin contended that there is a required reading activity prior to coming into the class. This program is designed to ensure that all students are fully engaged and participated in the classroom activities. When any misunderstanding occurs in the discussion sessions, the students are allowed to co-construct their understanding through peer checking activity. The tutors and lecturers also contribute to this knowledge construction among the students by giving detailed explanation on the topic outside the class. This continued and sustainable learning enables Andin to internalize knowledge effectively, as expressed by her comment, “this was such a useful activity there”. Following is the interview with Andin:

Excerpt 10

*In my study program, all students were obliged to read articles before coming into the class. So, our discussions were all based on these readings. I often did confirmation to my classmates when I did not understand any topics being discussed. It was called peer checking understanding. My tutor also often explained any misunderstanding that we encountered in the class. If it did not happen, I usually emailed my lecturers to ask for detailed explanation. This was such a useful activity there.*

As Andin moved to fuller participation in the class, she consistently struggled to understand her field, issues surrounding the field, and the role of classroom interaction for knowledge construction. As an example, in the academic writing course, she attempted to write a journal article on TESOL-related issues, despite her minimal understanding on the topics. She agentively negotiated her knowledge through mentoring process with academic advisor and lecturers, as well as sharing with classmates. These all open for identity development internalized in Andin’s active classroom participation. She said that:

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#### Excerpt 11

*There were some classroom assignments in my TESOL program such as presentation and writing an article. This writing activity covers the highest point in the classroom task. I was asked to write a topic in TESOL-related issues at that time, and I was blank, not knowing at all. So, for two years of my study, I often asked to my classmates, lecturers, and academic advisor to help explain the topic and mentor me in writing the article. Since that, I began to understand my position and my field, such as who I am and what I am now doing.*

At the end of her study, Andin started realizing the essence of re-designing her English language teaching curricula into a more situated and supported design such as exposing students to a wider variety of global Englishes, empowering teacher professional identity, and involving active classroom activities during the lesson. Reflecting on these projections, Andin intends to internalize her insights as an international graduate student in Australia into her home country teaching contexts. In the interview she shared that:

#### Excerpt 12

*Reflecting on my study abroad experiences, I thought that my previous schooling was too awkward, in the sense that the English language teaching was exclusively referred to British and American styles, while the aim should actually go for an international use of English which covers all varieties of English. Other social factors such as active classroom interaction and teacher continued support in the class are not much present. I feel that the policymakers should consider teachers who have gained experiences abroad as co-agents and co-partners in designing the curriculum. So, this will provide new insights of how to prepare for study abroad and teacher professional development.*

## DISCUSSION

### **Early identity construction and investment in a peripheral community of practice**

The analysis reveals that Andin experienced a gradual and complex identity formation prior to coming to Australia. Her belief on

native speakerism remains influential to her teaching methodology and teacher professional growth during her career as an EFL teacher in the country. Jenks and Lee (2020) explain that this native speakerism has been a prevalent issue in the professional practice of language teaching. Such as a pervasiveness reinforces the teaching of native-like pronunciation (Lee & Kim, 2020), while the need for such an ideal native style is no longer appropriate in multilingual worlds nowadays (Ferri & Magne, 2020). In the same vein with Andin's perception toward the power of British and American Englishes, it is interesting to see that the respect directed to these Inner Circle varieties are also held among language policy-makers in a Cambodian context. In their investigation, Lim and Burns (2019) expose that British and American Englishes are exceedingly cherished as the learning goal in the policy documents.

Importantly, Andin's early identity is gradually developed and interwoven while she received a scholarship and attended pre-departure training program, particularly when she encountered different varieties of English in that program. The initial awareness of other varieties of English may have contributed to this development. Empirical evidence has reported that language teacher professional identity emerged during their self-identification of what good English teachers look like through active discussion about global Englishes-related issues (Widodo, Fang, & Elyas, 2020) and teachers' understanding of other varieties of English is thus worth-noting (Jenkins, 2015).

Furthermore, the analysis also portrays the construct of investment depicted in Andin's agential initiative, by being positively influenced by her undergraduate lecturer and the understanding of her home country's education conditions. This leads Andin to make clear decisions to study abroad and project herself into an imagined community and identity in the future. Furthermore, Andin seems to understand the perceived benefits of returns on her investment. Like a recent study (see Sung, 2020) that explored a Hong Kong university student's L2 learning experiences, investment is mainly associated with particular conditions, dissimilar identities, and intention for membership in the imagined community and identity. It is also worth understanding that through internalizing

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investment in her L2 learning, Andin could posit her ideology, identity, and capital in the process of L2 learning (Darvin & Norton, 2015).

### **Identity constructed through classroom participation in the English-medium university**

Our interview data unpack a salient gendered racialization experienced by Andin during her first year of study in the community of practice. She was marginalized for her long *hijab* and a stereotype view that Muslim women are prohibited to go out home for a study. This analysis indicates consistencies in the previous research on Muslim women in general studying in western universities (see Hass, 2020; Karaman & Christian, 2020; Leet-Otley, 2020), despite the fact that scant attention is directed to female L2 learners. Such a discrimination hampers Andin's participation in the first year of her study. Interestingly, upon identifying this unequal power relationship in the class, Andin struggled to achieve the equal opportunity to belong into membership in the community of practice by showing her academic performance and moving from legitimate peripheral participation to full participation (Flowerdew, 2000).

The study also documents that Andin questioned her competence obtained from her previous community of practice. This is mainly seen from her insecurity of speaking with Australian encounters due to their fast accent. Such feeling may be well explained by several previous works on international students' interactions with native English speakers in the graduate studies (e.g., Ahn, Choi, & Kiaer, 2021; Jeongyeon & Young, 2020; Wang, Ahn, Kim, & Lin-Siegler, 2018). This finding serves as a reflection on the participant's previously-constructed identity as a competent EFL teacher (Jackson, 2017). Although myriad number of studies have documented the rise of global Englishes and English as a lingua franca communication in language teaching (Baker, 2018; Baker & Fang, 2021; Fang & Ren, 2018; Sifakis, 2019), the ideology of native speakerism seems to hold a strong position among EFL teachers (Yang & Jang, 2020) and international graduate students (Schreiber, 2020).

Albeit the participant in this study successfully gained her full participation gradually after the first year of study, we note a moment in

the oral presentation when the participation faced unparalleled problem with understanding her Indian and Chinese speaking in English in the class. This intricacy may occur due to her slight engagement with Outer Circle varieties of English in the previous schooling (Galloway & Rose, 2018). More importantly, previous research unveiled that such an interaction in the English-medium university lies under the framework of ELF communication that considers acceptance and social factors among the speakers (Lee & Kim, 2020).

### **The changes of identity and classroom participation**

This analysis of the findings informs gradual changes in Andin's identity and classroom participation at the end of her study. It is evident that Andin negotiated her knowledge with the lecturer and classmates in her academic writing course. This interaction is mediated by the required reading activity before coming into the class and lecturer's scaffolded explanation. Seen from Andin's movement to the fuller participation in the class, she become aware of the TESOL-related issues and her positionality as an emerging scholar. This finding shed light on the power of social interaction in L2 learning and identity development (Gray & Morton, 2018).

Moreover, the social interaction between Andin with her classmates and lecturers allows for self-identification which acknowledges an informed-pedagogy for Andin's previous schooling. As in the interview, Andin considers a possible re-designing of ELT curricula in her home country. The idea of such a reform is internalized from Andin's lived experiences as an international graduate student in Australia. This finding showcases that reflection and experience are both depicted in the identity exploration (Farrel, 2016).

These narratives have provided a picture of how Andin, as an international graduate student from EFL country, constructed her identity through classroom participation and how her identity changed across time. Through the three-dimensional framework of narrative inquiry, the findings captured Andin's interaction with classmates and lectures, situation of learning activities, and temporality of her previous schooling and its relationship with the present experiences.

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## CONCLUSION

The present study has sought to investigate how an international graduate student constructed her identity through classroom participation in an English-medium university in Australia. The participant experienced gradual and complex identity formation shaped by sociocultural factors in L2 learning and continued negotiation of her identity and English competence in the community of practice. The identity construction was mediated by classroom interaction, activities, and the participation's agency made in order to reach full participation in the classroom.

Although the study recruited single participant and hampered from generalization, the research design made use of three-dimensional frameworks of narrative inquiry that allows for the interwoven of temporality, interaction, and situation in each line of the story. Besides, the findings open for understanding the power of story in unveiling multiple, subjective, and situated lived experiences of L2 learning. Despite these, future research is encouraged to probe into identity construction and classroom participation using a case study approach to look further into other possible social dimensions of L2 socialization (see Duff, 2019).

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