

Learning Investment as a Means of Shaping Learner Identity in Higher Education

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Despite the growing number of research studies on identity and investment in EFL countries, there seems to be insufficient research on the investment and identity in Asian contexts, and research is extremely sparse in the Indonesian context. To fill this void, this study aims to investigate how an Indonesian learner's investment in English shaped her identity as an English language learner. This study was carried out through an in-depth interview both offline and online. Additionally, a narrative analysis was used to examine the Indonesian learner's investment and identity in learning English with regard to her complex real-life experiences. The data were analyzed by referring to learner identity and learner investment as frameworks for the case study. The outcomes of the study found that the learner's professional and well-educated parents supported her investment in terms of time, support, and money for learning English, and as a consequence, the learner was motivated and felt a connection to the language, which gradually shaped her identity across diverse communities as an English language learner. These findings have the pedagogical implication that educational practitioners need to consider not only curricular activities but also extra-curricular activities to facilitate effective learning while fostering investment. Since in many Asia contexts there is a financial component to English language education instruction beyond regular schooling, the parents' view of English language education plays a critical role. This directly impacts a learner's perception of English, their English instruction, and their investment in the language. This study suggests implications for the Southeast Asian and Asian classrooms, considering factors outside the classroom.

Keywords: learning investment, learner identity, higher education, English learning, Indonesian learner

INTRODUCTION

Current studies on investment in language learning and the learners themselves are essential to explore how an individual understands themselves as an EFL learner, as it has impacts on their engagement in the process of learning English. Some scholars have tried to conduct research related to this issue. Norton's (1995, 1997, 2013) work highlights the socially and historically constructed relationships between learners and the English language, which influences their connection to the language and desire to pursue its acquisition (i.e., investment). Lee (2014) revealed that a previous background in learning English from primary school to college is helpful to understand the learner's investment, increasing investment or diminishing it. In the case of increasing investment, the idea is that since the learner has dedicated extended time to learning English through participating in various extracurricular learning opportunities and activities that aim to build English proficiency, and has been rather successful, they may feel a sense of minimal effort spent as well as the absence of language as part of themselves and, therefore, feel a disconnect with the target language community. In the case of diminishing investment, it is essentially the reverse of the above. Despite putting in effort and time, the learner feels unsuccessful, creating a barrier to learning and connecting with the language. Either way, these individual experiences shape the learner's identity over time. The teacher's role is to understand the influence these factors have on students and how they may influence their acceptance of, or resistance to, learning strategies used and topics presented within the context of communicative competence. Furthermore, Teng (2019) found that there is an interrelationship between investment, language learning, and identity development. First, learner identity is historically and socially shaped, and learner identity influences EFL learning. Second, the process of EFL learning is a social practice in which experiences are organized and identities are negotiated during interactions. Third, EFL learners are constantly transitioning from engagement and investment from their old communities (primary school and secondary school) to new communities (university), and display their identity flux within and across diverse communities. In sum, identity is fluid and based on family, educational, social, cultural, and political factors.

In addition, Gu (2008) continued to broaden the view, but in line

with Norton (1995, 1977, 2013), and stated that English language learning entails complex and interrelated issues of motivation, identity, and culture. Likewise, behind some students' participation lies a struggle between identity, culture, ideology, and power. From the current research, it is concluded that the issues of identity and investment in EFL learning are dynamic, not static, and have a uniqueness in the individual identity construction process. As this study engages with renowned literature addressing a broad view of identity involving positive identity, negative identity, and identity conflict, it permits the study's findings to be discussed more than just locally (e.g., in Indonesia) with respect to one English language learner. This study's findings are also applicable more broadly to similar Asian EFL contexts due to the dynamic nature of identity and due to investment in language learning not being generated solely from the individual learner but extensively through family, education, society and government.

In the Indonesian context, where her case study was conducted, Wirza (2018) found that the emergence of identity of Indonesian EFL learners was influenced by the social, cultural, and political dimensions. These factors reshaped their identity even though English was not selected as a foreign language by their choice, but instead, it was imposed through the school curriculum, in which English is a compulsory subject. Al Mubarakah and Prasetya (2020) also describe how Indonesian EFL learners constantly reshape their identity through various learning experiences from the primary school to the university level. In particular, they found that parental support, school policy, and the environment play an essential role in dynamic development of learner identity.

However, despite the growing interest, and consequently the increasing number of research studies, on identity and investment in EFL countries (e.g., Gearing & Roger, 2017; Hajar, 2017; Lee, 2014; Norton & Gao, 2008; Teng, 2019; Vasilopoulos, 2015), there still appears to be insufficient research on investment in language learning and the negotiation of identity in Southeast Asian and East Asian contexts. In particular, the topic has been minimally discussed and/or researched in the Indonesian context (Al Mubarakah & Prasteya, 2020; Wirza, 2018). However, Indonesian learners, like other Southeast and East Asian learners, face a daunting challenge because of the educational, social, and political parameters driving English education in each country, and of course, English is not the dominant language in those countries (Doro,

2007; Manchon, 2008). In addition, English is also increasingly used as a medium of instruction in schools and universities (Lauder, 2010). These conditions make Indonesian EFL learners more reliant on English proficiency and require them to put a significant effort into learning English. The same is true in many countries in East Asia, like Korea where English medium instruction was introduced at various educational levels and took hold in many of those sectors. The contextual insight, the established literature, and the findings from one case presented have pedagogical implications that educational practitioners can consider for not only curricular activities but also extra-curricular activities to facilitate effective learning investment. Thus, it is useful to understand learners' coping strategies regarding investing their time, energy, and various other factors into learning English and constructing their EFL identity.

This research started at the beginning of 2020 in accordance with parental support in examining the learner identity of their child based on established similar work (Al Mubarakah & Prasetya, 2020). The context has potential relevance to the broader context of Asian countries, especially in terms of learning investment models. Although this research solely examines an Indonesian learner's experience in negotiating identity and her investment in learning, the findings offer wider implications for Asian EFL countries when understood within the framework of the established literature addressed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Learner Identity in Language Learning

Identity and language are interrelated. They are not only abstract and theoretical, but they are also essential elements in the process of language learning and teaching. As Norton (1997) stated, identity has interconnected elements relating to the person, their activity, and the local and global social circumstances. As a consequence, the dynamic nature of identity creates the construction of identity across time and space. Also, there is the possibility that individuals see many limited opportunities for their future, impacting investment in language learning and hence, identity. More specifically, Morgan (1995) asserted that identity is dynamic across time and place, which means that the learner

is constantly changing throughout their lives; it might be moving from one institution to another, from one country to another, or from one community to the next, and so on. Therefore, identity is a construct and a guide for the learner to negotiate their place in familiar and new, larger social processes (Teng, 2019).

Further, the possibilities for learners' future success have a significant effect on their level of identity and language learning investment. A simple illustration of this view is that of an immigrant learner's experiences in their home country that may have a significant impact on their identity, but then their experiences are constantly changing and are constructed by their experiences in the new target-language country, transcending across the workplace, school, community, and more (Norton, 1997). Based on this viewpoint is the process of exchanging knowledge, information, and insight into a person who has interaction in their social life while using or learning the target language. Also, they may continuously shape or reshape their identity based on who they are and how they relate to the larger social group or society.

Imagining the desired community is one of the options for increasing multiple identities in the future (Norton & Gao, 2008). Teng (2019) also stated that the classroom is the most likely place for identity construction to occur and depicts sites of identity negotiation and struggles. This is because of the pressures of language learning, which are socially, culturally, politically, and historically situated (Kim, 2003; Lee, 2014; Teng & Bui, 2018). Consequently, students might build up their individual identity and struggle finding ways to recreate or re-shape it within the community they belong to and/or the EFL community of students within the classroom (Lobaton, 2012). Based on everyday situations, language learners seek a more positive environment to modify their language use in the target language and also join the dominant group. This dominant group depends on the context of the learner and oscillates as an individual moves throughout the day and their contexts. Therefore, it is worth noting that negative identity or identity conflict is possible, and common, in the course of an individual's journey in language learning.

The framework guiding this research is that language and identity are dynamic and ongoing processes, accompanied by extraordinary learner experience, and resulting in more than one identity constantly in familiar and new larger social contexts (Teng, 2019). The aforementioned

Indonesian studies suggest the existence of diverse findings. Wirza (2018) revealed that two Indonesian EFL learners were influenced by the sociolinguistic and political landscapes. The participants were struggling to deal with their situations, which were indicative of their agency and investment to overcome the challenges. The participants' personal stories that were unique, rich, and nuanced with the interplay of social, cultural and political dimensions (re)shaping their experiences.

However, Hajar (2017) reported on the effects of teachers, family members, and peers as mediating social agents for two Syrian learners who studied in the United Kingdom in reconstructing their learner identities. He further indicated change in learning motivations and beliefs after going through different teachers' instructional practices with different parental support for each participant. Additionally, Ishiki (2013) revealed how a Filipino American negotiated his identity. Ishiki explained that the participant pretended to be a struggling English learner to fit in with his class, where he was placed with other struggling learners despite his good English proficiency. Furthermore, the participant was excluded from Tagalog-speaking Filipino American classmates due to his lack of fluency in that language, while being accepted in a Japanese-speaking community at his school for his struggle to fit in through learning the language.

Learning Investment in Language Learning

Identity is related to the concept of investment. Norton (2000) pointed out that it is a complex connection between power, identity, and language learning. Language learner identity involves emotional and cognitive processes, and a more powerful identity is constructed through effort and commitment in learning a language, which is termed *investment* (Norton, 2015). In addition, investment is influenced by the learner's desire to engage in social interaction and community practice (Norton, 2000). Based on Norton's work and others, there has been significant attention to the theory of investment in SLA. Ellis (1997), in his book *Second Language Acquisition*, comparing the investment theory of Norton (1995) and that of Schuman (1978), mentioned that investment is learner commitment to learning L2, which is viewed as related to the social identities they construct for themselves as learners. This means that investment is not unitary or static because these cases are holistically depicting the socially and historically constructed relationships between

learner and the target language in the social world without barriers, and with unmeasured spatial and temporal dimensions.

The main reasons for learners to invest in a target language is related to symbolic resources and material resources (Norton, 2013) that can be acquired to permit access to particular communities and/or enhance their learner identities. Symbolic resources means that learners may build their friendships, learning language to master proficiency, and/or gain a high education level through investment. Furthermore, material resources (e.g., capital goods, real estate, and money) mean that when the learner moves across a community, institution, or even country, the value of their cultural, economic, or social capital constantly is changing. Also, it shifts the dimensions of the spatial and temporal (Teng & Bui, 2018). On the other hand, these conditions are contingent on the extent the language learners are willing to invest in a target language, from which they know or come to understand what kind of benefit or impact they will receive for their effort. Thus, the ideas of identity, investment, and imagined community are vital to examine to help language teachers and researchers support learners.

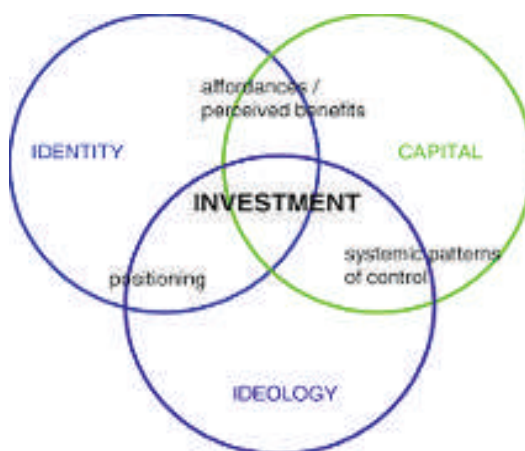
The framework guiding this article and the research on which this discussion is based is that Indonesian learners as well as Asian learners (e.g., Korean learners) have unordinary experiences in using and investing in learning English in the local context and display their flux within and across diverse communities or environments (Al Mubarakah & Prasetya, 2020; Vasilopoulos, 2015). This is because there is a connection between the language learner and dynamic social world, the complex community, and the effort and commitment of the learner in learning a language. This model contains four factors: learners' cognitive awareness/ideology, perceptions of affordances in the English learning community, learners' sense of agency, and disparities between the practiced community and the imagined community (Darvin & Norton, 2015). It is important to note that investment is multifaceted because it is dependent on the capacity and ability of the learners themselves.

The previous studies on this issue present diverse findings. Man, Bui, and Teng (2018) explored the relationship between social learning environments, investment, and the identity development of learners based on their Japanese and English learning experiences. The findings revealed that the investment in language learning was unfixed, dynamic, and subject to the changing context.

As depicted in Darvin and Norton's (2015) model, investment is

located at the intersection of identity, capital, and ideology (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1. Model of Investment (Darvin & Norton, 2015)



Language Learning, Learner Identity, and Investment in the Asian EFL Context

The construction of English learning identity has been an attractive issue in Asian EFL countries. In this section, I present previous studies on how English learning identities have had a connection to how learning investment was sought or somehow planned. Three countries are presented here – Indonesia, South Korea, and Taiwan – as these countries have been categorized as having increased English fluency. Globalization in the Asian EFL context has been campaigned for in 1995 by the governments of the countries concerned (Vasilopoulos, 2015). For this reason, English has been positioned as being the foundation for global success, particularly in terms of economic development and education (Nam, 2005). Therefore, this issue brings Koreans to be more concerned about their English proficiency. In Korea, the use of English in public spaces builds self-enhancement, with some EFL learners even repositioning themselves as educated and “part of the elite” (Kramsch, 2009). Since the ability for Koreans to be Korean–English bilingual is the most desired skill, excessive private tutoring is an alternative for elite

Koreans to gain the best private English instruction (Kim, 2012). A Samsung Economic Research Institute poll revealed that more than 65 percent of household expenditure in Korea was used for private education expenses because of prestige and competition for a high social level (Piesse, 2015). In many cases, Korean families send their child overseas to gain international exposure, and they believe that it is the best way to gain a better career in the future. It has been shown that Korean students are the third-largest group of international students in the United States after Chinese and Indian students (Dhawan, 2021; Vasilopoulos, 2015). In other words, the craze of high financial spending on global education, especially in learning English, creates a gap in Korean society in family income and social issues.

In a similar vein, the phenomenon of “education fever,” also called “educational obsession,” has become a controversial issue (Lee, 2006). On one hand, this phenomenon creates educational opportunity expenses, promotes growth in scope of the political and socio-economic areas, and increases the socio-economic position through higher education. On the other hand, there exists an egoistic attitude among individuals in terms of successful career and life, a competitive education system, and excessive private tutoring (Lee, 2002, 2006). In Indonesia, English enthusiasm can also be understood as an attack on Indonesian learners, especially for the elite in international schools. The establishment of a national identity is part of schooling, particularly in the early years in elementary school. Also, as a consequence of personal experiences, children most often feel comfortable and loyal to what is familiar (i.e., the Indonesian culture and language). Therefore, most learners need to negotiate their English identities based on their core identity derived from their assumed first-language culture (Zacharias, 2012). These phenomena indicate that there is an interrelation of conflict presented by English education fever and English enthusiasm within and EFL context.

In the process, the investment in learning English has affected EFL learners’ identity. Many of the same broader factors discussed in the literature presented for all EFL learners have influenced the learner in this case study, but sociocultural context plays an influential role (Park, 2012). For example, if EFL learners have gained overseas experiences and have friendships and online communication with individuals in English-speaking countries or communicate with an English-speaking community as part of the home country context, they then can be more familiar with negotiating themselves and their identity to adapt to new

environments. The uniqueness of identity negotiation highlighted by Gu (2008) entails complex and interrelated issues of motivation, identity, and culture. As the social context shifts and as the cultural contexts move (e.g., micro-culture: family; group culture: skateboard group; macro-culture: school), so do the dynamics of multiple identities held by the learner and how they negotiate their identity and themselves. Likewise, Gu (2008) highlighted that behind some students' participation lies a struggle between identity, culture, ideology, and power within and across these primary and sub-groups.

Since identity and investment in EFL learning are dynamic rather than static and have uniqueness in the individual identity construction process, it is essential to consider identity and investment in the language learning context as well. Therefore, research in the Korean context on these topics is shared, moving beyond the Indonesian context, yet the discussion highlights how they relate to work cited in the Indonesian context. Despite distinct social, cultural, and political contexts between the two ELT nations' contexts, Hofstede (2001, 2005) and Morgan (2006) have extensively shared paradigms that have been published to establish and share sociocultural norms between the two nations and their ELT contexts.

METHOD

The Participant

To preserve the confidentiality of the case study participant, the name of the participant herein is a pseudonym (female, Kayla), and the participant was recruited for this study. Kayla came from a modest but economically stable family background. Her family's social status due to both parents having professional jobs is upper-middle class but not wealthy. Regardless of external factors, her parents were not particularly focused on academics. Kayla grew up and lived in Samarinda, East Kalimantan, Indonesia. Samarinda is the capital city of the Indonesian province of East Kalimantan on the island of Borneo. The city is the most populous city on the entire island of Borneo within Indonesia but is still provincial in lifestyle in many ways compared to the island of Java and the capital, Jakarta.

The environment itself has a vernacular language called Banjar, but

Kayla's first language is Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia). However, Kayla used Indonesian with the Banjar dialect to communicate with her local friends. In primary school, she learned Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia) as a medium of instruction. In secondary school, she enrolled in an international school called RSBI (Rintisan Sekolah Berbasis Internasional). The medium of instruction was still Indonesian, but the textbooks were in the English language, and international exposure and activities were facilitated by the school. Further, from primary to secondary school, she took some English courses outside of school because her parents realized that she had low grades in English as part of the school curriculum. At the time of this study, she was enrolled in an international program at a private university in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, in which the program implemented English as a medium of instruction. One of the requirements for enrolling in an international program is to have at least a Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) score of 450, and her score was 545. This is possibly in part due to her actively having participated in competitions both national and international, student exchanges, international conferences, and similar events.

Data Collection

Data collection was carried out through an in-depth interview both offline and online. A narrative analysis was used to examine the Indonesian learner's investment and identity in learning English with respect to her complex real-life experiences. Connelly and Clandinin (1999) stated that identities are established through stories that are lived and by exposing learner's underlying personal realities. The use of narrative analysis accommodates personal internal dialogues that are manifested in narratives, revealing identities and unique combinations of the learner's experiences during learning language (Sfard & Prusak, 2005). The participant was guided to reflect on her experiences learning English over time and the participant's perspective in various EFL groups and communities. Since the participant was cooperative, the interview was conducted for more than two hours through an offline interview at her university. Then, there was mixed-meaning data, which required more in-depth information through interviews. The follow-up interviews were conducted online for more than an hour. Thus, it helped to investigate the participant's identity from various perspectives. Further, the researcher used a semi-structured interview technique to

make the situation more comfortable when conducting the interviews. Afterwards, the data were analyzed using Teng's (2019) perspective and Norton's (2013) work on investment and identity.

Data Analysis

Data collection and analysis were conducted in using a thematic analysis. This thematic analysis emphasized identifying, analyzing, and interpreting meaning from what the participant said during the collection of data (Riesman, 2003). In this experience-centered narrative study (Benson, 2014), the participant's stories were examined across her individual account. Since the interviews were conducted several times, the researcher coded the interview transcripts over time. Data analysis was focused on the learner's identity and investment in EFL learning and categorized into certain thematic headings. Second, the results of research and interview transcripts were given to the participant to confirm. The data were repeatedly examined to identify statements related to construction of learner identity or learning investment.

FINDINGS

EFL Learning in Primary and Secondary School: Kayla's Story

Kayla came from an upper-middle class family. Her mother worked at a state-owned corporation and her father worked as a provider of heavy equipment for mining. Likewise, her mother graduated from a management degree program and her father from a law degree program. This afforded Kayla to grow up in a family environment that paid significant attention to education. Moreover, English was something familiar to Kayla's family. This was because some of her family selected to pursue their careers abroad, such as in Singapore and Canada, where English was the first language. Sometimes, Kayla visited them during school holidays or for other purposes like conferences, competitions.

Indirectly, Kayla was exposed to English by her family, however, formal education in primary school was the first place where she learned English. It should be noted that English was one of the compulsory subjects in primary school as regulated by the state curriculum. However, in the second grade of primary school, she said that her English score

was lower than others in the class. Her parents were worried that Kayla was unable to participate in English class learning activities, and specifically EMI (English as a medium of instruction) subjects in the future. Consequently, Kayla joined additional English classes at school, and later outside of school at her parents' request. Indeed, the school provided additional English classes, but these were not required. The school's extra English instruction was conducted every day after school for an hour with the same teacher and peers. However, attending these classes did not last for more than one month because Kayla thought there was no improvement. She thought that the learning activities were boring and tiring, and that the teacher provided a lot of homework.

EFL Learning in an Additional English Course

Kayla's parents searched for other English courses outside of Kayla's school. Eventually, they found one at a local private English institute in Samarinda. Her parents paid the registration fee and also bought an expensive textbook for the Indonesian context. However, Kayla was required to change the textbook for the next chapter every month. Indeed, the price of the course was expensive, and the parents were willing to pay more for Kayla's development for her to gain the best English score in school. During the course, her parents realized that Kayla's competence in terms of English increased, and it had a positive impact on her schooling overall. However, this situation lasted for approximately only one year because over time Kayla looked bored and lost interest to continue her English learning at that private institute. She claimed that new companions and her parents' support were the main reasons she was staying there. In addition, she confessed that the course content there was the same as in her principle school context, which was based on textbooks and was extremely theoretical. Apparently, Kayla's parents observed that Kayla's interest in English was more than just wanting to gain a good score in school. As before, they eagerly began to look for the most renowned English courses at private institutes in Samarinda.

Financial matters were no longer an obstacle for Kayla's parents as long as Kayla was able to learn English well: She would be able to apply her English in the real world, and it would be beneficial to her in the future. Kayla recounted,

“My parents always give support to me to focus on learning English, and they have a big role for my current achievements in English, especially in terms of financial. I know that they spent much money for all I need to learn English. And they always say if you have opportunities, just take it.”

Eventually, Kayla’s parents found a highly regarded English course at another private institute in Samarinda. This was a reputable English institute with a lot of branch locations in Indonesia and worldwide. As well, the English tutors were Indonesians and foreigner instructors from an inner circle country (i.e., a country where English is a first language). In other words, the English course was credible, trusted, and there was a wider opportunity to go abroad to learn English intensively. Indeed, this English course was high-priced compared to other courses, yet according to Kayla, as financial matters were no longer an obstacle for her parents, they enrolled her. During the institute’s program, Kayla was enrolled in a high-level class because her English competencies were above average when adjusted for her age. Subsequently, Kayla’s competence in English increased sharply both in terms of accuracy and fluency. Then, she gained the chance to go to Singapore for a summer camp organized by her English institute. Yet, the program was self-funded and her parents were required to pay the costs. Furthermore, by the time that the summer camp opportunity arose, Kayla had participated in this English institute for approximately five years, which was a lengthy period to participate in an English program outside one’s principle school.

This improvement not only helped Kayla to gain a good score at school but also provided her with a lot of privileges from the people around her. During middle school, Kayla became the prominent student in her English class because she always spoke English more fluently than other students. Hence, she often represented her school in competitions such as conferences, biological sciences, and English debate at either the national or international level. As a result, her teachers and her companions recognized her English competencies even though sometimes she still struggled to understand all of the content of English, when she joined competitions. Apart from this, she made a lot of friends from other countries and currently still is connected with them through social media.

EFL Learning in College

Kayla enrolled as an accounting major in a regular program at one of the private universities in Yogyakarta City. Suddenly, her mother offered her the opportunity to move to a university with an international program that implemented EMI. Kayla doubted her ability to participate after she had taken the TOEFL as one of the requirements. According to Kayla, her mother asserted,

“What are you waiting for? You have a good basic understanding of English, so the TOEFL was not supposed to be an excuse. If you procrastinate to join an international program, it will be difficult because you will miss a lot of subjects. Now or never, kid.”

Eventually, Kayla was accepted as an accounting major in the EMI international program. This condition forced Kayla to learn to adapt to a new environment, residence, friends, teaching–learning atmosphere, learning materials, and other new things.

DISCUSSION

This study drew upon an Indonesian learner’s lived experiences during the investigation of her English language lived experiences of instruction over time, which shaped her identity as an English language learner within the self and society. Findings indicate that professional and well-educated parents supported the learner’s investment in terms of time, effort, and money into learning English consistently and that the learner shaped her identity across diverse communities gradually as an English language learner. As previously explained by Norton (1997), that identity is interconnected with the person, activity, and larger social community in the world. Thus, it is common for an English learner to embrace themselves in local and global social circumstances and be adaptable to the people and underlying activities. To this extent, Norton (2013) also emphasized that the dynamic nature of identity makes identity constructed across time and space. Kayla recounted,

“I learned English due to English as a compulsory subject in my primary school, then I joined an additional English class conducted

by my school, but it didn't take more than one month. I moved to a local English course in Samarinda City, and it took approximately one year. During the national exam, I paused my English course [extracurricular study] then continued to the international English course [institute] in which some tutors were native English. In this English course [institute], I felt confident and lasted up to more than five years. Afterward, I studied in an international based junior high school and regular senior high school. Currently, I study in an international program university. Thus, I am confident and dare to join some international programs both in Indonesia and abroad."

As evident in the analysis, this concept is found throughout the interview. Kayla starts learning English from primary school, continues in various English schools, and then joins some study abroad programs. She also negotiated her identity when moving from one English course to another, from one formal school to another, from a regular program in university to an international program university, from a narrow social environment to a wider environment. For instance, when she studied in a regular program in university, her identity was that of a university student. Then, when she enrolled in a university with an international program study, her identity was that of an international student. Likewise, when she enrolled in some English institutes and schools, she was an English learner. Furthermore, when she joined an international conference or international competition, she was an international delegate. This is in line with Morgan's (1995) perspective that the learner continuously transforms throughout their life through moving from one country to another, from one institution to another, from one community to the next, and so on. It is also important to point out that identity is a key for learners to negotiate their place or environment in a larger and more diverse social sphere (Teng, 2019). Additionally, Wirza (2018) revealed that political landscapes influenced EFL learners' identities, going beyond solely linguistic and social spheres.

Another point that is worth mentioning is that classrooms and another EFL learning community are the places where it is most possible for learners to struggle and rebuild or reshape their individual identity during the teaching and learning process (Lebaton, 2012; Teng, 2019). As revealed in this study, when she first started to learn English, Kayla felt difficulties in learning English and felt the need to study even harder than others. At some time, she was required to reshape her identity when joining an adult-level English class because her score was above average

when adjusted for age. She had to adapt to a new environment because sometimes the learning material was complicated, and it took some time to understand the flow of communication when attempting to talk with her adult classmates. What is important is that the learner gained an understanding of and resiliency in language learning in terms of culture, politics, social circumstance, and history. Thus, the learner had no choice but to negotiate and recreate her individual identity within the classroom (Kim, 2003; Lee, 2014; Teng & Bui, 2018).

It is important to note that based on Norton's (1995) and Schuman's (1978) theory, investment is not unitary and static. As mentioned, it is dynamic because individuals are holistically depicting their socially and historically constructed relationships between themselves as the learner and the target language in the social world without barriers or unmeasured, partial, and temporal dimensions (Ellis, 1997). In Kayla's case, her parents were successful in creating an environment in which she was in an inner circle of people who were learning English. Her parents struggled to find the best English program and invest their money to provide the best English learning facilities for their child. In the same context, in some Asian EFL countries such as Korea, attending English academies for EFL learners increased because of associated prestige and increased social status; it is even common to send children abroad to study with the intention of the child having the opportunity for a better career in the future (Dhawan, 2021; Piesse, 2015). Kayla related,

"I always share and tell my mom if something happens to me during learning English either in school or my English [academy] courses. My mom always understands me if I complain about my English teacher or tutors, my friends in school and English courses [academies] when it is difficult to adapt with them, and I am so happy to have her."

Equally important, Kayla had valuable communication with her parents. Her parents were always good listeners when Kayla conveyed her story on any topic. For instance, Kayla always told them how she was feeling, what happened with her academy companions, or what she had just learned. Afterward, Kayla's parents provided her with advice. Thus, these kinds of communication gave Kayla ample confidence to learn English, and it affected her perceptions of affordances in the English learning community (Darvin & Norton, 2015).

This corroborates Norton's (2015) perspective that language learner

identity involves emotional and cognitive processes. Likewise, investment occurs when the learner makes an effort and a commitment to learning a language. In Kayla's case, she had been learning English for approximately fifteen years continuously:

“There were a lot of ups and downs during learning English. I felt embarrassed by teachers and friends when I failed to win. Also, there was an international science competition and even though science was not my expertise, I selected because my English proficiency is good and it made me more effort to study. Then, I felt uncomfortable with others because I am the only one junior who was selected in every competition.”

The expression that best represents Kayla's journey in learning English is “From writing ‘bubble gum’ to going abroad.” When she was first learning English, she did not know how to spell *bubble gum* in English, and from then, she struggled to learn and gain confidence in English. Ultimately, she joined international competitions in many countries as her school's representative and gained confidence. However, there were ups and downs. At times Kayla found herself in an unaccepting English community, and when she failed to win a competition, her surroundings make her feel inferior when she spoke in English. There were times when Kayla felt bored and became tired of learning English and the time it consumed. In a similar vein, these results are somewhat similar to the findings presented in Man, Bui, and Teng (2018). They are similar in terms of how social learning environments benefit or unravel the construction of learner identity. However, this study highlights the role of parents as one principle factor in an EFL context in creating the foundation to foster an investment in English, which in turn couples well with the learner's negotiation of identity over time, by having a supportive social learning environment. Thus, the parents' investment in their daughter's education and learning process was successful in shaping the participant's learner identity. Therefore, it can be stated that not only an educational role model and scholastic experiences inform learner identity and investment, but so does the home environment. Parents play considerably equal roles as contributors in the construction of learner identity. What can be seen in this analysis is that there were a lot of contributing factors to the participant's past experiences, leading up to the current exploration of her ups and downs in her journey. Ultimately, the learner (i.e., the participant) perceived and acknowledged the benefit

of learning English as part of her identity.

Further, the main reasons for learners to invest in the target language is to gain symbolic resources and material resources (Norton, 2013). As revealed in this study, Kayla requires, and acquires, symbolic resources in terms of building social relationships with English learners and staying connected with her English tutors, international friends, and English classmates in order to master English speaking, gain a higher academic record in the skill, and obtain international opportunities and exposure in the local community. In doing so, she acquired tangible and symbolic resources by moving through diverse English communities and gaining cultural exposure and values when taught by her foreign native-speaking English instructors. What is important is that the learner's (i.e., the participant's) cognitive awareness of her identity development and her perceptions of the affordances of English in particular communities were dependent on her capacity and ability, which is confirmed by the literature (Darvin & Norton, 2015).

What can be seen in the analysis is that there is a similar context between two nations (i.e., Korea and Indonesia) in educational inequality in terms of financial issues, level of education, and social status caused by education fever and English enthusiasm (Seth, 2002). Korean parents are able to send their children to school according to financial ability. For instance, families with mid to low financial status are most often only able to send their child to regular public schools and common cram schools (i.e., as opposed to affluent and well-regarded study institutes). Also they are less likely to send their children to international schools or to attend higher education abroad like many families with mid- to upper-level financial status. There is a stereotype among Asian countries that a high-level education with English proficiency allows a student to obtain a successful career in the future and experience a happy life (Dhawan, 2021; Lee, 2006; Piesse, 2015). On the contrary, people with low-level, manual jobs or the unemployed lack social prestige and respect. In other words, one's level of education determines a person's future career success and social status. Consequently, as is common in Asian collective societies, where public face is primary, depression often occurs because these individuals fail to gain their desired job. Society, and family, view them differently, and their interaction with both is altered. Additionally, English enthusiasm, the "English fever" (Seth, 2002) makes excessive private tutoring common among the most elite Asian students (e.g., Koreans and Indonesians), who are able to gain

entry into the best private English institutes (Kim, 2012). Piesse (2015) and Lee's (2006) analysis revealed that education fever and English enthusiasm are symptoms that tend to have a negative impact rather than a positive one. These phenomena impact English learning investment and EFL learners to shape their identity. As Gu (2008) highlighted, along the learner's journey in learning English lies a struggle between identity, culture, ideology, and power within these primary and sub-groups. Behind the success of English learners, there is a contribution in the past, which means learning investment. In other words, the right investment will shape the learner's identity as well. Since Korea is historically known for having a good educational system, Koreans have an opportunity to make the right decisions as to where or in what way they invest for their child rather than struggle to build the child's motivation to learn.

To respond to the phenomenon of education fever and English enthusiasm in the Asian EFL context, particularly in two nations (i.e., Indonesia and Korea), the author first makes an over-arching suggestion based on the case study: The negotiation of identity of learners and its challenges for EFL learners in a specific context need to be explicit. It needs to be properly monitored and supported by parents, teachers, and community members, and by the learners themselves. For example, parents, teachers and community members can educate each other informally and formally to develop a sense of safety in a student's English identity and investment in their language skills, without fear of negative issues arising from social status, job, etc. Likewise, assistance for EFL learners to develop core confidence in their language abilities instead of having to rely on their parents' advocacy for English education can build maturity and autonomy. Teachers can be supported and trained to be more capable in handling various student characteristics, language abilities, and dynamic identities to facilitate classroom learning. In practical terms, they can be better guided to build good communication and bonding with their students and to support investment and identity development. It is important to acknowledge that this study was conducted on a small scale (i.e., one participant) and does not reflect the investment and identities of all Korean and Indonesian English learners in local or global contexts. However, the findings are able to offer new insight into learning investment and learner identity in the EFL context.

CONCLUSIONS

From the discussion, it is suggested that in the EFL context, especially in Indonesia but also Korea, parents' acknowledgement and development of English language learning investment plays a significant role. By having access to an above-average education (i.e., private school, and/or private institutes/*hagwon*) and parents with professional employment and higher salaries, often matched with social connections, learners are likely to more easily identify the value in learning English. There is no evidence here that closely identifying with the value of English produces increased investment. However, the assumption of a correlation appears logical and could have impacted the case study participant, as well as others with investment in English learning. Effective learner investment creates an understanding of purposeful financial, time, and effort investment for English learning. In this study, the investment was then re-learned by the participant to start building her learner identity in English proficiency.

This study has the pedagogical implications that educational practitioners can consider not only curricular activities but also extra-curricular activities to facilitate effective language learning in connection with the process (i.e., investment) as well as connection within learners individually (i.e., identity). It is important to point out that not all EFL learners can succeed in attaining a high level of language proficiency even if their parents have invested as much as they can afford into such efforts through materials resources and financial support.

Differential access to English education, as discussed in this paper, and with societies' distinct lenses on the value of social and personal identities, as presented here, the question remains as to what instructors in the classroom can do as EFL educators to promote investment and identity negotiation in a healthy manner. This study was limited to a participant with above average financial support, but it serves many sectors and is reflected in the literature, making one individual's experience transferable in part to many that may have similar contexts. It also informs understanding of others in a distinct context, based on the perception of the role that access to English instruction has on the negotiation of identity.

Sociologists seek to uncover the structures and mechanisms that

produce and reproduce the social and economic stratification of different groups of people. Education and schooling systems in modern society are key sites of such socio-economic and cultural production and reproduction.” (Lin, 2008, p. 205)

Regardless of the national context, the sociopolitical context of each country and educational context have a focus; it is helpful to consider that instructors can build investment and identity among students. Nonetheless, since the issue of financial spending for education in Asian EFL contexts (e.g., Indonesia and Korea) is growing, further studies are suggested to explore how successful English learning investment by a family with mid to low financial support may be and how identity is constructed.

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