

A study of three Indonesian teachers' participation in a US graduate program

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Abstract

Many research have focused on the identity construction of Asian teachers (see, among others, Chang, 2004; Cui, 2006; Ha & Que, 2006; Tang, 1997; and Tsui, 2007). Among all these, studies focusing on Indonesian teacher identity construction are rare. Thus, the study aimed at filling the gap. The study examined the identity development of three Indonesian English teachers navigating in an in-service program in the US. The study found that their identities varied with one subject experienced identity shift while others illustrate the case of identity as relatively permanent. Whereas previous studies on L2 teachers have focused primarily on the construction of teacher identity per se, the findings of the study indicated that the construction of the three Indonesian teacher identities were grounded in other identity options such as nonnative speaker, gender as well as learner identity.

Keywords: teacher identity, discourses, cultural identities, gendered identities, imagined communities

Introduction

This article explores narratives on the teacher identity construction told by three Indonesian English teachers. They were participants in a larger qualitative research study conducted at a graduate program at a mid-size university in Pennsylvania. Although the participants saw themselves positioned in multiple ways by the US community, professional identity emerged as a key factor in many of their decisions to participate in an in-service teacher education program. Although the participants came from the same countries, they interpreted the narratives of their teacher identity formations in varied ways, depending on their history, culture and present circumstances.

The article explores the participants' viewpoints on their teacher identities as they negotiated in a US TESOL graduate program. Specifically, the study examines the construction of teacher identity prior to studying in the US, while in the US, and upon returning to their home countries, Indonesia. I understand teacher identity as a constant negotiation and

struggle (MacLure, 1993) between the personal and professional selves (Alsup, 2005; Britzman, 1994; Bullough, Knowles, & Crow, 1992; Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Danielewicz, 2001; Tsui, 2007).

Studies on bilingual English teacher identities

The identity construction of bilingual English teacher has been of interest in applied linguistics for decades. Some earlier articles suggested that bilingual English teachers were often analyzed relative to monolingual English teachers or, more often called “native speakers of English.” As a result, the identities of bilingual English teacher were often understood dichotomously, rather than on a continuum, (e.g. Hinkel, 1994; Hoekje & Linnell, 1994; Kobayashi, 1992; Tyler, 1992) to monolingual English speakers identities. Bilingual teacher identities, then, were constructed based on what they lacked of compared to their monolingual English teachers (see, among others, Shuck, 2006). These studies appear to categorize bilingual English teachers into a single group without demonstrating how variations in culture, gender, prior schooling and educational experiences could have influenced these professional. The dichotomization of nonnative professionals also disregarded the notion that bilingual professional identities could be fluid and multiple (Norton, 1997, 2000, 2006; Pavlenko, 2002, 2003), not binary.

Recently, however, attempts have been made to construct bilingual teachers in a more positive light. Studies were conducted focusing on the professional dimensions of teachers’ lives—in knowing what they are like and what factors influences their teacher identity construction. One significant factor affecting bilingual teacher identity development is their participation in a teacher education program in Western contexts. Investigations of bilingual teachers involved in these programs have looked at the process as a form of socialization into a community of practice (Her, 2005; Morita, 2000; Varghese, 2006).

To examine how Asian in-service teachers negotiate their participation in US communities, scholars in applied linguistics have taken a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches. A common finding of these studies shows that the process of becoming a competent member in L2 communities of practice was challenging and resulted in either enabling access or limiting opportunities for bilingual English learners (see Her, 2005; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000). These studies also highlighted the importance of participation in a community of practice as a form of constructing identity. As Wenger (1998) states, “We define who we are by the ways we experience ourselves through participation as well as by the ways we and others reify ourselves” (p.149). The processes of identity

construction described in these studies demonstrate the complexities of developing a professional identity in a context where the linguistic resource and previous experience of subjects can be interpreted differently, depending on the positions of members in the community.

Studies also indicated that the identities of L2 learners change as a result of participation in US academic communities (Park, 2006; Pavlenko, 2003; Samimy & Brutt-Griffler, 1999). Pavlenko's (2003) study pointed out the significant role of classroom readings and discussion, in this case on bilingualism and multicompetence, in providing alternative identity options. Generally, her nonnative in-service teachers were the ones who most actively engaged in reconstructing their nonnative identities into more empowering multicompetent English speakers. Pavlenko explained this was because they were the ones whose legitimacy as professionals was mostly challenged by the NS/NNS dichotomy. A slightly different finding was found in Her's (2005) study. She studied three Korean in-service teachers participation in a MA program in the US. The data demonstrated that each of the subjects reacted to the critical perspectives in the MA program differently. If two of the subjects actively engaged in these discourses and felt empowered by them, one subject, Jin, did not seem to be influenced by the new identity option offered by the critical pedagogies.

Among all the studies, research focusing on Indonesian teachers negotiating in the US was rare. This was the sole reason why this study was needed. The study examined the lived experience of three international, as opposed to immigrants, Indonesian English teachers as a way to further acknowledge the diversity within the nonnative speaker continuum. Scholars argue that teachers are not empty vessels waiting to be filled with theoretical and pedagogical skills, but they are individuals who enter teacher education programs with prior experience, personal values, and beliefs that inform their knowledge about teaching and shape how they negotiate their participation in the classroom.

Research Methodology

In this study, individual interviews were conducted with Indonesian English teachers as a means of gathering data concerning how the teacher participants conceptualized their teacher identity formation whilst their participation in a US graduate program. The major question guiding the study was: How did the three Indonesian teachers negotiate their teacher identities as they participated in a US graduate program? Although semidirected, the interview questions were open-ended to elicit a richer set of responses and allow teachers more freedom to explore personal struggles (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). The interviews in this study were designed to

explore participants' perspectives and responses to factors affecting the construction of their teacher identities by focusing on three areas: (a) their perceptions of what constituted Indonesian teachers; (b) their academic and cultural adaptation in the academic community; and (c) their visions upon returning to Indonesia.

The teachers who participated in this study were recruited through contacts with mutual friends. Participants were three Indonesian teachers in their mid twenties to mid thirties with teacher experiences ranging from two to five years. They taught English in universities located in different parts of Indonesia. The interviews presented here are part of a larger study that included interviews with twelve Asian English teachers over the course of eight months. During this time, I had frequent informal conversations with the teachers and conducted three one-hour formal interview with each participant at the school site. Each interview was audiotaped and then transcribed for analysis. The participant statements from transcripts were then coded according to the previously mentioned categories and analyzed for recurring patterns (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The analysis included an examination of expressed attitudes, contradictions, and conceptualizations concerning key issues related to their teacher identities. It would be impractical to include all the information obtained from the interviews in this article. I have selected several typical examples of the responses to illustrate the participants' identity construction.

Snapshot of the Participants

The three teachers consented to be part of the study. Fatur, Nesiani, and Ido were all trilinguals. All of the three teachers were hired in the university either as part time or tenure-track English teachers. In Indonesia, the process of becoming an English teacher involved obtaining bachelor degree in English and received a teaching certification from the government. Fatur, Nesiani, and Ido were all Fulbright scholarship grantees. The selection of attaining the scholarship include interview on their study plans and TOEFL score of at least 550.

Fatur was an English teacher from Aceh, North Sumatra. Prior to studying in the US, he has been teaching English for three years at three different places: a high school, a private course and a university. Other than being a teacher of English, Fatur also was an English-Indonesian translators working at a nongovernmental organization (NGO). At the time of the study he was living in the US for 1.5 years. *Ido*, an English teacher from Jember, has taught English for 5 years. He was a tenure-track faculty at *Politeknik Negeri Jember* (Vocational College) and a guest lecturer at State University of Jember. He received awards to attend several professional development programs in Singapore before studying in the US. *Nesiani* was an English

teacher from Yogyakarta who taught English for approximately five years at Indonesian Islamic University. She taught General English as well as TOEFL Preparation program. Similar to Fatur, she was living in the US for 1.5 years when the study started.

For the purposes of this discussion, I am lumping together the three teachers into one essentialistic category: Indonesian teachers. I acknowledge the fact that there are differences between each of them and that the term itself is problematic. Nevertheless, I believe that the narrative analysis is equally relevant for the three of them, however different they are, and hence those narratives, may be.

Findings and Discussion

The discourses informing Indonesian teacher identities

Informed by authors such as Marsh (2002), I defined discourses as frameworks of thought and actions that individuals draw upon in order to speak and interact with one another in meaningful ways. Discourses are historically, culturally, politically, and socially generated patterns of thinking, speaking, acting, and interacting that are sanctioned by a particular group of people (Burman, 1994; Fairclough, 1989; Gee, 1996). In this section, I examined individual's teacher identities that shape and are shaped by the discourses that are made available to them.

The meaning of "Indonesian teacher identity" is likely to vary with the circumstances of each individual teacher although they all agreed Indonesian teachers were different from teachers from other countries. For Ido, Indonesian teachers in general were *Pahlawan tanpa tanda jasa* (Heroes without medals). The words *Pahlawan tanpa tanda Jasa* was a title of a song dedicated to teachers. Since then the title of the song has become a slogan to salute and honor teachers' dedication to education. The slogan also highlights the low wages of Indonesian teachers. Low wages combined with a cost of living means that they need to make more money to make ends meet. Due to the pressure of making ends meet, Fatur's, Ido's and Nesiani's narratives seemed to show how they let their professional lives dominated their personal lives. A typical example is Nesiani. She, a graduate of the teacher-training department at the university in Yogyakarta, who was now an English teacher at a language centre in the same city. Other than teaching English, Nesiani hold a managerial role in the department which required her to stay in the office from 8 AM to 3 PM. Afterwards, from 3 PM-9 PM she still needed to teach three to four English classes. She described her life as "a robot" following a similar set of routines and left a little room for her personal life, let alone developed professionally. Nesiani's routine reflects the complexity of being a teacher in Indonesia. In any case, in order to earn

enough money to get by, teachers generally cannot restrict themselves to a single job; and at the same time even accept jobs that are not related to teaching, like Fatur. In addition to teaching English in three different institutions, he also translates documents from English to Indonesian.

Ido's narratives, however, were characterized by a tendency to position himself by drawing attention to the way in which he differed from other teachers. The following narrative account exemplified his dedication to teach although he was only paid fifty cents per hour:

Because [it] like only [pay] lima ribu [five thousand rupiahs] per hour yea [...] many of my colleges rejected this offer but OK I took it [...] [because] [I] could promote like networking among teacher and student across university not only this I have been working outside my university so I can do it a form of networking (12/20/07).

In the narrative Ido took the care that he was not like other teachers with whom he worked and that was reflected in his practice, which was centered on his strong sense of dedication to his profession. His understanding of dedicated teachers was those who were oriented towards job, not material rewards.

Other discourses affecting Indonesian teachers derived from the meaning of the word *guru*, an Indonesian word for teachers. *Guru* stands for *sing diguGU lan ditiRU* or "to be listened to and model after" (Widiyanto, 2005). Widiyanto (2005) explains *guru* in Indonesia was then an ideal model of a member of the society. Consequently, all *gurus* should give good examples in manners and behaviors, and members of society should also imitate those examples in their daily practice. This phenomenon was also reflected in Ido's narratives. For Ido his teacher identity projected a certain prestige and trust. In the following interview excerpt, Ido narrated how being a university professor increased his potential to be a favorable candidate for a husband in his neighborhood:

before I met my wife ... at that time [...] when I was employed [as a university lecturer] many of my neighbors try to match me with girls [...] because you are already teacher so I think many girls OK accept you and marital proposal and then three months later on I met with my wife then OK so ... [laughed] I have to acknowledge that I am a teacher at university and then she thought OK that's why and she asked like the approval from her parents and they are OK because you know the values of becoming a teacher in terms of social perspective is very high (12/20/2007).

Ido's narratives suggested that teachers were an indication of a good individual because of social expectations. From Ido's perspective, the personal selves was guided by the social norms of their profession and tended to develop in harmony with them. In other words, the professional largely acted as a guiding force, contributing to the formation of teacher and personal identities.

If Ido's narratives suggested the positive impact of being a teacher to his personal identity, the narratives of Nesiani suggests subtle tensions in her negotiations of her teacher identity. Nesiani narrated that being a teacher somehow created a certain burden because people expected her to behave in a certain way everywhere and everytime. Actually, she did not want to behave as a teacher everywhere but she was somehow "forced" to do so because the society expected a teacher to behave in a certain way. Her narratives implied that she was submissive to follow the societal expectations of a teacher. The fact that she was compelled to behave like a teacher everywhere implied a certain tension in her negotiation.

Another discourse affecting Indonesian teacher identity construction was religion. Fatur and Ido agreed that being a good Indonesian teacher was equal to being a religious person. In Indonesia, a teacher is the epitomy of good conducts and morals and this was partly driven from religion. Take for example Ido. In his case, being a good teacher was equal to being a good Muslim and being a teacher is a God-driven duty:

Because the holy book Al-Quran said ... you have to educated others for the sake of God not for the sake of your own that's why before I applied to be come a teacher I asked myself "Are these duties in the name of God?" (12/20/07).

In Islam, Ido explains being a teacher was considered as one of the good deeds that God would consider when one passed away:

In Islam teaching we have three tenets [...] First you have to dedicate yourself to your parents [...]. Second you need to share your knowledge and skills with others in need. For example if you find people who cannot read then, you have the responsibility to teach them even small things like reading one sentence. And third, you have to help others (12/20/07).

Nesiani's narratives, however, illustrated a subtle resistant to the idea of the interrelatedness of religion and teacher identity. For her, one's religion should not be the basis of determining a teacher's competence. She was basing her view on her experience of having a teacher who was a self-

proclaimed atheist. Although he did not have a religion, Nesiani remembered him as a good teacher and a kind person.

The last discourse affecting teacher identity construction was native speakerism. Fatur, Nesiani and Ido voice their concerns of the native speaker myths permeating through the English language teaching and learning in their contexts. In Nesiani's school, for example, local teachers were paid five times less than "native-speaker" teachers although some of those natives did not have adequate qualification in teaching English. Similar practice occurred in Ido's and Fatur's institutions. When asked why they did not do anything about it, their responses indicated that throughout their education, they have made to believe that native speakers were positioned by the institutions and society at large as the model of English use. Ido narrated that one day he asked a native speaker teacher, "John", about research in English language teaching. To his astonishment, John could not help him because he did not know anything about research in English language teaching. Although that small incident was the beginning for Ido's doubt of the native speaker myth pervasive in EFL contexts, he remained silent. It seems he did not have any platform to resist such domination.

Although all Fatur, Ido and Nesiani agreed of being subject to the native speaker myth, their narratives illustrated no doubt about their identity as lecturers teaching English at Indonesian universities (also, for example, Li, 2007). All of them were proud to be teachers. Nesiani mentioned being an *English* teacher, in particular, brought an added value because Indonesian society generally perceived people who were proficient in English as smart. Fatur was proud of his American-accented English, which reaped a lot of complements particularly because he never stepped foot in English-speaking countries. Although all of them were aware that they were nonnative speaker of English, the awareness did not seem to affect their confidence of being English teachers.

The narratives of Fatur, Ido and Nesiani illustrate that their teacher identity constructions were informed by multiple discourses derived from the sociocultural contexts. Their narratives were varied with Fatur's and Ido's narratives somehow able to achieve "narrative coherence" (Clandinin et al., 2006, p. 10) whereas Nesiani's narratives exemplified subtle tension in her negotiations. Despite the variations, all of them were certain of their teacher identities.

Multiple identities "consumed" by NonNative identities

The subjects' narratives illustrate that their teacher identities became "an issue" (Delanty, 2003, p. 135) when they were participating in a US academic community. Suddenly, they needed to justify and make sense of

what it took to be a teacher of English. They became more sensitive of their nonnative status. Instead of introducing themselves as teachers of English, Fatur and Nesiani felt more comfortable introducing themselves as learners of English, an identity that allowed room for imperfection in their English. Nesiani described her English as “problematic.” In the following narrative account, she described her ambivalent feeling of being misunderstood by her US friend:

when I was speaking [...] they get really impatient because they cannot understand what we are talking about because in terms of pronunciation the way we pronunciation words sometimes is not understandable sometimes I have problem with that and I got frustrated and they say what? What is it? Sorry pardon [I said] [I wonder] is it because of my tongue or is it because of their ears [laughing] (2/25/08).

What was interesting from Nesiani’s narratives is her silent attempt to resist such an undesirable identities of a nonnative speaker imposed by her conversation partner. Although she did apologize for her mispronouncing some words to her US friend, she was doubtful if she was the one who was entirely responsible for the communication breakdown.

Different from Nesiani and Fatur, Ido did not seem to be affected by his nonnative status. While Nesiani felt inferior when conversing with US nationals, Ido claimed that he did not feel inadequate as an L2 English teacher despite his personal belief that native speakers should be the model of a competent English user. Ido’s confidence appears to stem from his strong academic background. Ido who holds a bachelor degree in teaching EFL had attended several teacher education programs such as Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Linguistics and a Short Course on Language Curriculum and Materials Development both at SEAMEO-Regional Language Centre, Singapore under the Jack. C. Richards’ Scholarship. It was during those times that he continued to develop himself professionally by publishing three articles in peer-reviewed journals in the areas of teaching writing and grammar. His continuous academic endeavour and achievements paves the way to his construction as a teacher-scholar, rather than a reduced Non-Native English Speaker identity that was often imposed by the Native-English Speaker counterparts that he interacted with.

Ido also seemed to be assertive in deflecting the identity of “less-able” nonnative speaker imposed by his nativespeaker friends. In the following narrative account, Ido describes his feelings when his native speaker friend questioned his grammatical competence:

once I design my teaching materials and then she said ah I forgot in terms of pronunciation she [said] 'hey this is wrong' 'what is wrong?' [I asked] because she said that everyone can be plural right? [...] but for me it's incorrect because everyone can be he or she right? [...] It's the way I grew up with English so OK so but before I came up with like good understanding I quarrel with her (5/6/08)

In another narrative account, he narrates how he felt looked down upon when his native speaker friend asked his grade:

when I attended 'Introduction to TESOL' taught by Dr. T one of my American classmates like feel proud "ey Ido I got A" [he said] so [...] [he is a] native speaker [he asked] "how about you?" "A plus" [Ido answered] 'a .. how did you get more than I?' [he asked] so [Ido wondered] "who do you think you are?" and I walked away (5/6/08)

In both narrative accounts, Ido seems to negotiate not only his competence but also his identities. He did not want to be constructed as a less competent English speaker and attempted to project more empowering identities. In the first narrative, prior to accepting his native speaker suggestion, he "quarrel with her" to show his resistance. A slightly different resistance approach was employed in the second narrative. He resisted the undesirable nonnative identity by saying he got "A plus"; a grade higher than his native-speaker friend. When his friend asked further why his grade was higher than his, rather than answering the question, Ido chose to keep silent and walked away. I understand his act as a way to avoid confrontation; a cultural value upheld in Javanese society.

To sum up, the subjects' narratives concurred with the perspective that teacher identity changes as one transitions from one sociocultural context to another (Cote & Levine, 2002; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000). When they were in Indonesia, subjects did not seem to feel the need to justify and make sense their teacher selves to themselves and others. For Fatur and Nesiani, being in the US foregrounded their nonnative identities and thus, fragmented their narrative coherence of their teacher identities. It seemed that their multiple identities, among others, as a bilingual and an EFL teacher were subsumed into one single identity: a nonnative English speaker. In the case of Ido, his solid teacher-scholar background seemed to prevent him to be submissive to his nonnativeness. Instead, he was active in resisting the nonnative positioning casted on him by his US friends.

The NonNative self empowered by critical pedagogy

One notable finding was that subjects experienced shifting identities on how they perceived their nonativeness after participating in graduate classes dealing with issues of bilingualism, nativespeakerism and second language identities (hereafter, critical pedagogy). Fatur described his shifting identities as “liberation from the confinement of native speakerism.” Prior to studying in the US, Fatur understood nonnative speakers, himself included, largely in terms of their limitations or deficiency, he gradually saw such a notion as negative and problematic and thus, attempted to avoid the use of words “native” or “nonnative” speakers in his future teaching. The new discourse also made him aware of his other identity options: his identity as a bilingual. The following interview excerpt illustrate his transformation:

back there [...] I did not consider English my languages I consider it as a foreign language [...] I speak others' language [...] I remember one article that I read ... about bilingual and then I realized I was a bilingual or multilingual ...I knew when I was here ... so I never knew I was multilingual and then all of these languages are mine you know all of these languages are mine so it's really changes when I am here so it's more like I become more aware of who I am (5/5/08).

The new discourse he encountered in the graduate program was fulfilling because it provided him with new ways of identification. It helps him to reposition himself in relation to English and his other languages. Fatur's profound transformation was not only occurred around his identity as a nonnative speaker but also how he perceived the identity of a teacher:

here I really change ... there is a process that I've been going through because in the past I've been constructing my belief about teaching practices in certain way ... for example the role of teacher in the past I believe teacher is the one who provides knowledge right so now it's changing ... I deconstruct that and then I reconstruct a new way of viewing teacher [...] in the past when my teacher says that's bad way of teaching I tend to follow and tend to not do it right now if they say it's bad, I'll still try maybe it will work for a certain context [...] so when I came here [the U.S.] I have to deconstruct my belief of teachers as someone that always right ...and reconstruct so right now I am actually in the process of reconstructing [...] never ending process (5/5/08).

Nesiani's profound shift was related to her different accent. In the first interview conducted during the beginning of her stay, she continuously referred to her English pronunciation as "problematic." However, it was only after learning a great deal of academic discourse, she seemed to grow more tolerant of her accented pronunciation:

... the most important thing for me is they can understand what I am talking about so a ... accent actually doesn't really matter for me [...] I mean nonnative speaker will always have accent they cannot leave their accent so I don't feel I don't feel really intimidated as well (5/6/08).

The above excerpt illustrates her different positioning in relation to her pronunciation. Her focus shifted from trying to emulate native speakers' pronunciation to the intelligibility of her different pronunciation.

If Nesiani develop tolerance of her accented pronunciation, the critical discourse Fatur learned in the graduate program made him question his American-accented pronunciation:

because I believe in [...] world Englishes ... sometimes I wonder if I should change my pronunciation ... my Indonesian friend said ... "you are so funny you believe in World Englishes but you use American English" he said well ... nothing wrong with that [having American pronunciation] I mean you know I am not prescribing students to follow me you know (5/5/08).

Fatur's narrative reflects the multiplicity and contradictory nature of identity (Pierce, 1995). The new discourse has resulted in Fatur's questioning his pronunciation ("I wonder if I should change my pronunciation"). This was particularly triggered by his Indonesian friend's remarks, which questioned the discrepancy between his belief in World Englishes and his American-accented pronunciation. Confronted with such an inconsistency, Fatur chose to retain his American pronunciation ("nothing wrong with that"). He contended that accepting the notion of World Englishes did not necessarily mean he needed to change his pronunciation. In a similar interview, Fatur was determined not to prescribe any pronunciation model for his students and left it to them to make the choice.

When asked how he viewed his education in the US, Ido responded that generally many things that he learned in the program made him a better teacher. Prior to coming to the program Ido adored teaching methodologies from the West and always found solution to teaching problems from the West. However, from readings concept related to "postmethod pedagogy"

(Kumaravadivelu, 2003, 2005). Ido started to see the role of local teachers as “problem solvers” rather than “followers of Western pedagogy.” He underlined that in the past he only perceived his role as a consumer of Western knowledge. He sought help for teaching problems from the West, rather than from himself. His ownership was buried under the innovation from the West and he forgot that he, too, was capable of producing knowledge. According to Johnson and Golombek (2001), to be a knowledge producer is to reconceptualize what knowledge is and who holds it. Thus, Johnson and Golombek (2001) asserts L2 teachers, like Ido, needs to believe that they were not only possessors of knowledge, but also creators of knowledge. Ido felt the education he received in the US instilled the belief that he too can be a producer of knowledge.

In summary, I have so far discussed the impacts of alternative discourses on how the three Indonesian’s taking up new positions. The new discourses they encountered activated their agency, helping them rediscover competence and embrace their lived and living histories.

Justifying good Muslim identities in the land of the NonMuslims

Being in the US also compelled Fatur, Nesiani and Ido to negotiate their religious identities. For Fatur, Nesiani and Ido their religions were an intrinsic part of their identity construction. In Indonesia, being a Muslim projected the identity of a good individual. In the US being a Muslim brought certain tensions. Ido and Fatur felt challenged to justify that not all Muslims were terrorists. Ido in particular constantly attempted to show that Islam was a peaceful religion by showing more tolerant.

Ido explained that being in the US has widened his understanding of US people. In Indonesia, the media made them believe that the US was antagonistic to Muslims including himself. However, his personal experience depicted otherwise. During *Ramadhan* (fasting month), Ido explains, all the professors in the program always gave time to *break fast*. In the university, he also did not encounter difficulties finding rooms to pray. Although people generally were considerate and showed tolerance of their Islam, all the subjects felt being a minority.

Being an Indonesian learner in a US classroom

In participating in a US academic community, Fatur, Ido, and Nesiani not only needed to negotiate their teacher identity but also their learner identities. Her (2005) contended that the acquisition process of L2 academic literacy requires students to come to terms with new ways of making sense of literacy practices that may be at odds with their L1 literacy.

The subjects' narratives, however, described various stances when discussing their adaptation in the classroom. In their narratives Fatur and Ido voiced their disagreement about the western stereotype of Asian learners as inactive and critical. Fatur considered himself an active learner regardless the sociocultural contexts. Ido's learner's identity was slightly different from Fatur's. His narratives illustrated how his classroom participation pattern was mediated by the presence of native speaker classmates. In fact, he saw them as competitors:

when I attended that class taught by Dr. DS [...] all Americans but I was challenged to participate in the class because I need to show even I am not a native speaker I could participate in the class [...] because many native speakers [...] look us down [...] it is because he is not native speaker so he couldn't participate in the class [...] but that judgement is wrong (2/1/08).

From his viewpoint, his native speaker classmates looked down on him because of his non-nativeness. Thus, his active participation was an act to resist the stereotypical identities of nonnative speakers as silent and inactive learners.

Among the three subjects perhaps Nesiani's learner identity was most complex. She preferred to be silent in the classroom unless she was forced to speak by the teacher. She speculated perhaps growing up in a paternalistic society, in which women "needs to listen more" (2/25/08) and "speak less [...] and wait till the males speak first," (2/25/08) affected her classroom participation patterns. In the beginning of her stay in the US, her narratives demonstrated her struggle to be more active for fear of being constructed as not wanting to learn by US professors and friends. However, the process was unsuccessful because of her gendered cultural identity which viewed women talking too much as arrogant and impolite. Nesiani's narratives, thus, portrayed a dilemma. On the one hand, she desired a full membership in the academic community, which seemed to require speaking up like other U.S. members; on the other hand, she did not want to develop what her culture perceived as an arrogant communicative style.

If Fatur claimed did not experience any shifts in his learner identity, Nesiani's identity shift was more internal. Even after participating in several classes, she continued to remain quiet in the classroom although she felt less pressured to be like US students. In response to the question "Why you remain silent in the classroom?," Nesiani gave the following answer:

because I believe that being silent doesn't mean you don't know anything you silent because because silent is golden

(laughed) I mean [...] it's cool i mean if you silent actually you know everything but when your professor ask you to say something and then you just say and you say the right thing and I enjoyed that moment [laughed] I mean rather than keep on talking for no reason talking nonsense and we don't know what we are talking about it's like we are not ready to talk but we have that desire to talk (5/6/08)

Nesiani's academic adaptation and internal shifts seemed to be more grounded in her cultural identity. Her conscious decision to be silent, rather than initiate a talk in the classroom interaction was an act of humbleness, which was greatly valued in her culture. Liu (2001) explains that silence was perceived by "expressive culture" (p.190) such as the U.S., and "receptive culture" (p.190) like Indonesia, differently. Liu (2001) further explained that for receptive cultures, silence indicated strength and power. For Nesiani, being silent when she actually knew the answer to a question projected a powerfully humbling identity. Thus, she was actively negotiating her multiple identities in the classroom even when she appeared to be passive or withdrawn.

Although the three subjects came from the same countries, the way they negotiated their learner identities varied from one another. Both Fatur's and Nesiani's learner identities to a certain extent depicted relative permanency although they were significantly different from each other. Fatur preferred to be an active learner and continued to be one even after living in the US. In the beginning of her stay, Nesiani opted for silence although she was conflicted and fear of being constructed negatively as an incompetent student due to her silence. Overtime, she was comfortable of her silence and viewed it as an act to project her gendered cultural identity of being humble.

Envisioning teacher identities

Identities are not only about negotiating the past and present but also future trajectories (Block, 2007; Kanno, 2003; Norton, 2000). One major characteristic of the subjects in contrast with those in most research on ESL education and bilinguals is that they were temporary sojourners in the host country as opposed to permanent residents. They arrived in the US knowing that one day they were going to leave. The narratives of the subjects in this study illustrate the significance influence of the trajectory of going home to teacher identities. The imagined future teacher identities of Fatur, Ido and Nesiani were likely to vary with the circumstances of each individual teacher.

Both Fatur and Nesiani imagined a teacher identity as an agent of change. Fatur aimed to cultivate learners who were proud of their own cultures and used English to promote local and national cultures. Nesiani attempted to educate learners to be more independent and critical, including those that could challenge teachers. However, she was doubtful if she could implement the changes because “everybody should work together it will be [...] almost impossible for me myself, only me, to do something ... [and] others don't do anything” (5/6/08). Nesiani's pedagogy of change appeared to be rooted in Javanese cultural value of *gotong royong* or “joint bearing of burdens” (Geertz, 1983) that put emphasis on the cooperation of many people to attain a shared goal. For her it was impossible to initiate changes if people in her department did not support them.

Ido imagined a future teacher identity as an exploratory and reflective teacher, rather than a good teacher. In his understanding a good teacher did imply the idea of continuity in learning. He intended to ask students to write reflective journal about their own learning. Ido believe change was only effective when it came from the students rather than initiated by teachers.

Different from Nesiani and Ido who were excited going home to transfer the acquired Western knowledge into practice, Fatur articulated concerns about going back teaching in his previous institution. He envisioned future imagined community that would challenge and reject his identity as an agent of change because:

I bring something new and they will hate me [...] they will hate me even if I wanna do something [...] they might think “O common because you have master degree and you have a higher degree than me and then you wanna challenge us how many years have you been working? Are you senior enough?” [...] That's the question they have [...] because in their mind I am just a kid [...] that's why I am not excited about teaching (2/7/08)

Fatur's narratives pointed out two institutions, the graduate program in the US and the work place back home, that had a large impact on his experiences and identity constructions. The experience he had in the graduate program led him to take the role of agent of change (“I bring something new), which might challenge the status quo. He was fully aware that the new role he opted would impede, rather than assist, his reentry into his previous community.

Conclusion and pedagogical implication

The study examined the teacher identity development of three Indonesian teachers by analyzing their narratives while participating in a US graduate program. Although all of them came from Indonesia, their narratives were not uniform or depicted a uniform sense of Indonesian teachers. In other words, a coherent CoP of Indonesian teachers was not particularly evident in this study. The analysis of the subjects' narratives illustrate their teacher identities as situated and were often based on their changing sense of competence and legitimacy as a member of a given community. The findings of the study supported studies conducted by Samimy and Brutt-Griffler (1999), Pavlenko (2003) and Ha (2008) highlighting the significance role of classroom discourse as an identity function and an education tool for subjects' participation in U.S. communities of practice. During the first few months, some participants described their nonnative status as inhibiting their access into US communities of practice. However, after participating in several courses focusing on issues related to bilingualism and nativeness, they started to identify themselves in a more positive way.

The study suggests the importance of reintegration issues of returnee in-service teachers. In the discussion of the education of culturally diverse students, universities tend to concentrate on the cultural adjustment of newly arrived international students but rarely on returnee in-service teachers. The interviews raised the concerns of Fatur about going back to their home countries. His particular concerns centered on the abilities of their home institutions to accommodate their shifting identities. Nesiani stated that she could not apply all the things she learned in the graduate program if it was not supported by the department.

When we think of the relationship between individuals and communities of practice in which they participate, it is important to remember that not only do the individuals change as a result of their learning and social participation but so do the communities. Lave and Wenger (1991) pointed out "communities of practices are engaged in the generative process of producing their own future" (pp.57-58). Kanno (2003) maintains that a dynamic community that can sustain its vitality and relevance over time may be characterized as one that is capable of rejuvenating itself by integrating the input of newcomers into its practice. In this study, however, the home university/institution was perceived to be resistant to change as seen from the narratives of Fatur. He felt that the home university practices impeded rather than assisted identity development of the teacher returnees. The subjects' narratives illustrated some subjects' concerns to adapt to the

system of the university, rather than the university adjusted their system to the needs of the returnee teachers. Kanno (2003) believes that these institutions were traditionally developed for the education of monolingual and monocultural people, thus, bilingual and bicultural people, as the subjects in this study, experience major adjustment to make which were not supported, even, acknowledged by the home universities or institutions.

Certainly, this is not an easy job. In contrast to the vast literature available on how to support new arrivals, there is a conspicuous dearth of information on how to support those in-service teachers once they return to their home countries. Thus, research on the needs of these returnee teachers once they were back in their home countries is crucial. Failure to do so will make universities/institutions unable to utilize the knowledge and skill that returnee-teachers have gained through their studies to the fullest.

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