

EXPLORING INTERCULTURAL CAPABILITY ON INDONESIAN TEACHERS OF ENGLISH: A NARRATIVE STUDY

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EXPLORING INTERCULTURAL CAPABILITY ON INDONESIAN TEACHERS OF ENGLISH: A NARRATIVE STUDY

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Abstract: This paper presents a study on the development of Indonesian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' intercultural capability in an overseas study program and its impacts on classroom English Language teaching practices. By using narrative inquiry as a research methodology, this study draws on the stories of two Indonesian EFL teachers' experiences of intercultural learning during the master's degree program overseas. Data were gathered through semi-structured individual interviews with Indonesian EFL teachers who have completed Master of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) studies in Australia. Findings show that communication and cultural disequilibrium in an overseas study program plays a crucial role in the development of EFL teachers' intercultural capability to enable them to develop their attributes from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism. The findings also reveal that although the teachers become interculturally capable, the overseas study program does not necessarily contribute to their oral English skill development. As a further result, this study reveals that the development of the teachers' intercultural capability affects their subsequent classroom English teaching practices in a way that they begin to employ dialogical communication and interaction by reflecting on their past experiences.

Keywords: *English as Foreign Language, intercultural capability, communicative interaction, English teachers*

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INTRODUCTION

The demands for education and internationally recognized degrees are significantly increasing. These phenomena lead to an escalating number of people pursuing higher education overseas, to develop their communication and intercultural skills by being exposed to international dimensions.

On the other hand, considering those skills and attributes that are urgently needed internationally, the Indonesian government has decided to allocate 20 percent of the country's budget to provide considerable educational opportunities through a scholarship program which goes by the name '*Lembaga Pengelola Dana Pendidikan*' (English: 'Indonesia Endowment Fund') for the past decade (Tanuwidjaya, 2017). Along with this policy, acquiring international foreign language proficiency and improving individual's intercultural competence in this globalizing era (Zhang & Zhou, 2019) are believed to be the main reasons why a massive number of Indonesian students are pursuing their studies overseas. They hope for a significant increase in their linguistic competence, as well as intercultural understanding when they return to their home institutions (Cadd, 2012).

Intercultural capability can be labelled as an intercultural sensitivity (Bennet, 1993; Laughton & Ottewill, 2020), including becoming appreciative and responsive when it comes to interacting with others who are culturally and linguistically different from oneself (Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006). In the area of foreign language learning, the definition of intercultural capability is expanded to be an ability to understand and relate to people from other countries (Byram, 1997) that requires both interactional competence and symbolic competence (Scarino, 2009). It encompasses the experience of interpreting and constructing meaning in communicative interactions and the capability to analyse the process of meaning-making in the context of diverse cultures.

Building from the idea that intercultural capability is defined in various ways in this rapidly changing cultural circumstances, studying overseas is commonly believed to be the core factor in promoting one's

intercultural capability. Its limitless access to native speech communities and authentic sociocultural behaviors enable those in the program to gain significant life skills such as empathy awareness (Palmer & Bernard-Warwick, 2012; Medina, Hathaway, & Pilonieta, 2015), appreciation for others, a deeper level of self-knowledge, flexibility, open-mindedness, multiple perspectives, foreign language skills, personal confidence (Shiveley & Misco, 2015), a non-prejudicial attitude, understanding, reasoning, and self-development (Akpinar & Unaldi, 2014).

In another line of thought, numerous studies also show that study abroad experiences are likely to become continuum stages of an individual's personal growth, where it moves them forward from ethnocentrism to ethno-relative attitudes (Bennet, 1986). This argument is further supported by the study conducted by Laughton and Ottewill (2000) and Gonzales and Ariza (2015) stating that a challenge for an intercultural capability is to secure a shift from ethnocentrism into being appreciative towards different cultures, which is what they called ethno-relative attitudes that later improve their intercultural sensitivity (Campbell & Walta, 2015).

As a further result of the popularity of the study abroad and scholarship opportunities provided by the government, the proportion of Indonesian teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pursuing their Master of TESOL degree studies overseas is getting higher. Although interculturally competent teachers are currently increasing, many of them still experience lack of preparation in teaching learners with various cultural and linguistic background (Romijn, Slot, Leseman, 2021). Therefore, English language teachers' narratives regarding their intercultural capability and experiences during their overseas study are essential to be investigated to further enhance the teaching practice upon their arrival. The language teachers' intercultural capability is vital since, as Kramsch (2000) denoted in Wang (2014), language education does include not only the learning of a language but also the learning of the culture, education, and the relationship among them. It implies that the teaching of a foreign language is considered to be the learning of the

language and the learning of the inter-culture, both by the students and teachers, so that the two entities seem to be inseparable. Concerning this, an immersed overseas environment is believed to enable students as well as teachers to potentially gain rich opportunities for their language proficiency's advancement and lead them to gain an increased exposure to intercultural capabilities among foreign language learners (Shiri, 2015; Salisbury, An, & Pascarella, 2013).

The study of intercultural capability falls within an array of domains, including skill, knowledge, as well as a disposition that potentially guides foreign language teachers' thinking and behaviour and can influence their classroom teaching practices. Concerning this, each domain's development is believed to have to be possessed by teachers to increase cultural awareness and implement culturally responsive teaching in today's rapidly changing cultural landscape (Colwell, Nielsen, Bradley, & Spearman, 2016). Nonetheless, only a few studies have been conducted to investigate the development of Indonesian EFL teachers' intercultural capabilities in the context of an overseas degree program and its impacts on classroom English teaching practices upon their return to Indonesia.

As a response to this issue, this study aims to explore Indonesian EFL teachers' experiences of intercultural learning during their study abroad program, to reveal how their study abroad experience of intercultural learning develops their intercultural capability, and how the development of their intercultural capability affects their classroom English teaching practices upon their return to Indonesia.

METHOD

This research utilized narrative inquiry as the research methodology to explore the experiences of Indonesian teachers of English as a Foreign Language as the research participants and amplify their voices. According to Clandinin (2006), the fundamental of narrative inquiry is a way of thinking about experience. This argument is in line with this study's main aim, which is to investigate the development of Indonesian EFL teachers' intercultural capabilities through the story of teachers' past experiences in their overseas study programs and how it

impacts their subsequent classroom practices. In identifying the story of the teachers, it does not merely describe an event, a person, or an object as such, but rather it is always in the process of navigating sites of narrative that involves a process of transitioning them within three commonplace themes: temporality (a chronological transition), sociality (focus on human interaction and social condition), and places (highlights contexts where the events happened in the narrative) (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). By using the three dimensions, the narrative of the teachers' experience is likely to highlight a series of critical events encountered during their sojourns that will later provide insights into understanding their life story, as well as manageable ways of focusing outcomes and recommendations for their improvement as an English language teacher (Webster & Mertova, 2007).

Furthermore, as the teachers' experiences overseas tend to bring transition with them (Webster & Mertova, 2007), the transition generated from the experiences is depicted by investigating the impacts of the development of teachers' intercultural capabilities in their subsequent classroom teaching practices. It is believed that teachers tend to use their own knowledge, training, and experiences to build up their own theories to improve their teaching practices (Richards & Lockhart, 1994, as cited in Ubaque & Pinilla, 2018). This argument implies that experiences and reflection have been positioned as knowledge for a living (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Therefore, the narrative inquiry is useful to employ as the research methodology, as it is always told with the purpose of an 'intended effect' (Bryman, 2016, p.589).

Method for data generation

This study employed individual interview as oral narrative method with two participants to generate the data. Based on Mishler's statement (1986), as cited in Clandinin (2006), the interview is the primary working methodology in a narrative inquiry, to focus on telling, whether the interest is in the stories told or the interpretations and meanings generated. Interviews can allow access to past events (Scott & Usher, 2011) and explore a range of critical events encountered by the participants through their storytelling (Webster & Mertova, 2007), which

enables the participants to select the details of their experiences within a chronological order, including a beginning, middle, and an end that makes them reflect on it (Seidman, 2006).

The interviews were conducted through a phone call for up to 40 minutes and were audio-recorded due to the distance issue between the researcher, who resided in Australia, and the participants who were in Indonesia. The interviews were conducted in the Indonesian language to build a safe and comfortable space for the participants to tell their stories. In conducting interviews, this study utilized Seidman's demonstration (2006) about three series of narrative interviews focusing on life story, the details of present lived experience, and a reflection on the meaning.

Research site and participants

This study's data were collected from two current Indonesian EFL teachers who have completed their Master's degree in TESOL Studies in Australia. The participants were selected based on the criteria of having completed a Master in TESOL degree program in English-speaking countries and currently become EFL teachers in Indonesia. They have been for at least a year upon completing a master degree overseas, and represent various fields of English education, including public schools, private school, a university, and private English courses or institutes.

In recruiting the participants, ethical issues such as informed consent, harm and risk, honesty and trust, privacy, confidentiality, intervention, and advocacy need to be addressed (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The researchers were firstly being open about the research practices to the participants to get them to understand the research problem and build a strong feeling of honesty and trust with them. After that, the researchers obtained the participants' written consent to use their data in this research. In addition, all the participants' names and personal data are fictionalized to ensure that their confidentiality is secured.

Data analysis process

Upon gathering the data using the interview method, the data

were processed through numerous analytical steps. Firstly, the recordings of the data were transcribed and translated into English by the researchers. The analysis was processed using the narrative approach, which included three dimensions: temporality, sociality, and place (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006), to focus on how the participants impose order on the flow of experiences in their lives, to enable them to make sense of the events and actions they have involved in (Schutt, 2011).

Furthermore, the second analysis was thematic. It was applied through a series of coding to identify several important themes from the stories. The themes focused on the participants' cultural and communication challenges abroad and the impacts on their classroom teaching practices. The thematic analysis was consolidated with the concepts of the development dimensions of intercultural sensitivity, demonstrated by Bennet (1993) and Taylor (1994), as well as its important elements by Chen & Starosta (1997).

FINDINGS

Ahmad's narrative account

Ahmad is an English teacher in a junior high school located in West Kalimantan, Indonesia. He has been teaching English for almost two years since completing his Master's in TESOL studies degree at an Australian university in New South Wales, Australia. Before his master's degree program, he had been to Italy on an English teacher's exchange program for a year. Upon its completion, he went to Poland on the same program for four months, sponsored by the European Union scholarship. Ahmad recounted his experiences in Italy and Poland that he did not have any real proper preparation prior to his departure. He later strongly suggested that pre-departure preparation is essential for visitors, especially when they are about to stay for a long time.

Furthermore, Ahmad asserted that his past experiences in Italy helped him a lot in adapting himself to Australia. He distinguished Italy from Australia as he had many Indonesian friends in Australia but few in Italy. His Indonesian friends' circle made it easier for him to adapt himself to the environment, while it was hard to find many Indonesians

in Italy. Ahmad contended that he barely encountered any cultural shocks when he was in Australia. He admitted that this was because there were a lot of Indonesian people at his university that he had an opportunity to stay together with Indonesian friends. Nonetheless, in the middle of the interview, he mentioned that his Indonesian friends' strong circle hardly made his oral English language skills developed.

Cultural and communication challenges

Throughout his time overseas, in Italy, Poland, and Australia, Ahmad stated that he often encountered cultural and communication challenges. He stated that cultural shock normally happens during people's initial days in a new place. In his case, it happened more often when he was in Italy than in Australia. He noted that it was not because of the language barrier; he spoke no Italian when he arrived. Rather, it was because people are likely to think by using an analogy based on their previous experiences or based on what they frequently saw in their home countries.

“...but, you know, even if Italians spoke English, I believe that cultural shock still happened as it was my first overseas stay. We tend to think using an analogy based on our previous experiences or based on what we frequently saw in our home country, don't we? Apparently, what I saw in Italy was something I had never seen before. So that was likely to shock me. It mostly happened when I came to explain an analogical concept to my peers, but there was a tiny possibility that they came to understand my point because you know, we shared different cultural perspectives.”

His initial insecurity in Italy made him isolate himself for a couple of weeks, even when he found out that Italians mostly did not speak English; this made him rarely interact with the locals. In our interview, he later strongly emphasized that his experiences in Italy caused him to be an easily adaptable student during his master's degree program in Australia. Furthermore, when Ahmad was asked about the issue of communication, he stated that language barriers are challenges people find difficult to control. The issue happened more when he lived in Italy than in Australia, by recalling his difficulties in communicating with the locals.

He further revealed that he frequently experienced the language barrier in a non-academic context. He believed that academic language's use had been framed so that it makes individuals adequately understood. However, in a non-academic context, people began to use informal words such as idioms interconnected with the culture of the language they were talking in. Ahmad recognized that the two contexts were conceptually different.

The impacts of Ahmad's study programs abroad on his classroom English language teaching practices

During the individual interview, Ahmad recognized that his overseas experiences during his master's degree program in Australia did not cause him to change radically as an English teacher. Rather, it strengthened his perspectives and life principles in the area of his teaching profession. He strongly emphasized the sharing of motivation, a positive mindset, and multiple perspectives to his students every time he started a class to encourage the students to be active learners in the classroom. They were shared through his reflection of his past experiences, emotions, and his feelings both as an individual and as a teacher.

In addition, Ahmad expressed his profound belief that 'dialogic communication' is highly essential in teaching and learning, especially when it comes to foreign language teaching practices. Therefore, he strongly emphasized this method within his classroom environment by slowly encouraging his students to speak up, give their opinion, analyze the learning materials, set up group-work projects and student-centered classroom activities.

Agni's Narrative Account

Agni has been teaching English for a year after completing her Master in TESOL studies degree program in an Australian university located in South-Eastern Australia. She is currently teaching English in an Islamic boarding school located in Sidoarjo, Indonesia. Before that, she taught general English classes at an Indonesian university located in Surabaya for five months. Australia was the first time she went abroad.

Throughout the period of her two-year master's degree studies, she gave birth to her first son in Australia, which she claimed was a challenging experience for her.

Agni did not have any preparation prior to the departure. During her early days in Australia, she experienced frustration, loneliness, and isolation from her environment. She rented a house with a few of her Indonesian friends and stayed there for two years. Agni argued that Indonesians dominated most of her circle of friends, so she did not develop her oral English skills during her stay overseas. During our interview, Agni pointed out numerous challenges she encountered. She highlighted that cultural and communication issues challenged her the most.

Cultural and Communication Challenges

Cultural and communication problems did not only happen in Agni's early months of her degree studies. She admitted that she frequently encountered numerous difficulties as she tried to settle down in her new environment. She said that the difficulties in cultural and language barriers remained an issue for her and became part of her growth, both as an individual and as an English teacher.

Cultural challenges were deeply felt by Agni upon her arrival in Australia, which she claimed was 'cultural shock', as she resided in a quiet suburb that made her feel like it was hard to find friends. During her second semester, she became involved and participated in numerous campus activities and the Australian teaching community. She expressed like an outsider as she was categorized as a minority group in the community. As a Muslim, she initially felt insecure, as there was one time when she was invited to go to a bar with her community friends after teaching activities. She said that it became an issue for her as a Muslim, for she knew that hanging out in a bar was considered inappropriate.

"So, I was the only Muslim in the community [...] one more cultural shock was when they invited me to the bar. At first, I hesitated to go, but I felt worried they would think I was avoiding them, so I

went there, but I did not drink alcohol. I still remember the time when I secretly did my prayers around the corner of the bar. I felt kind of insecure in that situation”.

In an academic context, she discovered she appreciated and valued the Australian learning culture, where students were encouraged to think critically in the classroom. Her classroom environment happened to be of the student-centred learning style. However, although she valued these cultures, she realized that Australia’s and Indonesia’s cultures were quite different. In her opinion, not all the learning methods that worked in Australia will always fit in the Indonesian context. As time went by, she discovered she gradually became more inter-culturally competent.

“Although [she] was Muslim and categorized in a minority group in Australia, [she] believed that everyone has their own culture and their own life choices, so [she] just did not mind being friends with everyone. [She] discovered values in befriending diverse international people”.

Furthermore, there were other numerous issues over which Agni felt she had less control. She described that communication became the most frequent difficult issue she had to deal with. There were language barriers in her interactions with people, especially when it came to English language communications. She described her first pregnancy was a highly challenging experience in Australia, as she needed to fulfill her academic tasks during her pregnancy. She told stories about her first time having a consultation about her pregnancy when she was not familiar with the medical terms and the culture of undergoing a pregnancy in Australia. There was one moment when she realized she experienced a language barrier when she made a phone-call consultation with a native-English-speaking Australian nurse that caused some misunderstanding.

The impacts of Agni’s study abroad program on her classroom English language teaching practices

When Agni was asked about her current teaching practices, she

highlighted her teaching of valuing the cultural differences between Indonesian and English language by recognizing the importance of understanding the first and target languages' cultures. She highlights the cultural subject by infusing the teaching of idiom expressions, where she mentioned one example of an Indonesian idiom, '*lain ladang lain belalang*' (English: different field, different grasshoppers), which means 'every nation has a different culture'. The idiom is culturally rooted in Indonesia since the '*ladang*' (English: rice field) is rice fields that dominate a very common Indonesian word since most of the land in Indonesia is dominated by rice fields. However, she explained that the expression is relatively uncommon in English, as they hardly find any '*ladang*' in English-speaking countries. Furthermore, Agni emphasized cultural teaching by reflecting on her overseas experiences in her classes when she taught how Australians address older people directly by name, which is commonly considered impolite in Indonesian culture.

In addition, Agni also stated that she always reminded her students that every language has a different cultural background. She encouraged her students to learn English culture to minimize cultural shocks and avoid judging other people incorrectly. However, Agni also emphasized that not all cultures are socially acceptable in all countries. 'There are some we need to learn and understand, but not always to follow'. To a final interview question, Agni added the importance of encouraging students to practice English by speaking up in the classroom. Agni explained her numerous strategies to get the students to speak English by delivering group-work and peer-to-peer activities when she became an observer and facilitator.

DISCUSSION

Communication and cultural issues play a key role

Findings on Ahmad and Agni's narrative account show that the development of their intercultural capability was highly influenced by the emerging issues of communication and culture encountered when they were abroad. It reflects Taylor's argument (1994), who stated that cultural disequilibrium and its emotional nature become the propulsive force for change and development that promote the participants to

become inter-culturally capable in the host culture. However, what is interesting here is that Ahmad and Agni experienced a cultural shock in a different overseas setting. While Agni stated that she encountered massive challenges when she was in her master's degree program in Australia, Ahmad expressed that he did not experience the dissonance as much as he did when he was in Italy and Poland, before his master's degree journey in Australia. It indicates that Ahmad's previous exposure to intercultural learning in Italy was essential for getting himself more easily adapted and becoming inter-culturally competent in Australia. In this sense, although Ahmad's journey in Italy is not considered to be what Berg (2009) and Parr and Chan (2015) stated as a pre-departure training program, it played a significant role in Ahmad's development of his intercultural capability during his master's degree in Australia.

Starting from ethnocentrism

Furthermore, as the TESOL studies students undertaking a master's degree program in Australia, Ahmad and Agni shared different sequential stages in developing their intercultural capabilities, as demonstrated by Bennet (1993) and Taylor (1994). Agni initially experienced 'denial' (Bennet, 1993) and the phase of 'setting the stage' (Taylor, 1994), which reflects on what Bennet stated as ethnocentric attitudes, where she began to experience her new community setting by feeling isolation and frustration towards the group, especially when she expressed insecurity about being a Muslim, who is considered to be a minority group in Australia. This case reflects on Taylor's statement (1993), explaining that the disequilibrium seems to be intensified by differences in gender, race, status, etc. which is muted by one's experiences of being a minority. Meanwhile, in the case of Ahmad, although he revealed that he did not experience conflicts in Australia to the same extent as he did in Italy, he could not avoid cultural shock, especially when it came to communicating with local Italians because he needed to familiarize himself with the environment surrounding him.

The conflicts of culture and communication above led Ahmad and Agni to employ 'self-esteem' (Chen & Starosta, 1997), to be able to deal with the conflicting issues to meet their needs in the host culture (Taylor, 1994). The 'self-esteem' quality was a driving force for them to interact

with their new community settings in Australia, as they began to realize that dialogical communication within their interactions with diverse people was essential for dealing with their conflicts. It mirrors what Taylor (1994, p.165) stated as the stage of 'behavioral learning strategies' in the development dimension of intercultural capability, where one begins to be involved and participated in the overseas community.

Moving towards Ethno-relativism

The sign of cultural sensitivity, mentioned in the previous section, is a proof that Ahmad and Agni moved forward to what Bennet (1993), Laughton and Ottewill (2000), and Gonzales and Ariza (2015) stated as ethno-relative self-attributes where they began to employ 'open-mindedness', 'empathy' (Palmer & Mernard-Warwick, 2012; Medina, Hathaway, & Pilonieta, 2015) and 'appreciation' towards their new communities on their overseas journeys (Shiveley & Misco, 2015). It can be seen from Ahmad's and Agni's statements where they began to adapt gradually and their awareness of embracing differences in the host country. Furthermore, the sensitivity originates from the 'self-monitoring' and 'interaction involvement' they made that is mentioned by Chen and Starosta (1997) as an ability to feel sensitive towards culturally different counterparts and the starting point for them becoming more responsive, attentive, and perceptive. To a further extent, Ahmad and Agni's abilities also reflect on the element of 'non-judgement' demonstrated by Chen and Starosta (1997) as a quality of an individual to allow oneself to listen to culturally different counterparts.

Undeveloped oral English language skill

In another vein, although Ahmad and Agni expressed that they have developed their self-attributes from 'ethnocentrism to ethno-relativism' (Bennet, 1993; Laughton & Ottewill, 2000; Gonzales & Ariza, 2015) through interactions and communication, Ahmad and Agni argued that their overseas experiences did not contribute to the development of their oral English language skills as most of their friendship patterns in their master's degree programs in Australia was dominated by Indonesian people, those who shared the same cultural background and language. It confirms the demonstration of the element of 'cultural

environment' and 'quality of experiences' by Townsend and Wan (2007) that need to be reinforced through deeper interaction with more diverse cultural activities overseas. They further (2007) assert that social adjustment and friendship patterns in an overseas environment are vital to the participants' development of their intercultural communication skills and for moving them to a deeper multicultural interaction.

Reflection from previous experiences and its impacts on classroom English language teaching practices

Building from the discussion of how overseas experiences help develop Indonesian EFL teachers' intercultural capabilities, this study considers what was stated by Shiveley and Misco (2015) and Shedrow (2017) that although the intercultural capability is not always fully utilized during overseas experiences, it is likely to be capitalized in the teachers' experiences upon their return to the home country. Although Ahmad and Agni do not specifically teach 'intercultural understanding' as a subject in their classroom settings, they infused this into their teaching practices upon their return to Indonesia by reflecting on their experiences through their focus on 'dialogic communication'. It can be seen from how Ahmad and Agni strongly emphasize the value of the approach in their EFL classrooms by encouraging their students to speak up and become active learners. Although Ahmad expressed that his intercultural learning experiences in Australia did not make him change radically, he explained he valued interaction and communication strategies for learning English. Meanwhile, in Agni's case, she realizes that her experiences caused her to change as a teacher. As she is aware of the importance of interaction and communication for learning a language, she implemented these in her classroom teaching.

Ahmad and Agni's concern confirms the study demonstrated by Scarino (2009) that the critical points entailed in learning a language inter-culturally are communication and interaction. In the context of this study, these two elements enabled the students to move between two languages and cultures – Indonesian and English. Furthermore, Ahmad and Agni's dialogic communication and interaction also support Scarino's (2009) focus on the assessment of intercultural capability for students, in which students are assessed based on their performance in

analyzing communication in a dual process—Indonesian and English.

The approach to interaction and dialogical communication, which are delivered in the form of group work, projects, photos, and videos from when Ahmad and Agni were abroad, refers to the elements of the teaching methods demonstrated by Laughton and Ottewill (2000) where they stated that teachers are expected to be able to cover analytical, factual, and experiential methods, by setting up the collaborative learning activities. This method came from Ahmad and Agni's reflection on their past experiences in Australia, where they value the learning methods in their Australian classroom settings, where the student-centered learning style was performed. Nonetheless, in the case of Agni, her awareness that not all Australian learning and teaching methods fit the context of Indonesia indicates that she put a great deal of thought into how nations have different learning styles to fit the context and the culture of each. Arguably, she has developed the quality of her personal attributes to the point where she began to employ international awareness, open-mindedness, and the self-awareness to take the appropriate actions in her classroom teaching practices (Townsend & Wan, 2007).

In another line of thought, the quality of Ahmad's and Agni's self attributes, revealed by their transition from ethnocentrism to ethno-relativism, seemed to affect their classroom English teaching and learning. It can be seen from how Ahmad and Agni infused their encouragement for multiple perspectives and a positive mindset towards their students' differences. In the case of Agni, she specifically and implicitly infused the learning of other cultures by introducing her students to the differences in idiom expressions in English and Indonesian and the culture of how Australians address older people directly by their names, which is considered somewhat impolite in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

This study's findings show that communication and cultural disequilibrium played a crucial role in the development of Ahmad's and Agni's intercultural capabilities during their study programs abroad. The development dimension enabled them to develop their attributes from

ethnocentrism to ethno-relativism, where they began to value and appreciate cultural differences. However, the findings also indicate that although Indonesian EFL teachers are inter-culturally capable due to their overseas experiences, it does not contribute to their development of oral English.

A further result is that this study reveals that teachers' development of their intercultural capabilities affects their subsequent classroom teaching practices in the way that they employ dialogical communication and interaction as part of their classroom practices, by reflecting their previous experiences, particularly when they finally recognized the importance of communicative interactions when dealing with their challenges overseas.

In terms of its limitations, I, as the researcher of this study, realize that this research project is very imperfect and presents limited data to construct a complex, rich research text due to limited time, constraints as well as tiny numbers of participants involved. Specifically, in the area of the narrative inquiry methodology, this study only conducted data generation through interviews without any observation of the Indonesian EFL teachers' classroom teaching practices, which makes the data less elaborative. Moreover, in terms of the context, this study only considers investigating the development of teachers' intercultural capability 'during' and 'after' their experiences in overseas study programs without considering their experiences prior to their stay overseas. Neither does it comprise a discourse of the teachers' identity, which plays an essential role in constructing how they respond to their social world. Despite all the limitations, this study can be viewed as an insight for a larger-scale research project in the future.

In relation to the limitations explained above, it is recommended for any further research to involve observations of the classroom practices as data generation might provide a more profound understanding and elaborative data for the topic of EFL teachers' development of their intercultural capabilities in the overseas study program. It is also necessary to consider investigating the discourse of Indonesian EFL teachers' identity and experiences of intercultural learning prior to their overseas sojourns, as this also plays an essential

role in the teachers' understanding of how to deal with their social world.

In addition, as the finding of this study also shows the Indonesian EFL teachers' oral English skill did not develop during their study program, the future research might consider investigating the specific 'cultural environment' and 'quality of experiences' that exist abroad, which may offer better insights for developing their oral language skills.

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