

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Multilingual identity awareness refers to the ability to recognize and navigate multiple linguistic and cultural identities, which can be affected by various factors, including cultural background, language use, and social context (Siebenhütter, 2023). This awareness is necessary for people to communicate and interact with people from diverse language and cultural backgrounds, and for language learners to help them to navigate the complexities of language use and cultural differences. This awareness also supports the development of language teaching methods that cater to diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Forbes & Rutgers, 2021). In line with the traditions of the field of multilingualism, the word ‘multilingual’ is used to refer to someone who functions in more than one language for purposes of communication and not necessarily as someone with high levels of proficiency in those languages (Kramsch, 2006)

However, students in Indonesia are not typically exposed to English in their daily lives (Huhtala et al., 2021). Most of the students use English for academic or professional reasons, such as studying abroad, working abroad, or interacting with English-speaking coworkers. The status of English in Indonesia is as a foreign language, but learning English or even being proficient in using English can improve our ability to access the outside world because English is an international language, so people all over the world use it to communicate (Benzehaf, 2023). Learning foreign language can consider language learning as an opportunity for the construction of interculturality, thus causing learners to redefine themselves as they hybridize their cultural identity.

As a large and developing country, Indonesia has many diverse languages, such as Javanese, Sundanese, Madurese, Papuan, Bangkanese, etc. This results in a negative view of Indonesian society when someone learns or is even proficient in speaking a foreign language. This assumption arose because they were considered not nationalistic and arrogant. Pramono (2009) strongly argues that Indonesians are those who speak Bahasa Indonesia in a correct and right manner (*berbahasa Indonesia yang baik dan benar*), which implies speaking Bahasa Indonesia with an

English accent or code-mixing is symptomatic of the deterioration of nationalism (Pramono, 2009).

Based on previous research conducted by Yujong Park, (2020) it is stated that these multilingual students being examined by Yujong, negotiate and build one's linguistic identity by evaluating different ways of speaking English which in turn influences their linguistic use (Park, 2020). The study helps to understand how normative expectations or beliefs are expressed at the level of interaction and underscores the need for EFL awareness and the development of related pedagogical tools for empowering these groups of students. While Pennington, (2019) has described this kind of ability to understand with other preferences of language reference to pronunciation in multilingualism or plurilingualism as competence in multiphonology or pluraphonology, involving speaker agency in using more than one language to express different aspects of identity and metamessages, as in the practices of style-shifting (i.e., changing speech style or language to fit the context; Eckert, 2000; Eckert & Rickford, 2001), crossing (i.e., momentary use of a language from a group other than that to which the speaker belongs; Rampton, 1995), and translanguaging (i.e., use of two languages in combination; García, 2009). The results showed that many of the participants negotiated their identities based on a core identity based on their assumed first language (L1) culture, when it comes to using English, encounters with native speakers appeared to increase their linguistic insecurity, and they saw their status as non-native as a drawback, all participants appeared to be fully aware that using English in public spaces would project negative identities as Indonesian nationals. Zacharias (2012) also has described research entitled "EFL Students' Understanding of Their Multilingual English Identities" (Zacharias, 2012).

Multilingual identity awareness remains an understudied topic, particularly in the Indonesian higher education context (Nursanti & Andriyanti, 2021). Many identical research focused in multilingual concept as a context, but did not explore the perception from the students or the subject from the research. This research aims to explore the factors that influence the students' multilingual identity awareness in learning English as foreign language by the perception of the students, and how the factor itself influenced the participants.

1.2 Formulation of the problem

The question of the research is what are the factors that influence the students' multilingual identity awareness in Learning English as Foreign Language?

1.3 Operational definitions

The researcher provides two definitions related to this study to avoid misunderstanding about the terms set out in this study as follows;

1.3.1 Multilingual Identity Awareness: Multilingual identity awareness in this context refers to the ability to recognize and navigate multiple language and cultural identities, which can be influenced by Experience, Social Factor, Motivation and Learners' attitude toward language.

1.3.2 Learning English as Foreign Language (EFL): Learning English as foreign language (EFL) refers to the process of acquiring English in a country where English is not the native language

1.4 Aim of the Research

By addressing the research question above, this research aims to explore the factors that influence the students' multilingual identity awareness in Learning English as Foreign Language.

1.5 Significance of the Study

1.5.1 Theoretical Uses

This research will contribute to the existing theories about multilingual identity awareness in learning English as Foreign Language, especially in Indonesia.

1.5.2 Practical Uses

Practically, this study provides insight for language educators, policymakers, and practitioners on how to promote multilingual identity awareness and support the language development of multilingual students in Indonesia.

1.5.3 Empirical Uses

This study contributes to provides field data on the existing research

about multilingual identity awareness, or students' perception of their multilingual identity in learning English as Foreign Language.