

“Do I really recognize it?” Delving into English Language Learners’ Identity Construction

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Abstract

Learners must construct a learning identity to succeed when learning English. This current study attempted to discuss English language learners’ (ELLs) insights on language learning identity construction. A survey study collected quantitative data from 219 ELLs in several Indonesian universities. Questionnaires were distributed and completed via online mode (i.e., Google Forms), and a two-week due time was assigned for each participant. As for results, various insights emerged as the ELLs recognized their identity construction. They have identity aspects such as linguistics, belongingness, expectation, attitude, and agency. Each aspect helped to form ELLs’ identity construction in many ways, including learning competence, socio-cultural awareness, educational component, and psychological conviction. Identity construction is not complicated to achieve as long as ELLs have strong learning commitment. In addition, it is implied that this study is paramount to empower pedagogical strategies, educational policies, and academic performance.

Keywords: English language learner; identity construction; language learning

Introduction

Identity construction appears paramount for many learners learning English as a foreign language in English language learning. There is no reason why English language learners (ELLs) have to indulge in identity construction into their basic learning principles (Ahn, 2021; Aliakbari & Amiri, 2018; Benzehaf, 2023). ELLs know every step they are engaged in, as learning English is natural. Identity construction is comprehensive in that it allows ELLs to determine their learning

concept, positive, cultural influence, and interaction with various aspects of learning a language, such as linguistics, psychology, environment, and language policy.

This current study unleashes practical evidence of ELLs’ identity construction as an inseparable part of their learning awareness. To deal with identity construction, ELLs must increase the intensity of language exposure. It can be revealed through active language learning, cross-cultural understanding, teacher-

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learner interaction, and material enhancement (Chen et al., 2022; Fata et al., 2023). ELLs' awareness helps them recognize what they do not discover during English learning identity construction. ELLs with lower attention to their learning identity construction must encounter fluctuated processes, which may negatively impact language learning achievement. Their language development may be hindered as they are unaware of their English competency and talent.

However, preliminary findings showed that ELLs encounter challenges constructing their identities as foreign language learners. ELLs, for example, have conflicts arising from the disparity between their native cultural identity and the cultural beliefs and norms prevalent in the English-speaking community, resulting in a feeling of cultural disharmony and a problem of identity (F. Li & Han, 2023; Y. Li & Deng, 2019). Insufficient mastery of the English language can impede successful engagement and self-expression, resulting in emotions of anxiety and lack of sufficiency, which can have a detrimental effect on learners' formation of identity. The issue of ELLs occurs due to bias and discrimination based on their language competency or cultural context, affecting their confidence and sense of belonging within society. Inequitable access to high-quality training and means for language learning impedes identity development among ELLs, resulting in discrepancies in academic performance and limited prospects for individual advancement. The presence of negative perceptions and the impact of group pressure in educational environments shape the self-perception of English language learners, resulting in the internalization of prejudices and

a diminished sense of self-esteem (Liu et al., 2023).

The concept of identity construction among ELLs pertains to the intricate and dynamic procedure by which learners assimilate the new language into their preexisting self-concept and cultural identity while acquiring English as a foreign language. The procedure above encompasses the negotiation and adjustment of linguistic, cultural, and social elements alongside developing a distinct identity that integrates the characteristics of the source and target language and cultures (Macías Villegas et al., 2020). This process involves the formation of a diverse identity that may incorporate elements of the ELLs' country, as well as their encounters and engagements in the English-speaking society.

Identity construction enables ELLs to assimilate into English-speaking groups, traverse cultural subtleties, and communicate proficiently with native speakers. This method facilitates personal development and self-reflection, increasing their robust self-identity and confidence in their linguistic aptitude. An adeptly crafted persona empowers ELLs to actively participate in social exchanges within and beyond the English language learning setting. Developing a good sense of identity as a foreign language learner enhances academic achievement by creating an environment favorable for learning and communication (Nazari, Karimi, et al., 2023). Meanwhile, It enables ELLs to maintain their indigenous culture while simultaneously incorporating aspects of the English-speaking culture, fostering a sense of multiculturalism and variety. An extensively developed identity allows for their psychological well-being, increasing a sense of belonging and acceptability within their

communities. Proficiency in English is frequently esteemed in many professions, which augments professional prospects. Recognizing the significance of identity construction for ELLs, EFL teachers, policymakers, and communities establishes a new context that fosters cultural inclusiveness, linguistic variety, and comprehensive growth (Nazari, Karimi, et al., 2023; Nematzadeh & Haddad Narafshan, 2020). It, in turn, facilitates the successful assimilation of ELLs into diverse linguistic and cultural environments.

The concept of identity construction for ELLs' English language learning is an intricate and diverse reality encompassing numerous aspects, such as cultural heritage, social surroundings, personal encounters, and linguistic competence. When learning English, ELLs frequently undergo a dynamic journey of assimilating the acquired language into their existing identity while simultaneously adjusting to the cultural subtleties linked to the language. English learning frequently entails encountering unfamiliar cultural situations and viewpoints. ELLs encounter a transformation in their cultural identity when they engage with the beliefs, attitudes, and practices prevalent in the English-speaking groups they deal with. Mastery of the English language is crucial in influencing the development of learners' identity (T. A. Nguyen et al., 2022; Pandhiani, 2022). As ELLs enhance their linguistic abilities, they change their self-image, communication patterns, and cognitive functions, which impact their self-identity and social interactions.

Many studies have been conducted some years ago regarding constructing English learning identity. One of the studies (M. H. Nguyen & Ngo, 2023), for example, investigated

identity construction as a part of the professional development activities of three Vietnamese preservice teachers (PSTs) of English. The study focused on their experiences in the past, present, and anticipated future in various contexts. It utilized narrative data obtained from narrative frames and person-to-person interviews. It employed third-generation cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) to investigate how the participants constructed their language teacher identity. Specifically, it examined anxieties they encountered in these activities and how they emotionally and actively responded to these anxieties. The active structure analysis and theme analysis results indicated a combination of stress, emotion, agency, and identity. These anxieties led to the emergence of emotions, which drove efforts to address the tensions and establish a sense of identity as a language instructor. Their sense of identity influenced the participants' attempts to manage their anxieties and emotions. They explore the conceptual implications, which involve a model of how language instructors develop professionally. This model is based on the connections between anxieties, emotions, autonomy, identity, and the practical implications for facilitating the establishment of language teacher identity.

Another related study (Feng & Kim, 2023) explored the process of identity formation in two Chinese EFL teachers in a cosmopolitan metropolis in China. The study rigorously examined the elements that influenced the development of teacher identities, using the theoretical frameworks of 'identity in belief and practice' and the concepts of teacher understanding. The data were obtained via interviews and classroom assessments. The

study uncovered that the participants assimilated and incorporated their practical information in distinct ways, leading to variations in teacher views and pedagogical approaches. Participants' learning of pedagogical knowledge did not always result in functional identities that aligned with their initial assumptions. The disparities between the understanding and practice of teachers, as well as the discrepancies between the participant's goals and the actual reality, played a significant role in shaping their 'global' identity (Gao et al., 2022). The results revealed the conflicts and constraints in the educational exchange between Western-style and non-Western-style settings in the instructional practices of Chinese teachers.

To emphasize the importance of identity in TESOL theoretical and practical concepts, a survey study (Richards, 2021) examined how the concept of identity enhances comprehension of teacher identity, second language acquisition, and teacher learning in language instruction. The review examines existing concepts and studies to demonstrate the origins of teacher and learner identity and the complex strategies in which identity influences their learning approaches. It also explores how identity can influence views, beliefs, enthusiasm, classroom procedure, and English language usage. Recommendations are provided on incorporating identity into language teacher training courses.

There is a lack of study on the perspectives of international multilingual NETs who work in heritage environments. Specifically, it is necessary to understand how these individuals navigate their teacher identity and reconcile their cultural identity with their NET identity.

The study (Gu et al., 2022) examined the process of identity creation among two international NETs (Native English Teachers) of Chinese ethnicity who have returned to Hong Kong to teach. It utilizes the concept of ethical self-formation and its implementation in teacher identity study as a conceptual framework to solve the existing research gap. The results suggest that (1) the participants actively managed their multilingual identity and the monolingual identity imposed on them in the workplace (2) they devised strategies to utilize their understanding of the local language and culture as assets in teaching, and (3) they proactively broadened the understanding of the term "NET" and positioned themselves within the complete institutional and social framework to address their identity disagreement and enhance their sense of autonomy. The findings have consequences for education policy to adapt and recognize the diverse skills and abilities of native English teachers (NETs) and non-native English teachers (NNETs).

A theoretical underpinning or review (Pennington & Richards, 2016) examines the concepts of identity and teacher identity, their connection to the unique aspects of language teaching, and how teacher identity can change or be cultivated via experience and teacher education. Teacher identity refers to the unique qualities of a teacher and how they are combined with the opportunities and potential offered by the institutional identity of teaching, as well as the subject matter and instructional approaches of a particular field within specific teaching environments. The components of a teacher's identity in language teaching are generated from a comprehensive analysis of existing literature on identity. These

components concern the fundamental and advanced skills necessary for effective language teaching (Barahona & Ibaceta-Quijanes, 2019; Chao, 2022). Excerpts from narratives shared by teachers support this description. The conversation culminates with suggestions for enhancing teacher education and professional development, including emphasizing the importance of identity.

Based on the previous studies, it is necessary to include a summary supporting this current study's emergence. The previously selected studies mostly referred to in-service EFL teachers' identity construction based on descriptive, qualitative, or quantitative approaches. The previous studies were published in less than three years, proving they are considered new regarding research time allocation. Meanwhile, this study was proposed to investigate the identity construction of learners who learn English as a foreign language. It was different from those conducted previously. First, it focused on learners' language learning.

In contrast, the previous studies mostly focused on EFL teachers' identities as objects of discussion. Second, one public university in Indonesia was chosen as the research location. At the same time, few similar studies have been done in the same area. Third, this study employed a newly constructed or validated research instrument that differed from those conducted earlier. Above all, to focus, a research question was compiled, namely, “How do the ELLs perceive identity construction regarding English language learning?”

Method

Research Design

A survey study with a descriptive quantitative approach was employed as the research design. There were several reasons underlying the selected approach. A survey was an effective method that helped determine participants' perceptions of a focused research topic. The topic of ELLs' identity construction seemed to be explored through a broader number of participants. Such a survey was an enabler that increased the possibility of collecting comprehensive statistical data. Moreover, such a research method reached more participants in wider areas, leading to richer data.

Participants

This study included 219 EFL learners from the English department in several universities as participants. They consisted of more female learners (n=169) than the male learners (n=50). It was noticed that most male learners did not respond to an invitation to participate in the study. A total of 18 male learners could not participate in the survey study. Another rationale is that the researcher found that female EFL learners outnumbered male learners in most EFL classes in the selected universities.

Meanwhile, as for grade, senior ELLs (55.3%) overdid the juniors (44.7%). Unfortunately, those with low English proficiency were in a higher number (n=131) than those with high proficiency (n=88). In addition, the number of ELLs learning English in college was higher (53.9%) than in university (46.1%).

The participants were selected through convenience sampling, allowing the researcher to determine those who stated their readiness as study objects. An informed consent was employed to ensure that each ELL read, understood, and signed the form to indicate

their voluntary participation during the survey study. The form was distributed via WhatsApp or email, as online applications are more effective in reaching ELLs. Of 237 informed consents delivered to the ELLs, 219 forms were signed and

returned. It indicated that 219 ELLs agreed with their participation in this survey study. On the other hand, 10 ELLs returned the forms but had not signed them. The rest of the ELLs did not give any response to the form.

Table 1
Demographic variables of research participants (n=219)

No	Demographic variables	Total	%	
1.	Gender	Female	169	77.2
		Male	50	22.8
2.	Grade	Junior	98	44.7
		Senior	121	55.3
3.	English Proficiency	High proficiency	88	40.2
		Low proficiency	131	59.8
4.	Type of Institution	College	118	53.9
		University	101	46.1

Instrument

In this survey study to identify scale for English language learners (ISELL), the study employed ISELL, which specifically measures ELLs' identity construction when learning English as a foreign language (Tajeddin & Fereydoonfar, 2022). ISELL comprises 47 items and five factors: linguistic investment, belongingness, expectations, attitudes, and agency. ISELL uses a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The internal consistency of ISELL is indicated through Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha=.93$). It is stated that a value more than .80 has higher reliability. ISELL was said to be reliable as the instrument for this survey study. The factors of ISELL were considered suitable for researching ELLs' identity construction as the scale consisted of completed variables that ensured complexity and practicality. In addition, the scale was allowed to be used in this survey study. The permission was

received as a basic requirement to use the scale in research ethics.

Data Collection

The first step of data collection was to ensure that each participant agreed with their voluntary participation through a signed informed consent. Another step was to inform each participant that a questionnaire was sent via WhatsApp and Email. They were asked to check their mobile phone or other tools, such as a laptop, to convince them they had received the questionnaire. Each participant was allowed to complete the questionnaire for two and a half weeks. The researcher believed they had their activities, tasks, and other daily routines. As they filled in the questionnaire in Google Forms, which led to flexibility and ubiquitousness regarding the completion, 187 (85.4%) questionnaires were completed and sent back online. Fortunately, the remaining participants (n=32) collected their questionnaires by the due

date. In this case, 219 completed questionnaires were successfully collected prior to analysis.

Data Analysis

Several steps were followed to analyze the survey data collected through questionnaire completion. Each response was checked for any missing entries. Using SPSS 25, the data cleaning stage was followed by estimating means, percentages, and standard deviations to **Table 2**

Descriptive statistics of linguistic investment factor

Items	Responses (%)					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. I have always wanted to be an English language learner.	20.3	23.4	2.6	8.5	5.6	40
2. Being an English language learner gives me a higher social status.	5.6	53	5.5	12.1	12	12.2
3. Being an English language learner is an important aspect of my life.	54.8	1.3	4.3	3.7	4.9	31
4. I'd prefer to spend my free time learning English rather than doing other activities.	5.7	23.5	5.3	15.6	20	30
5. I decided to learn English voluntarily, not because of external forces.	30	12.6	12.5	9	15.6	20.3
6. I like to be a better English language learner.	8.9	20	1.6	7.7	4.3	57.8
7. I like to learn English inside and outside the language department.	5.2	15	34.2	12	22	12
21. I am highly motivated to improve my English at the language department.	52.4	29.1	1.5	3.5	5.5	8
23. I go to the language department with enthusiasm and passion.	3.5	13	23	2.3	46.2	12
24. I like to learn a standard American or British variety of English.	22.1	6.8	2.9	1.5	53.7	13
41. I like to do language learning activities that reflect my real-life language needs.	27.5	3.4	22.3	5.7	34.2	6.9
42. I like to do language learning activities that include elements of English culture.	23	54.3	2.8	3.6	3.1	13.2

*1 (strongly disagree); 2 (disagree); 3 (slightly disagree); 4 (slightly agree); 5 (agree); 6 (strongly agree)

Five factors (i.e., linguistic investment, belongingness, expectations, attitudes, and agency) present data in descriptive analyses of ELLs' identity constructions. Each factor

determine descriptive statistical analysis. As for categorical data, the analysis was proposed to comprehend all response items. The last step was to conclude such descriptive data based on each presented table that entailed it.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

describes ELLs' perceptions or insights in constructing their identities as foreign language learners. As for the first factor, linguistic investment, it is noted that twelve items

represent ELLs' identity that need to be investigated. Several interesting findings were noticed based on the linguistic investments. Table 2, for example, showed that more ELLs (40%) expected to learn English. However, they

did not receive a higher status even if they learned the language (53%). Although they entered the EFL classroom with enthusiasm (46.2%), some did not consider engaging with English culture in language learning (54.3%).

Table 3

Descriptive statistics of belongingness factor

Items	Responses (%)					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. I feel a sense of belonging to the language department where I am learning English.	23.4	43	1.3	24	2.4	5.9
9. I see myself as a member of the English language learners' community.	2.5	3.7	3.5	4.2	56	30.1
10. I see myself as a member of the English language community across the world.	42.2	31	3.4	4.2	2.2	17
11. I like to join English language learners' online communities.	37.8	2.1	13	29.4	5.7	12
44. I like to develop a good relationship with my teacher at the language department.	3.5	1.8	2.8	32	45.8	14.1
45. I like to develop good relationships with my classmates at the language department.	55.1	2.6	2.5	12.1	5.8	21.9
46. I like to develop good relationships with my classmates out of the language department.	43.7	33.4	12.3	3.6	7	-
49. The relationships I develop with the staffs of the language department are important to me.	3.2	2.7	15.7	3.5	56.4	18.5
51. I am aware of the positive consequences of developing good relationships with supervisors.	4.5	11.4	2.8	21	43.4	16.9
52. I like to develop good relationships with native English speakers.	33.1	4.2	2.7	1.6	24.2	34.2

*1 (strongly disagree); 2 (disagree); 3 (slightly disagree); 4 (slightly agree); 5 (agree); 6 (strongly agree)

Regarding the expectations factor, it is noted that the ELLs (44.6%) expected that their psychological or emotional needs were treated properly. However, they did not believe in existing learning materials that helped them increase their English skills (44.2%). Another hope was that as each ELL had differences, EFL teachers should treat their learning based on needs (42.6%).

As stated in Table 5, the ELLs did not experience an ideal atmosphere offered in English class (54.6%). Fortunately, the learners thought positively about the English learning environment in the university (54%). They also believe in classroom management organized by university teachers during English learning.

As for the last factor, it is noticed that some ELLs hoped to determine the English learning process in the classrooms (47.2%) and how it

was delivered (44.3%). The ELLs needed to contribute to assessing their tasks (43.6%). Moreover, they considered to have a role in

selecting a teacher for a particular subject (73.9%) and setting a plan for English lessons (65.8%).

Table 4

Descriptive statistics of expectations factor

Items	Responses (%)					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. I expect the language department to consider my educational needs as a language learner.	22.1	23	2.4	43.6	8.9	-
13. I expect the language department to consider my emotional and psychological needs as a language learner.	16.4	-	3.7	44.6	35.3	-
14. I like teachers to teach and manage class in line with my expectations.	4.1	23.4	1.1	2.3	13.2	55.9
15. I expect my relationships with my classmates and teachers to meet my educational needs.	18.1	6	3.5	3.3	25.4	43.7
16. I expect my out-of-class communication with the language department staff to bring me a high level of satisfaction.	-	43.5	33.6	14	3	5.9
17. I expect the language department environment to help me develop an understanding of who I am and who I want to become.	31	24.6	3.2	5.4	34.7	1.1
18. I expect the textbooks and materials taught in the course to be well-matched to my needs.	44.2	12.1	12.3	5.7	8.3	17.4
19. I like the teacher to teach the textbook and materials I prefer to study.	28.5	-	6.7	5.5	46.3	13
20. I insist that my individual differences be addressed in English class of the department.	15.3	2.4	16.5	42.6	5.9	17.3
22. I like the language department to increase my motivation for learning English.	10	-	9	47.2	2.6	31.2
34. I like my teacher to take my suggestions about teaching into account.	2.1	45.2	3.6	6.7	16.4	26

*1 (strongly disagree); 2 (disagree); 3 (slightly disagree); 4 (slightly agree); 5 (agree); 6 (strongly agree)

The findings reveal a complex interplay of factors influencing ELLs' (English Language Learners') identity construction and learning experiences. ELLs exhibit diverse perceptions regarding their engagement with English learning. A significant portion (40%) expressed a strong desire to learn English, showing enthusiasm (46.2%) for language acquisition.

However, there is a disparity between motivation and the perceived social benefits, as 53% disagreed with the notion that learning English elevated their social status. Many learners (54.3%) did not prioritize engaging with English culture as part of their language learning, indicating a gap between learning objectives and cultural integration. Furthermore, while 57.8%

aimed to improve as English learners, learning standard varieties of English or preferences for specific activities, such as engaging in real-life language needs, varied.

Table 5
Descriptive statistics of attitudes factor

Items	Responses (%)					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
25. I have favorable attitudes toward the language department as a learning environment.	20.3	1.4	-	22.3	2	54
26. I hold a positive view about the way the language department is managed.	11	14.5	3.6	22.3	34.8	13.8
27. I perceive the English class of the language department as an ideal learning setting.	54.6	33.2	2.3	3.4	6.5	-
28. My perception of the staff at the language department is positive.	17.8	3.6	4	22.6	36.3	15.7
29. I hold positive attitudes toward English-speaking countries.	14	21.5	4.5	3.2	2.1	54.7
40. The rules and regulations of the language department provide a safe and relaxed place for learning.	-	5.2	22.1	12.3	3.5	56.9

*1 (strongly disagree); 2 (disagree); 3 (slightly disagree); 4 (slightly agree); 5 (agree); 6 (strongly agree)

Table 6
Descriptive statistics of agency factor

Items	Responses (%)					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
30. I like to have a role in the high-stake decisions made at the language department.	62.1	-	2.3	10.9	13.5	11.2
31. I like to have a role in classroom management along with the teacher.	-	55.9	33.2	2	-	8.9
32. I like to have a role in determining how to learn English at the institute.	11.6	5.3	12.3	23.6	47.2	-
33. I like to have a role in determining the teaching method in the classroom.	23.8	23.6	-	44.3	8.3	-
35. I like to be assessed by myself rather than the teacher.	1.5	34.7	-	3.2	17	43.6
36. I like to choose the classmates that I want to have rather than those imposed by the department.	-	10.4	22	13.6	2.6	51.4
37. I like to set or change the time of class based on my schedule.	-	-	9.3	22.8	34.2	33.7
39. I like to select my teacher for each term.	-	4.1	2	10.2	9.8	73.9
43. I like to have a role in the selection of language learning activities based on my needs.	-	1.5	9	11	12.7	65.8

*1 (strongly disagree); 2 (disagree); 3 (slightly disagree); 4 (slightly agree); 5 (agree); 6 (strongly agree)

The sense of belonging among ELLs shows a mixed picture. Many learners (56%) felt disconnected from their English department, and 42.2% did not see themselves as part of a global English-speaking community. Despite this, some learners (43.7%) reported extensive communication with peers from other universities, showcasing an inclination toward external socialization. Interestingly, the preference for developing relationships with native speakers was split, with a nearly equal proportion of learners (33.1% and 34.2%) showing differing levels of interaction. This highlights the complex nature of how ELLs perceive and engage with their immediate and global English-learning communities.

ELLs hold specific expectations regarding their learning environment and resources. A significant proportion (44.6%) emphasized the importance of addressing their psychological and emotional needs. However, a notable skepticism (44.2%) existed about the effectiveness of the learning materials in meeting their skill development requirements. Individual differences in learning preferences were another critical expectation, with 42.6% expressing a need for personalized teaching approaches. Learners also valued their relationship with teachers and peers as essential for meeting educational needs, underlining the social dimensions of their expectations.

Attitudes toward the English learning environment and management were generally positive. Over half (54%) viewed their university's learning environment favorably, appreciating the classroom management by teachers. However, the English classes were not universally perceived as ideal learning settings, with 54.6% indicating dissatisfaction. There was

also positive feedback regarding departmental rules and their contribution to creating a safe learning space (56.9%), emphasizing the importance of organizational support in shaping attitudes.

ELLs displayed a desire for greater agency in their learning experiences. Many expressed interest in influencing critical decisions, such as selecting teachers (73.9%) and choosing language learning activities based on their needs (65.8%). Additionally, 47.2% wanted to determine their learning methods, and 43.6% preferred self-assessment over teacher-led evaluations. This demonstrates a significant demand for learner autonomy and personalized engagement in the educational process.

While learners are motivated and hold positive attitudes toward their environments, gaps in cultural integration, belongingness, and material effectiveness suggest areas for improvement. Furthermore, the strong preference for agency highlights the potential for more participatory and learner-centered approaches in ELL programs.

Discussion

This current study leads to findings about how ELLs deal with identity construction in learning English. ELLs experience a lack of confidence in their linguistic abilities, which impacts their self-confidence and development of personal identity construction. They may consider their linguistic skills insufficient, resulting in a lack of confidence in social relationships. Linguistic limitations result in the alienation and isolation of ELLs inside the group that primarily speaks English. The act of excluding ELLs has a detrimental effect on their feeling of belonging and impedes the formation

of a good identity construction within the unfamiliar cultural environment (Pennington & Richards, 2016; Richards, 2021). ELLs embrace and prove proficiency in other languages as a valuable component of identity construction. By including their L1 alongside English, ELLs uphold a vigorous connection to their cultural history while increasing a favorable sense of learning (Rezaei & Latifi, 2020; Sakamoto & Furukawa, 2022).

It is noticed that enhancing communication abilities and increasing self-confidence among learners can be achieved by taking language lessons, engaging in practice, and immersing themselves in various English learning contexts to improve competency in the language. Improved linguistic abilities aids in more efficient interpersonal communication and lead to a more favorable development of ELLs' self-identity (Sampson, 2017; Stroud & Wee, 2005; Wang, 2021). ELLs develop their identity by implementing some strategies. It enables them to overcome problems more efficiently and trigger an effective insight that is inclusive and vigorous within the English learning context. ELLs frequently originate from culturally varied experiences, creating potential barriers between their original and English-speaking cultures. This problem engenders ambiguity regarding ELLs' identity and challenges reconciling cultural norms—certain ELLs learning the English language encounter stereotyping and bias due to their linguistic or cultural origins. Adverse stereotypes influence ELLs' self-perception and lead to the development of a fragmented or poor sense of identity (Shinozaki & Aoki, 2023; Tao & Gao, 2018). Participating in local events, such as celebrations, festivals, and society events,

assists ELLs in preserving their cultural heritage while integrating into the English-speaking community. Participating in this activity enhances ELLs' awareness of their identity within a multicultural environment.

ELLs enhance cross-cultural competency by actively studying diverse cultural rules, values, and customs while demonstrating respect for them. This strategy helps them navigate cultural disparities more efficiently. It leads to a more comprehensive and flexible process of constructing their identity. Participating in introspective activities, such as indulging in contemplation and consciousness exercises, helps ELLs learn the English language, increasing a more profound comprehension of their individual values, thoughts, and cultural identity (Ahn, 2021). This consciousness enhances the development of a tangible and comprehensive process of constructing language learning identity.

Integration of stress arises among ELLs when they undergo the challenge of transitioning to a new culture. This stress impacts confidence and formation of identity construction as they manage the intricacies of assimilating into a foreign cultural setting. Learning language challenges impede academic and professional development progress (Gu et al., 2022; Nazari, Nejadghanbar, et al., 2023; Nazari, Seyri, et al., 2023). Such circumstances result in dissatisfaction and an impression of incompetence, which harms how ELLs view themselves and construct their identity in scholarly and professional environments. A holistic approach is needed to tackle these issues, including providing assistance for language learning, facilitating cultural integration, and fostering a positive self-

perception among ELLs. Establishing an inclusive learning context and offering culturally responsive support structures encourages a more favorable and inspiring process of constructing identity for ELLs. Forming a support network consisting of classmates, teachers, and members of the society offers ELLs a feeling of inclusion and approval. These networks provide emotional assistance and direction, promoting a more favorable and unified process of constructing ELLs' identity (Pandhiani, 2022).

The social context, encompassing engagements with native speakers, fellow language learners, and teachers, exerts a substantial influence on forming identity among ELLs. Interactions among individuals and their use of language in social settings influence how ELLs perceive themselves and others. The learning atmosphere, instructional techniques, and educational regulations all have a role in shaping the identities of ELLs (Liu et al., 2023; Nematzadeh & Haddad Narafshan, 2020). Positive pedagogical encounters, teachers who provide support, and integrative pedagogical approaches increase a robust sense of affiliation and self-confidence in ELLs learning a new language. Psychological elements, including enthusiasm, self-esteem, and resilience, are essential in influencing the development of ELLs' identity construction (Ruohotie-Lyhty et al., 2021). Overcoming linguistic barriers and attaining language learning principles greatly influence learners' self-image and belief in competence.

Conclusion

This current study implies that identity construction among learners who learn English as a foreign language remains valuable but

predictable. Such identity allows ELLs to indulge in their quality and position as learners in an English department who believe in the English teaching and learning process. Meanwhile, some factors need to be enhanced when constructing identity, such as linguistic, socio-cultural, psychological, and educational aspects. ELLs must be aware of each aspect before and during identity construction. They should commit to managing language learning as a qualified stage in their education. Fortunately, identity construction relies on what ELLs prove to be true in learning English. Competence and attitude are paramount in determining whether ELLs reveal better identity construction during their English learning.

Several implications are determined from this current study. It is noted that acknowledging English learners' strategies to construct their identities informs teaching methods and curricula. It helps EFL educators to develop more inclusive and responsive pedagogical strategies that recognize and value the diverse identities of learners. This study emphasizes English learners' challenges in integrating into new linguistic and cultural environments. As for policy recommendations, the insights from identity construction may trigger educational policies to ensure they are equitable and inclusive. Educational policy is designed to support bilingual education, heritage language maintenance, and culturally relevant teaching practices. Stakeholders in a university should employ the study findings to advocate for resources and programs that support English learners' identity development. English teacher education programs incorporate the findings to prepare educators to work with English learners better. Lastly, this study empowers English

learners by validating their experiences and identities. It encourages learners to embrace their multilingualism and multiculturalism, leading to higher self-esteem, increased motivation, and better academic performance.

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