

**Interview by Ahmad Suaedy with Istiada, Malang, 23 October 2014**

**MA, Language Education, Monash University, 1992-1994**

Interviewer : Please start from your childhood and your -- *apa* -- study in primary school and your family background, and so on. *Eh*, your name, your university in Australia and year.

Istiada : Okay. My name is Istiada. I'm from Blitar. I graduated from Monash University. I think it was 1995. I came here the end of the year, 1994, but I came back to be active in this university 1995.

Interviewer : So in Monash from--

Istiada : From 1992 until 1994. And...I'm working... I've been working, actually, here start from 1995 until now. In Islam University Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.

Interviewer : Oh, not here?

Istiada : *Ya*, here. At that time--

Interviewer : Oh Maulana ya ya ya. The name--

Istiada : The name changed four times, so it was IAIN, Sunan Ampel in Malang at that time. The name was Tarbiyah Faculty IAIN Sunan Ampel in Malang.

Interviewer : What about your background and your school, in primary school, junior and--

Istiada : Okay. I graduated from Primary School in Blitar. It's um, in Elementary School--

Interviewer : Do you mind [if] I take your picture? *Ya*?

Istiada : In Elementary School in Blitar and then I continued my study at Sanawiyah, so that's Secondary School...Islamic School...

Interviewer : In the *Pesantren*? Or in...?

Istiada : No it's just (an) Islamic Secondary School but it was not in the *Pesantren*. And then--

Interviewer : [Addressing another person] *Saya curi, Bu*.

Istiada : Hahaha... And then I continued to study Alliah. Yeah, it's um... Senior High School. [An] Islam Senior High School. Actually State *ya*. State Islamic Senior High School in Blitar. And then I continued my study here at IAIN, Sunan Ampel in Malang, Tarbiah Faculty, and then after that I--

Interviewer : In English?

Istiada : Oh yeah, in [the] English Department. Then I continued [in] Monash in 1992. And...Actually I enrolled in [the] Education Faculty, then I moved to Humanities.

Interviewer : Tell me about your child[hood], when, uh, how your parents, your... background of your parents and also their work, teacher or something?

Istiada : Yeah. My father was a teacher in Senior High School. My mother [was] just a housewife. Formally--

Interviewer : They come from university also?

Istiada : Uh, no. No. My mother actually was also [a] teacher, but after getting married with my father then she quit, so...

Interviewer : Religious teacher? Or Islamic teacher?

Istiada : Yeah, Islamic teacher.

Interviewer : How many brothers do you have?

Istiada : I have two brothers. and--oh sorry, two sisters and three brothers.

Interviewer : So all five yeah?

Istiada : All five, including me.

Interviewer : All uh...go to university?

Istiada : Yeah, all of us, yeah, go to university. My brother in [the] Education Faculty and my younger brother, uh, in Usuluddin and the other in Tarbiyah Faculty.

Interviewer : How and why did you uh...look for English Teacher, uh, English Faculty here? There was some experience?

Istiada : Um, actually I just like English. I think English is great.

Interviewer : Since you were...uh...

Istiada : Yeah, um... junior high school. When I was in Junior High School I had [an] English teacher. And I think English is good. I like the sounds of English speaking. So that is why I like English. And basically I like being a teacher, so that is why I chose uh...Tarbiyah Faculty in [the] English Department.

Interviewer : So your uh, didn't get difficulties at all here when you joined in English here in IAIN?

Istiada : Not significantly. Of course there were many difficulties but I think I can manage.

Interviewer : Did you finish on time? At that time?

Istiada : Yeah. I think so.

Interviewer : How [did] you get information on what to study in Australia? Tell me about your struggles.

Istiada : Um, we had a special program from Religious Affairs at that time. We had *Pembibitan Calon Dosen*. Yeah um, different year with Syofiyah [00:05:26] . I was in the 1991, I think. Yes we graduated 1990 and then I joined 1991 in Jakarta for nine months.

Interviewer : Nine months? So very short?

Istiada : Yeah, nine months, hahaha....very short preparation.

Interviewer : Your grade must be very high.

Istiada : Uh, fortunately I was accepted directly, after we had an academic interview and I got [a] highly recommended report, so they asked me to go straight away to Australia. So without having any training in ELF. Yeah.

Interviewer : Did you have a supervisor when you were here? I mean, before you went to--?

Istiada : Yeah, actually it was our English teacher from Australia, Mr. Robert Kingham--

Interviewer : Oh, at that time? Here?

Istiada : Oh no no no. In Jakarta. He helped quite a lot. I think so. Hahaha...

Third person: *Ini juga dari Australi. My husband tuh.*

Interviewer : *Oya Bu... Pak Suebi... Tadi saya curi Ibu ya. Hahaha... Mungkin lain waktu kalau ada waktu...*

Fourth person : *Oh njih njih... Monggo pareng riyen.*

Interviewer : *Njih, matur nuwun.*

Interviewer : So how did you find Monash University?

Istiada : Um, I browsed -- I think-- information from an exhibition in Jakarta. And we found many universities [that] offered...

Interviewer : Some programs?

Istiada : Some programs, and then I chose the one (which is) of course interesting. And I found many good lectures and also subject that I'd like to do. And then I tried to apply and I got [an] acceptance letter.

Interviewer : So directly was Monash the only one you submitted? Directly?

Istiada : Yes. Directly to Monash.

Interviewer : At that time did you communicate with the supervisor or person in Monash?

Istiada : Um, not yet. From Mr. Robert Kingham. And then I tried to submit my proposal and then I got an acceptance letter. Yeah...

Interviewer : Were you married at that time? When you...

Istiada : Uh, not yet. I was single. Hahaha...

Interviewer : So no problems when you adapted in Monash, in your studies?

Istiada : No. I enjoy it very much, because I got a new family. And in fact, uh, I had [a] new family over there. And until now we still keep in contact. So when I was there the first time, I had [a] classmate on one occasion. I forget how we met actually but we became very close to each other and she was actually from Scotland. But she moved to Australia and became an Australian citizen. And she um, [was] actually also a lecturer at Monash University, but a different part. It wasn't in the city. It was in um... I don't remember the place. And then once, she asked me to give a lecture in Monash Gippsland -- something like that-- yeah, Gippsland Monash and then we became very close. And I became part of her family. So we were very, you know, very close to each other. So with her husband, and her children... I was part of their family. And also they came to Indonesia every year, and every time they visited Indonesia, they visit my house in Blitar. And she--

Interviewer : For tourism?

Istiada : Yeah, yeah for tourism. And then she brought my pictures from Australia to show to my family, my father and my mother, so they were very close. And they also recorded video tapes and then she brought the video's from Indonesia to Australia, and vice versa. So I had information from my family and my family had information from me, you know, through my best friend.

Interviewer : Did you go there after you finished?

Istiada : Not yet. No no no.

Interviewer : But still contact?

Istiada : Yeah, and in fact, they come to Indonesia every year so until now--

Interviewer : Do they usually visit Bali or...?

Istiada : Yeah, Bali. But--

Interviewer : But they always come here?

Istiada : Always to Malang, for at least a week ya. So we spend time together. Sometimes we only manage to meet for two hours. But I think, yeah, it's quite good. And also I asked them to teach here, so after I graduated and then I asked them to be native speakers in this university. I think for about five years, at that time.

Interviewer : What about your struggles in adapting in Australia for the first time? You went directly to Melbourne, or...?

Istiada : Yes, yes, directly to Melbourne.

Interviewer : How did you find the house, or...

Istiada : Um, actually there was-- I lived in Normanby House on Campus stay.

Interviewer : How did you find this house?

Istiada : Um, from Monash. The first time--

Interviewer : Oh, information from the University?

Istiada : Yes, yes, the first time they came, there was someone (who) picked me up at the airport, and [took us] directly to the Uni, and asked us to, I think to... I think look around the Uni, and then they gave us information that there was also in-campus accommodation. And I chose that.

Interviewer : For how long in this -- in this--

Istiada : I think for three months, and after three months, my friend asked me to, you know actually use the house, because they went home to do research. So yeah, I used the house for another three months, and then I moved to look for a rented house.

Interviewer : For like permanently?

Istiada : Yeah.

Interviewer : Were there like difficulties on how to find a house to rent, and so on?

Istiada : Hmmmm, I think I didn't get that because so many people helped me, hahaha... So many people helped me like the one that-- Actually it was Fahrianti. Fahrianti and his friend who lent me the house. Yeah, they helped me a lot because it managed to make adjustments, *ya*, a few months adjustment is very important then. I got much help. And also Mbak Aini. Because Rohani Dwihayati came there first. And then the first time I came I contacted her and we became like sisters. And then she asked me to buy things, and I asked her make me settle down basically.

Interviewer : How are your activities in international relations with students? Students of international countries? Students [who] come from Southeast Asia... yeah...

Istiada : Hmm... In [the] Normanby House actually we are from different places, all over the world. And I had a friend from Japan. I think her name is Midori. Yeah, I remember. So we spent time together, and in the night we watched TV and talked about many things. And also from Indonesia. I also met *Mbak Rini*. *Mbak Rini* is the wife of...uh, an Indonesianist.

Interviewer : Australian?

Istiada : No no no...from Dutch.

Interviewer : But lives in Australia?

Istiada : Yeah, lives in Australia. At the time, she did her PhD at Monash.

Interviewer : So you managed your time (such as) cooking...washing...

Istiada : No no no. Actually the first time I came I bought from the Uni. And it was quite funny. Because actually I didn't know what food [was] over there and what kind of foods go with other foods. And sometimes [it was] like that, so I ask people. Which is -- I choose the ones. And they usually remind me about which one is pork, this is not *halal* foods, this is *halal* foods. Because I wear a headscarf, I think it helped me a lot, so they know I am a Moslem.

Interviewer : Even out of campus? Out of campus also they have information like that?

Istiada : Yes. Um. No no... Basically in campus, *ya*. Usually people help me identify which is *halal* food.

Interviewer : So you don't cook yourself everyday?

Istiada : After that, after I moved to Fahriali's house then I cooked.

Interviewer : Until-- How long [were you there]?

Istiada : Until two years.

Interviewer : What about your academic disadvantages, how to adjust? How did you get information, [a] supervisor, and so on?

Istiada : Yeah, um, when I was still in the Education Department, yeah and I got a supervisor, he was very helpful. The name is Elsa Zainuddin I think. Elsa. And *Bu* Elsa helped me quite a lot. She brought me a tape-recorder. Sometimes I get difficulties in adjusting my ear!

Interviewer : In the classroom?

Istiada : Yeah. I think my listening is very bad at that time. So it's very hard for me to catch the meaning of what people are saying in the class. And she gave me a tape.

Interviewer : How long did you feel it was difficult to understand uh, the lecture in the class?

Istiada : I think until three or four months. Yeaah... three or four months. And then I asked my friend, I think the best student in the class, to be my tutor. So I pay her to give me an explanation about some concepts, and I also asked her to correct my English, and before I submit...

Interviewer : What he enjoyed when you asked...

Istiada : Yeah...

Interviewer : I mean, not uh...

Istiada : Disturbed?

Interviewer : I mean, was this [a] very good service for you?

Istiada : Yeah yeah, it was very good. And it helped me a lot.

Interviewer : How did you follow [the] topic to write uh, your last...uh....

Istiada : My minor thesis?

Interviewer : Yeah, your minor thesis.

Istiada : I discussed [about this] quite a lot, I like to discuss with many people, and then I also read from books of course, in journals and thing like that. And then fortunately my mini-thesis [was] published.

Interviewer : Oh?

Istiada : In Monash it became a working paper and then it was also publish by Paper Prep.

Interviewer : After you finished *ya*?

Istiada : Ya.

Interviewer : So it's like a high rank of the work.

Istiada : Yeah. yeah. Alhamdulillah I think, it's a great fortune for me. Although people say that nobody will give you money. I think it's okay! Hahaha... It's not about the money, but about the-- the, you know..the trust.

Interviewer : What topic?

Istiada : I wrote about contemporary Muslim women in Indonesia.

Interviewer : No relation with Language?

Istiada : Uh, not really, because after that I moved to Humanities.

Interviewer : Oh yeah, your faculty [is] not about language?

Istiada : No. It's not about language. I switched.

Interviewer : Tell me about Humanities in the faculty.

Istiada : There are so many departments *ya*, in the faculty. One of them is uh, we have cross Sociology and Anthropology, and the other is Women Studies. So I belong to Women Studies. But I also chose some of the subjects from Anthropology and Sociology. So it helped me to, you know, to link my background, it is English, and then you know, to Women Studies.

Interviewer : So is there something uh, special, [such as] Moslem Women Studies there or...?

Istiada : No. No. No. Actually...

Interviewer : So at that time you are the only one who chose the topic of Women Moslem?

Istiada : I think so. But there is also [a] subject about Indonesia. I think Muslim in Indonesia, but not Muslim Women. Um, so that's for Interdisciplinary Studies. So many people from other Departments. So we join in discussion. And in fact, we have a group discussion every week. So we have Barbara

Hatley and David Chandler. I think they [are] managers of Asia Institute, David Chandler. So they have weekly seminars on Indonesia.

Interviewer : How did you find the topic on Muslim Women? Because you are struggling yourself or your supervisor?

Istiada : Basically it was my interest, but then I asked people, including Helen Sumarjo, she was a Senior Librarian in [the] main library of Monash University, and I asked her to find some books and articles about that.

Interviewer : What topic precisely did you research on?

Istiada : Um, about education. Still, how Muslim...um, improve ya. So I... challenging and finding a new path.

Interviewer : What is the title?

Istiada : Contemporary Muslim Women in Indonesia, Investigating Parts... I don't remember exactly the whole thing, hahaha.

Interviewer : What were you looking for?

Istiada : I looked for how Muslim women in Indonesia find out... problem solving for their lives. So I looked at how women's organizations, like Yasanti...

Interviewer : Ah, I see, okay, okay...like how the women organize to become social...

Istiada : To empower themselves through social activities, like that.

Interviewer : So you did research in Indonesia?

Istiada : Um, not really. I used some people hahaha...to do research in Indonesia. And I myself do the library research.

Interviewer : Okay...you got information from the...

Istiada : Yeah. yeah. Because it was actually only a mini thesis.

Interviewer : Did you get difficulties when uh, structuring the topic and looking for the source?

Istiada : Yes, of course. Finding [the] topic is always the most difficult part.

Interviewer : Hahaha...get stuck?

Istiada : Yeah yeah yeah...The fixed topic that we are going to write I think is always the most difficult part in writing [a] thesis or dissertation. So I struggled quite a lot to get [a] fixed topic. But because I have many friends, I think friends are quite helpful. Because by discussing with friends we can clarify what we are going to write. Because sometimes we just have uh like, a very general idea without having [a] clear picture, what is it about. Yeah.

Interviewer : In universities abroad it's very stick, haha..

Istiada : Yeah that's true. And I also got very helpful information from the founding fathers uh, mothers of Yasanti. And *Mbak* Kus Yuniarti.

Interviewer : You met her?

Istiada : OH yeah...she became my best friend.

Interviewer : He was in Australia?

Istiada : Um actually she was in Swinburne University. It's not in Monash, but we lived together, I mean, in one place. So we met quite a lot.

Interviewer : What about your activities in social and cultural? Maybe went [to the] theater or recreation?

Istiada : I like to go to [the] theater quite a lot. I uh-- in fact I enjoyed umm, you know, performances in Australia, because there were quite a lot performances from Indonesia and from abroad, like *Madam Butterfly*, and things like that that were quite famous. And from Indonesia we had some performances from I think Putu Wijaya and many things. And I also enjoyed my time to watch films. Sometimes I think, around twice a week, hahaha...

Interviewer : You mean Australian films?

Istiada : Uh, yeah Australian films-- Indonesian films. Basically Indonesian films. Because we have communities yeah. And then we actually watched Indonesian films I think twice...Yeah it was twice a week, but you know it was only a short time. Like [for] two months it was twice a week and after that we didn't have anything, and the other year--

Interviewer : Are there many Indonesian films?

Istiada : Yeah, um, I think the popular films, like from Garin Nugroho, *Surat Untuk Tuhan*, things like that. And also Australian and international films. Yeah so...

Interviewer : What about television? What do you like there?

Istiada : Ummm, usually I go to Uni until eight o'clock in the night. And then I went home. And when I went home usually there was like, *Family Feud*, now in Indonesia it becomes *Famili 100*. Things like that. About surveys...and reality shows. And when I got difficulties usually I watch *Mr. Bean*, hahaha...

Interviewer : Hahaha...the universal.....What about vacation, I mean, recreation? You often went to another university?

Istiada : Yeah, I remember the first time I went to Sydney and then Canberra. *Mbak* Aini was quite crazy because, you know, 'You [are] alone and very small, and the you didn't know anything about Australia. You are too brave.' She said [that] to me. But then I managed to go there. I went there using a train until ummm...I think until the end of Melbourne and then we moved to Coach, and after Coach, I used another train to Sydney.

Interviewer : What about in Melbourne? What place did you go and...the popular...

Istiada : Beaches. yeah, beaches of course, yeah in the beach. And the zoo and (the) traditional market. And also--

Interviewer : Victoria Market.

Istiada : Yeah, Victoria. And then Blue Mountain. Yeah, we went skiing.

Interviewer : Did you work also? Or full studying?

Istiada : Full time studying.

Interviewer : So the scholarship is enough to--?

Istiada : Yeah, because I was single and I can manage my money I think. I think it was enough. At that time. More than enough for me. Haha...So I usually spend my money to ring home and ring friends in the other States, like in Sydney, for one hour a month.

Interviewer : You finished on time?

Istiada : Yeah, on time.

Interviewer : I mean uh, maybe earlier than defined?

Istiada : No not earlier I think. Just on time.

Interviewer : Hahaha, okay. So what about when you came back to here? Adaption to, to--

Istiada : Yeah yeah. I think it was more shocking than when the first time I--

Interviewer : So [you have] never been back ya? In two years?

Istiada : Oh. I went. I went back for three months. So for the first six months I lived there and then I went to Indonesia for another three months. It was in summertime. Because I had a problem with my employment. I think it was about my *SK. SK Pegawai Negeri*, hehehe...

Interviewer : So you had to do something with--

Istiada : Yeah. Yeah yeah. I had to do something to...*apa*...register here and then to IAIN Surabaya to clarify many things.

Interviewer : Only one time?

Istiada : Only once.

Interviewer : So back to your adaptation...

Istiada : Yeah, and you know after two years living in Australia, coming back to Indonesia was quite....different. And difficult. Especially the traffic. And you know, I didn't have any bravery to ride *becak*--

Interviewer : Did you drive in Australia?

Istiada : No.

Interviewer : Here?

Istiada : No. But I was not brave [enough] to sit in the front of the car anymore. Because it was crazy. I think the traffic is very scary. And also *becak*. *Becak* is quite scary.

Interviewer : Not safe at all.

Istiada : Yeesss. And maybe it's like maybe one year to adjust myself to *becak* again. It's very long to *becak*. Because *becak* is quite crazy.

Interviewer : And now you drive?

Istiada : No, hahaha...

Interviewer : Motorcycle?

Istiada : Sometimes.

Interviewer : And what about your struggles in [the] academic environment? Because you never taught in the class before *ya*. Before you went to Australia.

Istiada : Yeah. Hmm. Umm. Actually before I went to Australia I was also [a] teacher. Not a lecturer, but I was also a teacher. I had been teaching for I think a year in senior high school. And it was STM, which is a very specific school because all of them are male. I taught English. And I was quite young. So you know how... It was [a] great challenge. But I think it was very good experience for me. So after teaching them and then I moved to Uni, I think [it was] a lot easier. A lot easier. Because the university students are quite tolerant. So they never treated the lecturer like that, hahaha... So I think I just enjoyed it.

Interviewer : What (about) your career?

Istiada : I think I am quite fortunate. Because the first time I came from Australia it was 1995 and then I became staff. I think only for two years I became staff. Staff of micro teaching. And then I moved be staff of [the] Taribiyah Faculty. But after that I always became a leader I think. So the first time I became a leader of PSW. Women Studies Center. At the same time I was appointed to be the leader of the main library of the faculty. And then after...I think 2000 I moved to the Department, I became the secretary of [the] Language Department. Until 2002. And after that I became uh, I think the Vice Dean of Financial Affairs. And starting there from 2002 until 2004 it was like uh, private. Because you know, actually, it was not paid by the government. Because we have UII, but we moved to UII and we became a University. But actually we didn't have any support from the government. During 2004 until 2009, I became the real Vice Dean of Financial Affairs for the first time.

Interviewer : Second ya? Uh, third vice?

Istiada : No the second Vice Dean, started at 2004-- no I think 2005 until 2009. And then I was appointed again at the same position 2009 until 2013. And from 2013 until now I become a Dean. Ya.

Interviewer : How [does] your family like it?

Istiada : My family is okay. I have three children. Now at the third grade SMA, and the second is grade two in Junior High School, and the third one is still grade five in Elementary.

Interviewer : And your husband is also--?

Istiada : No my husband is in Kanjuran University.

Interviewer : Terima kasih atas waktunya.