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English Language Lecturers' Communication Strategies: A Case Study in Aceh Province, Indonesia

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CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as part of the collaborative master/doctoral degree and/or fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Student:

Date: 15 August 2016

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ABSTRACT

This research critically analyses English Language lecturers' classroom interaction practices at Syiah Kuala University in Aceh, Indonesia.

Communication breakdowns and unanticipated language difficulty in the classroom are more complex than an initiation-response-follow-up pattern (Cullen, 1998) and require in-depth analysis for language learning.

In order to examine the English language lecturers' classroom interaction practices, the following research question is posed:

How do English language lecturers use communication strategies in their English teaching context at Syiah Kuala University, Aceh - Indonesia?

The major question is guided by three following sub-questions:

a. What is the nature of English language lecturers' communication strategies (CSs) as observed in university English classrooms?
b. What are the English language lecturers' beliefs underpinning the use of those communication strategies to facilitate learning?
c. How do English language learners perceive the language learning in their English classrooms in relation to lecturer communication strategies?

English language lecturers' communication strategies, which are drawn from a synthesis between 'the role of language user' and 'the role of language analyst' (Edge, 1988 as cited in Andrews, 2007, p. 185), are analysed in multi-faceted ways in consideration of lecturers' communicative language ability and language awareness respectively. This study explores the essential role of language awareness as part of a semiotic process in which awareness can stimulate a communication strategy to solve communication breakdown and promote learning simultaneously.

The study incorporates Vygotsky's sociocultural theory in that engagement of a lecturer in a socio-cultural context (micro genetic level) may affect his/her language development which impacts on all aspects of language teaching/learning (Cross, 2010) such as instructional practice. This practice may be perceived contradictorily by a lecturer and his/her university students.

This study is a descriptive case study with three data sources (classroom observation, stimulated recall, and focus group) and the participants were 2 lecturers and 40 university students at Syiah Kuala University, Aceh Province. The three main foci in the study are the lecturers' communication strategies, the lecturers' underlying beliefs about the strategies, and the learners' perceptions about classroom communication strategies.

It is evident from the data that the lecturers' communication strategies were predominantly used to promote accuracy and message comprehensibility. The lecturers' beliefs about the strategies emanate from their personal set of experiential knowledge and other impacting factors such as learners' positive and negative perceptions towards the lecturers' communication strategies as well as apparent varieties of traits in classroom culture.

This study has revealed factors leading to a missing interface between language awareness and communication strategies. The lecturers' experiential knowledge is found to influence rationales underlying their strategies. Such knowledge bases should be further explored in future studies, as findings are applicable to teacher education, especially with a view to increasing language awareness and communication strategies in classroom oral discourse.