

SOCIAL ACTORS IN AN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION CLASSROOM: A DISCURSIVE LENS OF INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

To date, Intercultural communication (IC) has been vastly regarded as an inevitable study to learn and explore since the growths of transportation and information & technology enabling people to move across geographical, linguistic and cultural boundaries. One of indispensable aspects of attaining the successful teaching and learning IC in the classroom context is understanding the representation of teachers and students as the social actors. This study focused on how the teachers and the students as the social actors in an Intercultural Communication classroom were represented discursively. One video recording transcript of IC teaching and learning process at a state University in Indonesia was selected as the corpus through document analysis. In particular, such a corpus was rigorously analysed based on van Leeuwen's Socio-semantic inventory of social actors framework, namely inclusion & exclusion, role allocation, genericisation & specification, individualization & assimilation and nomination & categorization (Van Leeuwen, 1996). The findings disclosed that the Hamzah as the representative of classroom presenters was represented as victimized, oppressed, intimidated and minoritized social actor based on his unpleasant past learning experiences in different cultural milieu. Then, the junior high school Mathematics teacher of Hamzah was represented as an intolerant, dehumanizing, discriminatory and oppressing teacher due to her inappropriate behaviours and insulting utterances towards a minor ethnic group student (Sundanese student) during teaching and learning process in the classroom. Besides, the junior high school Social Sciences teacher of Hamzah was represented as a racial, stereotyping, dominant and provoking social actor because of her unscientific, groundless and agitating claims towards the Sundanese student. Furthermore, the Intercultural Communication teacher (the IC teacher) was represented as the social actor endeavoring to encourage his students to be tolerant, critical, supportive and open-minded social actors because of his acts responding to Hamzah's presentation proportionally. Eventually, Hamzah's classmates in IC classroom were represented as sympathetic, supportive, friendly and reactionary social actors because of their responses sounded to Hamzah's presentation. Therefore, the overall pictures of social actors in IC classroom can be categorized into two main thematic representations, namely positive and negative ones. On the one hand, positive social actor representations were addressed to Hamzah, IC teacher and Hamzah's classmates. On the other hand, the junior high school mathematics teacher of Hamzah and the junior high school social sciences teacher of Hamzah were categorized into negative social actor representations. Ideologically, both parties constructed their own ideology to maintain the existence of their ethnic groups and hegemony. Theoretically, they were characterised as non-essentialists and essentialists.

Keywords: Intercultural communication classroom, social actors, discursive representation, othering

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