

A Few 'Aha' Moments: Reflections on Indonesian Language Learning

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The studies on second language learner language, also called 'interlanguage' (Selinker, 1972), usually include first language (L1) transfer, error analysis and a few factors that influence learner language. The studies of learners' errors provide deeper understanding of learners' second language systematic development. The other studies on second language acquisition shed a light on the positive role of consciousness raising and awareness in learners' second language acquisition (Schmidt, 1990). Consciousness raising and awareness and Focus on Form (Lightbrown and Spada, 1994) that departs from this approach facilitate language learning when used in meaningful ways. These approaches lay the base for this current study.

This study looks at the development of Indonesian language learning experienced by intermediate and advanced learners who participated in intensive language programs in Indonesia. While immersing in the language and culture and receiving rich language input, the students observed, reflected and recorded their own understanding of certain phrases and structures that are new or no longer new but are still puzzling to them. These observations and reflections provide valuable insight into learner language.

A few 'aha' moments recorded in one of the students' journal showed how she finally understood the difference between *budaya* and *kebudayaan* and *seni* and *kesenian* and the function of circumfix *ke- -an* in this structure. The learner also found how a phrase like *tak kalah* could be used as a transition phrase that connected paragraphs or thoughts. She thought this finding would make her writing take a leap forward. On the other hand, the journal also reflected on the fact that some phrases would never stick in the learner's mind no matter how frequently she was exposed to them. These language-learning journals, nonetheless, show what it means to know a language and how the knowledge of the target language evolves in the learners' mind.