

THROUGH THE METAPHORICAL LENS: UNDERSTANDING OTHERING OF LANGUAGE LECTURERS IN INDONESIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract: This research attempted to delve into the Indonesian and English lecturers' views on othering experiences through the metaphorical lens. The data collection employed interviews with ten lecturers teaching at two public universities in Aceh, Indonesia. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, and further analyzed using Johnson and Lakoff's Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) where a metaphor is referred to understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another thing. The results revealed that the lecturers expressed their feelings of being othered through 14 Acehnese metaphorical expressions. They are 'awak dalam', 'awak droe' 'asoe lhôk', 'Cina saboh geudông', and 'ureung lhap darah', 'kôn ureung gulam budée', 'kôn awak dalam', 'kôn awak droe jih', 'kôn syara Ma jih', 'gob mat aweuk', 'ureung di luwa pageu', 'jamok di luwa keuleumbu', 'awak gop', and 'awak blah déh laôt'. Those in power (i.e., the 'us') discriminated against some lecturers (i.e., the 'them') by not providing them equal opportunities in the institution, regardless of their quality and credentials. Othering that existed in the universities negatively affected their work enthusiasm, education quality, social justice, and equality. Consequently, othering must be eradicated so that the human resources recruitment and education in universities uphold the principles of transparency, equality, and accountability.

Keywords: *othering; metaphorical expressions; Acehnese; language; lecturers.*

INTRODUCTION

In this globalized era, the mobility of variously diverse people has increased in many countries. Today, culturally and religiously diverse people work for various organizations, including educational institutions. Therefore, supporting people to live and work peacefully and democratically is necessary by promoting respect, tolerance, freedom, unity, compassion, and fairness. Educational institutions are primarily responsible for promoting these values to the students to produce open-minded alumni as future workers.

However, the literature indicates that some academicians and students studying at universities or other educational institutions experience being othered, such as through their physical or other types of differences (e.g., place of birth, ethnicity, et cetera) (Dervin, 2015). Many scholars call this phenomenon 'othering' (e.g., Dervin, 2015; Golkowska, 2014; Liu, 2021; Vichiensing, 2017).

Othering in the workplace, especially in educational institutions, should not be neglected because it results in negative consequences for both individuals and institutions. Being othered threatens

the life experience of those who are constructed as others (Liu, 2021). Othering negatively affects people because of the discriminative treatment they receive in their social life (Liu, 2021; Vichiensing, 2017). Othering “can serve to reinforce and reproduce positions of domination and subordination. Those who are ‘othered’ often experience marginalization, decreased opportunities, and exclusion” (Murtagh, 2019). The othering can also fuel various hate crimes, as indicated in the anti-Asian crimes involving physical violence and harassment in the United States of America (Gover, Harper & Langton, 2020). Therefore, universities or other educational institutions as venues where people learn and live democratically, elegantly, and actively, should attempt to eliminate othering practices as they can negatively affect the quality of education.

Many previous related studies on othering in higher education institutions have also existed. Among them are studies on othering in the classrooms (e.g., Ahmadi, 2015; Linares, 2016), discrimination against students (e.g., Annalakshmi & Venkatesan, 2018; Gokce, 2013; Liu, 2021), academic staff at universities (e.g., Bakley, 2016; Clingan, 2021; Halici & Kasimoglu, 2006), and othering in terms of discrimination of academic staff members due to different genders (Husu, 2005). Othering is also practiced in the books used as lesson materials, like novels (Mushtaq, 2010). All these studies revealed that othering, such as exclusion and discrimination, have negative consequences for those working or studying at educational institutions. Halici and Kasimoglu (2006), for instance, conducted research in higher education institutions in Turkey and Azerbaijan in five discrimination areas: job advertisements and the evaluation of job applications, performance evaluation, providing staff with opportunities in the institution, reward, and punishment, and determining workload. However, instructors at Azerbaijan University experienced higher discrimination than Turkish instructors. Clingan (2021) reviewed previous studies on the discrimination of male adjunct lecturers in higher education in the United States and found that adjuncts are paid less than permanent professors in the institutions. Thus, schools find them economically feasible. Another study by Bakley (2016) on adjuncts in higher education institutions revealed that the adjuncts deal with various

challenges compared to the permanent employees on various campuses. The male adjuncts received discrimination challenges as compared to the female employees in the same higher education institutions. Among the instances are institutions that prefer hiring employees from within, discriminating against the new adjuncts.

Despite negatively affecting the quality of education and democratic living in higher education, research on othering practices in Indonesian universities, especially in Aceh province, is scant. One study that explored othering in Indonesia is by Widyastuti (2016) regarding the ethnic othering of Chinese in Indonesia. The results revealed that equality, acceptance, tolerance, and trust are the four interwoven focus themes that best summarize participants' impressions of social reality. Ethnic accommodation is best understood in terms of its political, social, and psychological aspects. Discourse analysis by using a multi-perspectival approach offers an all-encompassing resource for addressing social problems of ethnic othering.

Consequently, this present study explored othering expressed by Acehese lecturers teaching Indonesian and English in Indonesia through the metaphorical lens and how othering affects their educational performance. It is argued that using metaphors is crucial in understanding the experiences and how they are conceptualized in languages other than English. Conducting research through the metaphorical lens is relevant because the storied metaphor is a tool educators have personally and collectively used to convey their lived experiences (Craig, 2018). Metaphors not only create realities but also guide future action (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). Thus, universities in Indonesia should be where othering is not tolerated as Indonesia is a multi-diverse country in which every citizen believes in a religion, and Islam is the majority. Every religion forbids the practice of othering, such as discrimination, exclusion, and stigmatization. University communities must urge their people (staff, academicians, scientists, and students) to promote the value of ‘ourness’ rather than ‘otherness’. In the classroom context, Ahmadi (2015) stated that students have the right to study in a secure and supportive environment free from discrimination or stereotyping. In this way, they have the same rights in the learning process.

However, research on how educators perceive othering and how to eliminate or reduce it in the university context is scarce. Therefore, as Dervin (2015) suggested, othering must be discussed openly, banished, or fought against in educational discourses. Exploring many kinds of othering in higher education is necessary to maintain a good relationship among staff members.

Researching othering at universities is crucial as it can help maintain a good relationship and collaboration among academicians. As Canales (2000) pointed out, “our understanding of the other is important for how we understand [the] difference and how we engage with those perceived as different from self-as the other” (p. 16). Good relationships and collaboration between the academicians and administrators matter for improving the quality of education in higher education.

Therefore, this study intends to answer the following research questions: What are the metaphorical expressions in Acehnese used to express othering in higher education? Gaining more extensive knowledge of how these language lecturers experienced being othered and what types of othering they experienced is crucial for creating awareness of this problem in ways that may help mitigate and prevent it from happening in the future. It is hoped that insights from this study can help lecturers or instructors become more aware of othering and consider potential solutions to reduce its prevalence in higher education, enhance efforts toward inclusive excellence, and create more inclusive classroom climates.

The notion of ‘othering’ has been defined in many disciplines. In psychology, for instance, othering is an essential part of the differentiation of the ‘self from others’ (Krumer-Nevo & Sidi, 2012). Othering is also equated with stereotyping (Ahmadi, 2015; Phillipson, 1992). Even according to Golkowska (2014), othering is not only associated with stereotyping but also with ethnocentricity, involving “the domination of the in-group that declares itself superior to the out-group and denies the other subjectivity and uniqueness” (Vichiensing, 2017, p. 28). Other scholars, like Tyson (2015), define othering as the practice “of judging all who are different as less than fully human...and it divides the world between ‘us’ (the ‘civilized’) and ‘them’ (the ‘others’, the ‘savages’)” (p. 401), and Winslow and Winslow (2014) defined it as “a

discursive process of separating ‘we’ from ‘other’ as a means of constructing hierarchies of power” (p. 1). These definitions resemble Vichiensing’s (2017) definition of othering, “a mental distance is created between ‘us’ and ‘them’ (p. 127).

The othering concept is originally rooted in the postcolonial theory (Said, 1993). It is defined by difference-‘us’ and ‘them’, ‘self’ and ‘other’, to highlight a contrast between Europeans and oriental people during colonial periods” (Said, 1985, as cited in Liu, 2021). It addresses “the power relations between different cultural groups, and in particular the process by which a dominant group attributes a subordinate status and identity to another” and “in the process of othering, an idealized self is created against others whose characteristics are framed as different, problematic, and inferior” (Song, 2020, p. 2). However, according to Vichiensing (2017), the postcolonial theory is now used in many disciplines and addresses many kinds of othering as manifested through exclusion, marginalization, and discrimination.

Othering has been consciously and unconsciously exercised in many institutions. For example, othering is exercised for the usage of the English language; those with native-like English ability are privileged and those that do not have it are less privileged. According to Ahmadi (2015), “the ideology of equating English with civility has roots in Imperial Britain” (p. 442). Today, English is regarded as the global language, and the English language is believed to bring dignity and honor to people that have not yet entered the fold of mainstream English (Lippi-Green, 1995).

Since othering is related to one’s experiences and perception, which are abstract by nature, one can see it from a metaphorical lens. Literature indicates that metaphor has been used to see abstract things from more concrete things (Kövecses, 2002; Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). Metaphors can be an essential means of understanding people’s experiences (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Craig (2018) stated that people have utilized “metaphors to story and make sense of their lived experiences for themselves and to carry across their meaning interactively to others” (p. 301). In this regard, Lakoff and Johnson (2003) clarified metaphor as not just in language but in thought and action, where humans’ common conceptual system, which

guides how we think and behave, is inherently metaphorical.

Some scholars divide metaphors into stock, novel, emergent, and ascribed metaphors (Craig, 2018). Stock metaphors risk over-use and can be “absolutized to the point where they are meaningless. They can become so common that they unreflectively shape practice in non-enlightening ways. Emergent metaphors (Breault, 2006) are intuitively held and expressed by educators. They naturally appear in a teacher’s language and their unfolding practice. Ascribed metaphors are novel or stock metaphors that researchers intentionally adopt to describe a phenomenon they have identified or what they view as teachers’ perceived teaching experiences.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) is among the popular theories of metaphor today. Proposed by Johnson and Lakoff in 1980, the theory was then followed and refined by several proponents, such as Kövecses (2002), and applied by previous researchers (e.g., Usman & Mawardi, 2022; Usman & Yusuf, 2020). In their theory, a metaphor referred to “understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another thing” (p. 5). In the same vein, Kövecses (2017, p. 1) defined a conceptual metaphor as “understanding one domain of experience (that is typically abstract) in terms of another (that is typically concrete)”.

In explaining the CMT, Kövecses (2002) illustrated it with several examples. For instance, in explaining the metaphor of ‘love is a journey’, Kövecses used many linguistic expressions as in the following:

Look how far we’ve come.
We’re at a crossroads.
We’ll just have to go our separate ways.
We can’t turn back now.
I don’t think this relationship is going anywhere.
Where are we?
We’re stuck.
It’s been a long, bumpy road.
This relationship is a dead-end street.
We’re just spinning our wheels.
Our marriage is on the rocks.
We’ve gotten off the track.
This relationship is foundering.
(Kövecses, 2002, p. 5)

The linguistic expressions above use phrases in italics from the domain of a journey. This can be understood from the expression ‘How far we’ve

come and at a crossroads,’ which clearly indicates a journey. Other linguistic expressions also indicate a journey, as in ‘turn back’, ‘a long, bumpy road’, ‘going anywhere’, ‘a dead-end street’, ‘spinning our wheels’, ‘on the rocks’, ‘off the track’, and ‘foundering’, which are manifestations of the conceptual metaphor ‘love is a journey’ (Usman & Mawardi, 2022).

METHOD

This research used a qualitative method to explore the Acehese lecturers (i.e., five Indonesian language lecturers and five English language lecturers), on metaphorical expressions of othering in the Acehese language regarding their feelings of being othered in their universities. These ten Acehese university lecturers taught at two public universities located in Banda Aceh, Indonesia. This study focuses on the metaphors from the stories of experiences of the lecturers. A narrative is a portal through which a person accesses the world and by means of which their experience of the world is interpreted and given meaning (Connelly & Clandinin, 2005).

In collecting data, this study used narrative inquiry (i.e., interviews). The data were recorded and transcribed. The interview comprised questions of “Tell me whether you have experienced being othered in your workplace?”. Those who said ‘no’ were excluded from being the research participants. Meanwhile, those who said ‘yes’ proceeded with the next question, “What types of othering did you experience, such as marginalization, exclusion, or other types?”. They then told their stories about their experiences while working for the universities. The stories for research are crucial because, according to Craig (2018), “one major way that raw experience can be captured and communicated is through story...[and] the story has the power to reveal reality and elaborate problems in ways that the paradigmatic is not able” (p. 301). Once the participants had finished telling their stories, they were further questioned, “In the following Acehese metaphorical expressions, which one best describes your experiences of being othered at your workplace?”. That enabled the researchers to analyze the transcripts deductively when the participants expressed their responses to the questions regarding their feelings of being othered in their daily work at their universities and to

identify the kinds of othering they experienced and why these types of othering happen.

Johnson and Lakoff's Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) were used to analyze metaphorical expressions. As stated by Lakoff and Johnson (2003), metaphorical expressions are realizations of conceptual metaphors. In analyzing the metaphors, the metaphorical expressions used by the academicians (i.e., participants) in telling their narratives were then classified based on the themes (i.e., metaphorical expressions) that emerged from the data (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014). The participants in this study are coded as P1 to P10 in this paper.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After collecting and analyzing the data, the idioms by the participants who felt being othered in various ways, such as discrimination, exclusion, and marginalization, were identified. These types of othering were expressed in 14 Acehnese metaphorical expressions, they are: *'awak dalam'*, *'awak droe'* *'asoe lhôk'*, *'Cina saboh geudông'*, and *'ureung lhap darah'*, *'kôn ureung gulam budée'*, *'kôn awak dalam'*, *'kôn awak droe jih'*, *'kôn syara Ma jih'*, *'gob mat aweuk'*, *'ureung di luwa pageu'*, *'jamok di luwa keuleumbu'*, *'awak gop'*, and *'awak blah déh laôt'*. Subsequently, the next sub-sections discuss these Acehnese metaphorical expressions that represent othering at higher education as 'us' and 'them'.

Awak dalam (the insiders)

The metaphor *'awak dalam'* (people in (a group or circle) or the insiders), as exemplified by P3, is meant for those who are in power or those working within the central ring of the administration of the universities. She said,

(1) *"Ka biasa, so yang meunang, akan dipileh awak dalam mantong keu jabatan"*. (This is common, whoever wins, he/she will only choose the insiders for positions).

P3 continued *'awak dalam'* were privileged within the university administration, even though there were many others (i.e., academicians or staff) with better quality of education, competencies, and backgrounds.

'Awak droe' (our own people)

The metaphor *'awak droe'* literally means 'our people'. P8 and P10 said that in their universities where othering practice existed, *'awak droe'* were regarded as the people who received privilege and important positions within the administration. P8 said, sarcastically,

(2) *"Hana poenteng careung bangai, yang poenteung awak droe"*. (It doesn't matter if you are smart or dumb, what matters is that you are their people, i.e., them).

'Asoe lhôk' (the deep bones)

In *'asoe lhôk'* (the deep bone) metaphor, *asoe* (meat) is used to conceptualize a person or people, and *lhôk* (deep) is viewed as the locals (natives) where the university is situated. P6 voiced,

(3) *"Lôn panée ijak poerôh, kön asoe lhôk"*. (I am not eligible to have positions within their administration because I am not a native).

P6 narrated that the lecturers addressed as the *'asoe lhôk'* were considered eligible to have privileges within the university administration. They had a greater authority to regulate the university.

'Cina saboh geudông' (Chinese in one building)

This is a metaphor used to express the oligarchy in the university. P4 described that this metaphor came about due to the situation in Indonesia, where many indigenous people believed that the Chinese in Indonesia today have the money power structure consisting of elite individuals, families, or corporations that allowed them to control the country. He further explained,

(4) *"Lon kön Cina saboh geudong ngon awak nyan"*. (I am not Chinese in the same building as them).

This situation is then equated by the Acehnese with the situation at the university, where only those who supported the elected leader financially would receive important positions during his or her administration.

'Ureung lhap darah' (the person(s) who wipes the blood)

The metaphor *'ureung lhap darah'* (the person(s) who wipes the blood) is commonly used by the Acehnese to envision a situation where a person takes benefits from other people's work. P5 interpreted how blood usually comes out when

people get wounded, so in a battle, when it has ended, there will come a person to wipe the blood of the wounded or clean the mess. He said,

(5) "*Lôn hana mita-mita jabatan. Lôn kön ureung lhap darah*". (I am not begging for positions within the university because I don't wipe blood).

In higher education, P5 claimed that this was addressed to lecturers who came to join the group after others who 'battled' in the pre-election won for the period. P5 continued that such lecturers merely "harvests" what others have planted.

'Kön ureung gulam beudée' (not the person(s) holding the guns)

The metaphor *'ureung gulam beudée'* can be literally translated into the person/people holding the guns, which maps up those who have worked much to support their candidate to get the leader's success as an army. P1 informed:

(6) "*Lon kon ureung gulam beudée, panè na ijak poeròh dalam jabatan basah*". (I am not a person who held weapons, that's why I am not assigned any position (in the university administration)).

In this study, P1 explained the lecturers' struggle in competing for positions during a leader's administration, which is every four years, at his university, and this situation is conceptualized as a battle or war using weapons. The leader here is the Rector, Chancellor, Director, or President of a university. The elected leader usually selects the lecturers for positions within his administration. The person(s) who were not involved in supporting him during his campaign was regarded as 'not fighters in his battle'. These lecturers were excluded from being recruited to have leading positions, such as deans, vice deans, and heads of units, even though he or they were eligible for the positions.

'Kön awak dalam' (not the insiders)

'Kön awak dalam' (not the insiders) is also a metaphor that means the person(s) who are regarded as not members of a certain group or circle. In this study, P2 referred it to as the 'ring of the administration of the university', even though they were actually part of it as lecturers as well. These were administration or teaching staff members who did not belong to the group members of those who supported the elected leader during the election. He said,

(7) "*Lôn hana jiepoeròh dalam tes ujian mahasiswa baroe karena dianggap kön awak*

dalam". (I was not involved in the new student enrolment because of not part of the insiders).

'Kön awak droe jih' (not of their group members)

The feelings of not belonging to their group members (*'kön awak droe jih'*) were expressed by several participants. P4 narrated,

(8) "*Le that awak droe jih yang ka jijòk buet. Geutanyoe kön awak droe jih, sehingga jangankan untuk poejabat, keu tugah-tugah yang basah pun han jipoeroh*". (Many of their people were given jobs. We are not part of them so not just positions, other jobs (in campus) are also not given to us).

They felt their exclusion from being offered good positions within the university administration because they did not belong to the group members. Some of them accepted their fate because it is customary in the political world of campus today.

'Kön syara ma jih' (not his/her mother's relatives)

The metaphor *'kön syara Ma jih'* refers to a situation where someone is not given any positions in an administration because the leader is not a relative of that person. P9 informed,

(9) "*Geutanyoe kön syara ma jih, panè na I jak pakèk sebagai poejabat*". (I am not their mothers' relatives, so I am not eligible within their administration).

P9 refers to this situation similar to nepotism, the practice among those with power or influence of favoring relatives or friends, especially by giving them jobs. At his university, P9 informed that nepotism was still practiced among those who have high positions at the university.

Gop mat aweuk (the one(s) holding the big spoon)

In this metaphor, *aweuk* (a big spoon used for cooking soup or gravy in a big pot) is used to represent the university's top management, and *gob* means other person(s). P2 revealed,

(10) "*Lon pasrah mantong ngön keuadaan kampus geutanyoe, karena teungoh gob mat aweuk*". (I am submissive to the current situation of our campus because the spoon is in the hands of other people).

Other participants, such as P3 and P4, who felt being othered said they also received unfair treatment in their workplace, such as discrimination

in the recruitment of the human resources to hold important positions at the university.

'Ureung di luwa pageu' (the person(s) outside the fence)

The metaphor *'ureung di luwa pageu'* (the person(s) outside the fence) in this research is an Acehnese metaphor that conceptualized the university administration as something protected with the fence built around the leader or by in-group staff members. As mentioned earlier, those who did not struggle in 'his battle' were the out-group people. In other words, only those who have worked for or had a strong relationship with the elected leader was regarded as 'us' and, therefore, had privileged and got positions within his administration. P2 said,

(11) *"Panëna jipoeröh tanyoe untuk mat jabatan di kampus, lôn dianggap ureung di luwa pageu"*. (I am not recruited to hold important positions on campus because I am regarded as those outside the fence).

P2 further explained that in contrast, those who were not 'us' were likely to be excluded and usually received no positions, or at times, unfair treatment within the university administration.

'Jamok di luwa keuleumbu' (mosquitoes outside the mosquito net)

P10 explained that the metaphor *'jamok di luwa keuleumbu'* is almost similar to *'ureung di luwa pageu'* (the person(s) outside the fence) or as 'them'. Therefore, those who were not 'us' were likely to be excluded and usually received no positions. But in this metaphor, there is *'jamok'* (mosquitoes), which by nature like to bite and suck the blood of humans. In this case, P10 explained that the *'jamok'* were the 'them' or people who were opposed to the 'us' during the campaign and election (i.e., the opposition).

(12) *"Narit tanyoe bak grup WhatsApp dosen hana jideungö, tanyoe jianggap jamok di luwa keuleumbu"* (Our voices via the lecturers' WhatsApp group are not heard. We are regarded as the mosquitoes outside the mosquito net).

'Awak gop' (other people)

The metaphor *'awak gop'* (other people) is equated with others or 'them', and not 'us'. P7 portrayed these lecturers as not the people in the inner circle

(i.e., power), even though they all worked in the same place. He said,

(13) *Tanyoe mandum sama-sama dosen disinoe, tapi yang awak gop han di bi jabatan"*. (We are all lecturers here, but other people are not given positions).

That was why, P7 said, those regarded as *'awak gop'* often received discrimination or were not given equal opportunities in the university administration.

'Awak blah déh laôt' (the person(s) from other island(s))

The metaphor *'awak blah déh laôt'* is similar to *'awak gop'* (other people), and *'kôn awak dalam'* (not the insiders), referring to others or 'them' and not 'us'. The 'us', in this case, are specifically the *'asoe lhök'*, or the natives of the area where the higher institution is situated. P9 added,

(14) *"Lôn pernah 'clash' jameun, makajih jianggap awak blah déh laôt"*. (I used to have personal problems with him. That is why I am regarded as a person coming from across the sea/different island).

Hence, P9 described that lecturers from *'blah déh laôt'* were also discriminated against for positions at the university if the elected leader was not from the same origin as the *'awak blah déh laôt'*.

Discussion

This research explored ten Acehnese lecturers' experiences of othering in their workplaces in two public universities in Aceh, Indonesia. These lecturers taught Indonesian and English at their universities, respectively. The findings show that many of the Acehnese lecturers in higher education experienced various kinds of othering, such as discrimination and exclusion (Bakley, 2016; Clingan, 2021; Halici & Kasimoglu, 2006; Husu, 2005), which negatively impact the quality of their professional jobs (Canales, 2000). Most of the othering happening in higher education found in this study were triggered by different political interests during the pre-election of their leader, different birthplaces, and different groups supporting the leader candidates during the election. Those who supported the elected leader were privileged and received important positions within the administration. However, those who were the opposition were marginalized or regarded as others.

There are many conceptual metaphorical expressions in the Acehnese language used by the participants to express the concepts of their feelings of being othered in higher education. These expressions embed concepts such as armed people, fences, deep bones, blood, spoon, and mosquitos. Expressions related to armed people or the army are due to the long battle with the Dutch from 1873 to 1904 (Fata, Yusuf & Sari, 2018) and continued with the conflict between the Government of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement from 1973 to 2005 (Ronnie, 2016). Therefore, to be in war is linked to any struggle the Acehnese face in their lives, including the process of pre-elections such as the case in this study (i.e., *'kön ureung gulam beudée'*).

In terms of fences, Acehnese houses are typically fenced, either from wood, metal, or bushes, to indicate the border of the property of the house owner (Yusuf, 2002). Hence, those who do not live in the house, are considered not part of those who do (i.e., *'ureung di luwa pageu'*). Meanwhile, deep bones show strong kinship or relationship among the Acehnese to those who are blood-related. The Acehnese also holds on to the phrase 'blood is thicker than water', which means that relationships and loyalties within a family are the strongest and most important ones. Family relationships are very strong to the Acehnese and instilled in children from birth through traditional lullabies (Yusuf, Yusuf, Wildan, Yanti, & Anwar, 2022). Nevertheless, this situation is seen negatively when it is related to othering (i.e., *'asoe lhök', 'awak droe', 'kon syara Ma jih', 'ureung di luwa pageu', 'kön awak dalam', 'kön awak droe jih'*).

It is interesting how the word *aweuk* in *'gop mat aweuk'* is associated with 'power'. The big spoon, or *aweuk*, is used to cook soup or gravy in a big pot, known by the Acehnese as *beulangong*. In this study, the people who holds the *aweuk* in their hands are those with power. This reference can be seen in the culture of the Acehnese and how wives are regarded as in the homes. In the Acehnese language, wife is *'poereumoh'*. *Rumoh* literally means 'home, house', and the prefix *poe-* indicates ownership. Therefore, to the Acehnese, the wives are house owners (Nurdin, 2018). They are the ones in charge of the kitchen, and so, the ones holding the *aweuk*. In this study, the *aweuk* is in the hands of the leaders of the universities.

As for insects, mosquitoes are commonly found in tropical areas such as Indonesia. Mosquitoes are constantly bothersome and aggravating, whether it be the unsettling buzzing or the bites. Aside from spreading diseases like dengue and malaria (Khariri, 2018), mosquitoes are infamous for other reasons, such as swelling and itchiness after their bites. In this study, the mosquitoes are referred to as oppositions to the elected leader of the universities.

Based on the discussion above, culturally, the basic level of conceptual metaphors are anchored in human experience (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003), and emerge in society based on cultural motivations (Deignan, 2003). By examining the metaphors, one can understand how culture frames the conclusions and actions of society (Seiler, 2012), a group of speakers of a language.

Accordingly, to some extent, the findings of this research corroborate some of the previous research findings. Vichiensing (2017) prompted the negative consequences of the othering process that affect undesirable treatments in society. Accordingly, in higher education, Halici and Kasimoglu (2006) mentioned the importance of providing staff members with opportunities in the institution and determining workload. Therefore, in this study, by studying the lecturers' metaphorical lens of othering experiences in the workplace, discrimination can be eradicated in educational discourses (Dervin, 2015). This is important so that lecturers can work to their full potential, and they can work in a safe, encouraging environment free from prejudice and stereotyping (Ahmadi, 2015).

CONCLUSION

The findings and discussions conclude that the university lecturers in Aceh, Indonesia, experienced being othered in their workplace. They are triggered by three factors: different birthplaces (origins), different groups supporting the candidate leaders during pre-election, and personal conflicts in the past. They expressed their feelings of being others in their higher education through the metaphorical lens of the Acehnese language, with embedded concepts involving armed people, fences, deep bones, blood, spoon, and mosquitos. The 14 metaphors generated from their expressions can provide better insights and understanding of their feelings of othering, like being discriminated against, marginalized, decreased opportunities, and

excluded from receiving important positions within the university administration affairs.

However, the analysis of othering through a metaphorical lens for this study was only done based on the experiences of ten lecturers teaching at two public universities in Indonesia, from the language departments (i.e., Indonesian and English). Meanwhile, the feelings of being othered from administrative staff members were excluded. Therefore, it is recommended that further studies involve both administrative staff members and teaching staff members. The different metaphors expressed by male and female higher education staff members or academicians, and those from different departments, disciplines, or fields of expertise, can also be highlighted in future related research.

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