

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES USED BY ENGLISH TEACHER IN TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to describe communication strategies employed by English teacher at a senior high school in central Java. Types of communication strategies and the function of communication strategies were included in this study. The subject of this study is an English teacher who taught eleventh grade at a senior high school in a central Java. This study belongs to qualitative study which involved observation and interview to collect the required data. Observation was conducted during English teaching and learning process to gain the detailed information about communication strategies used by English teacher. Then, interview was employed to clarify and enrich the data. The data were analyzed by using Dornyei & Scott's (1997) taxonomy of communication strategies. The result of this study showed that there are six types of communication strategies used by English teacher during teaching and learning process. Code switching strategy was the most frequently used by English teacher during teaching and learning process. Those communication strategies were used to improve students' speaking ability and encourage them to communicate in English. In addition, teacher employed various communication strategies to stimulate students to be more active and confident in speaking during English teaching and learning process.

Keywords: communication strategies, English teacher, teaching and learning process

Introduction

Teachers have important role in teaching and learning process. Thus, pre-service teachers will be trained to master the content-area knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and general education course before they do teaching in real teaching context. Those three area have been emphasized in teacher training program since the lack of content area or subject knowledge might disrupt the better teaching (Halim & Meerah, 2002). Nevertheless, to achieve better teaching depends not only on how well teachers master the content or subject knowledge but also on how well they communicate or convey the knowledge to the students. Thus, having qualified communicative competence and communicative skill is important for teachers, particularly English teachers since they have to use target language in giving instructions.

In Indonesia, English is regarded as foreign language, so having qualified communicative competence and

communicative skill is very crucial for EFL teachers since they are supposed to use English during giving instructions. EFL teachers have to struggle to deliver the knowledge, information, and materials because the students' mother tongue is not English and their environments do not support them to communicate using English frequently. Hence, there are great possibilities for EFL teachers to face some communication problems or difficulties when they have to present the materials, information, and knowledge by using English. The communication problems may come from the inadequate linguistic repertoire of target language, own performance problems, and interlocutor performance problems (Dornyei & Scott, 1997). Thus, EFL teachers use alternative strategy to overcome those communication problems known as communication strategy.

The term of communication strategies is firstly postulated by Selinker (1972) in his paper entitled "Interlanguage".

Later, the study on communication strategies has been extended. Earlier studies on communication strategies focused on the definition and taxonomy of communication strategies. As the result, there are numerous definitions and taxonomies of communication strategies. Then, those various definitions and taxonomies can be distinguished into two perspectives; interactional perspective and psycholinguistic perspective.

Interactional perspective focuses on the interaction and the negotiation of meaning between speaker and interlocutor. In line with interactional perspective, Tarone (1980) defined communication strategies as “mutual effort between speaker and interlocutor to agree on meaning in situation in which requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared”. In contrast, psycholinguistic perspective emphasizes on cognitive activities during the use of communication strategies. In line with this perspective, Faerch & Kasper (1983) defined communication strategies as “potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal”.

Then, Dornyei and Scott (1995) extended the concept of communication strategies. They asserted that every potential attempt to cope language related problems in which the speaker is aware during communication course can be called as communication strategy. Those various definitions can be simply summarized that communication strategies are potentially mutual attempts between speaker and interlocutor to agree on meaning in order to cope any communication problems which they are aware during communication course.

Numerous studies on communication strategies have been conducted by researchers (e.g.(Amin, 2017; Maldonado, 2016; Sobhani et al., 2014). If the earlier studies on communication strategies focus on the definition and taxonomy of communication strategies (Faerch & Kasper,

1983; Dornyei and Scott, 1997; and Nakatani, 2006), the later studies focus on the influencing variable of communication strategies use such as; language proficiency (Lam, 2010; Zhao & Channarong, 2013), gender (e.g. Lai, 2010; Amin, 2017), learning context (Ghout-Khenoune, 2012; Shih, 2014) and its teachability (Maleki, 2007)

However, most studies on communication strategies generally have been focused on communication strategies used by L2 learners. Yet, it is not only L2 learners who have less adequate linguistics repertoire of target language but also the teachers as well (Rampton, 1997). Then, Willem (1987) stated that teachers have “natural tendency to use communication strategies when communication problems arise”. In addition, the study on communication strategies used by teachers is remarkably rare. Considering the importance of communication strategies use for EFL teachers, it is necessary to know the development upon it. Therefore, this study was conducted to investigate communication strategies employed by English teacher during teaching and learning process. It includes the types of communication strategies and the function of using those strategies.

Methodology

This research used descriptive qualitative design to investigate communication strategies employed by an English teacher during teaching and learning process. The subject of this research was an English teacher who taught eleventh grade students. Observation was conducted to gain the required data. Then, interview was conducted to provide additional information that was inaccessible through observation. Semi-structured interview was used in this research. Triangulation data was employed to ensure the validity of the collected data. Method triangulation data was implemented to avoid data bias and ensure the data validity and reliability. It covers the

combination of several data collection methods to provide the better evidence (Ary et al., 2010). The collected data were analyzed by Dornyei & Scott’s taxonomy of communication strategies (1997). There are three basic categories proposed by Dornyei and Scott (1997) namely; direct strategies, indirect strategies, and interactional strategies. Direct strategies cover message abandonment, message reduction, message replacement, circumlocution, approximation, using of all-purpose words, word-coinage, restructuring, literal translation, foreignizing, code switching, using of similar sounding words, mumbling, omission, retrieval, mime, self-rephrasing, self-repair, and other-repair. Indirect strategies include using fillers, repetitions, verbal strategy markers, feigning understanding. Then, interactional strategies cover appeals for help, comprehension check, own-accuracy check, asking for repetition, asking for clarification, asking for confirmation, guessing, expressing non-understanding, interpretive summary, and responses. After the collected data were classified, the function of communication would be analyzed.

Findings and Discussion

The findings of this study showed that there were six types of communication strategies employed by an English teacher during teaching and learning process. Those data was collected by doing observation during teaching and learning process was ongoing. It was conducted three times. The following table presented the communication strategies employed by an English teacher during teaching and learning process.

Table. 1. Communication Strategies Employed by an English Teacher

Types of communication strategies (Dornyei & Scott, 1997)	Sub-type of communication strategies	Function
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Direct Strategies	Code-Switching	To facilitate students’ understanding about the message delivered by the teacher
	Self-rephrasing	To simplify the delivered message
Indirect Strategies	Use of fillers	For breaking ice and being friendly and gaining time to think what the next action is.
Interactional Strategies	Asking for confirmation	To avoid misunderstanding between teacher and students
	Asking for clarification	To ensure students’ understanding regarding with the delivered message by the teacher
	Asking for repetition	To get clear information from the students

Code switching was employed by English teachers five times. In fact, the use of code switching is not recommended in foreign language teaching and learning. Cook (2001) emphasizes that code switching should be extremely restricted in the classroom. In line with Cook, the advocates of intralingual teaching strategy assert that the use of code-switching will give negative transfer in foreign language learning (Chaudron, 1988; Ellis, 1984).

In contrast, the advocates of target language exclusivity state that it is not necessary for learners to comprehend everything said by the teachers using target language and that code switching is part of learning process (Doqaruni, 2017). Hence, in this study, teacher employed code switching strategies in order to facilitate students’ understanding and to deal with the lack students’ response.

The use of self-rephrasing was identified in this study. English teacher employed it once during teaching and learning process. It was employed to simplify the delivered message. For instance,

teacher said, “*what is it? You drink it when you’re thirsty...*” (holding a bottle of mineral water) to simplify the word “mineral water”.

The use of fillers by English teachers was appeared during teaching and learning process. It was employed once by the teacher. Teacher employed fillers in order to gain time to think about what next action that should be done. Moreover, the use of filler aims to break the ice and be friendly. For instance, “*you know,.. Well...*”.

Asking for confirmation was employed by teacher to avoid misunderstanding between teacher and students. For instance, “*do your answer use ‘has’? Use ‘has’?*”, said by teacher. Dörnyei & Scott (1997) describe asking for confirmation strategy as request to confirm that the interlocutor understood the message correctly.

Asking for clarification was also identified in this study. Teacher employed these strategies twice. The use of asking for clarification aimed to ensure students’ understanding regarding to the message delivered by the teacher. Moreover, it was employed to encourage students to communicate actively during teaching and learning process.

Then, asking for repetition was employed by teacher twice. It was employed to get clear information from the students. For example, “*Pardon? What is your question?... Your question?*”, said by teacher.

Conclusions

The purpose of current study was to describe communication strategies employed by English teacher during teaching and learning process. There were six types of communication strategies employed by English teacher during teaching and learning process namely; code-switching, self-rephrasing, use fillers, asking for confirmation, asking for clarification, and asking for repetition. In general, the aim of using those strategies is to deliver the material effectively so that the students

comprehend the material comprehensively. Hopefully, teachers are more aware in using communication strategies because the use of communication strategies can encourage students to be more active for communicating in target language

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