

Communication Strategies Employed by the Fourth Semester Students of English Department of State University of Makassar

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ABSTRAK

The research aims at identifying the types and investigating the reasons of communication strategies employed through English. The research used a qualitative method in nature. The subjects were twenty five students of English Department of State University of Makassar who passed Speaking Three classes. The researcher used Littlewood's taxonomy of communication strategies in identifying the data and Miles and Huberman interactive model of analysis as the techniques of data analysis. The interview and the observation were carried out simultaneously to elicit and to identify the types of communication strategies employed. The research reveals that there are eight strategies employed in which seeking help strategy was most used in dialogue. It was proved that when the students faced difficulty to express the meaning, they asked for help from the interviewer. The researcher found some reasons of communication strategies, namely making communication running well, catching the message easily, making the speaker more creative, and avoiding being afraid of making wrong words. The thesis argues that, on the basis of the findings, further research into the use of communication strategies in classroom context could make a significant contribution to teacher education.

Kata Kunci: communication strategies, Littlewood's taxonomy

INTRODUCTION

Language is the human use of spoken or written words as a communication system. It can also include a system of communication based on signs, gestures, or inarticulate sounds. From the definition above, it can be said that language as a means of communication which holds an important role in doing interaction with others. In human life interaction or communication, spoken language has urgent role, because spoken language can express feelings, intensions and emotions directly in communicating or in building good relationship with others. However, some people find some difficulties in their interaction with others. In interaction, people do not only use their first language, but also foreign language or second language, this is mostly English. Nowadays, foreign language or second language becomes very important in this globalization era. That is why everyone is demanded to acquire it.

However, it is not an easy job because in real communication people who learn a foreign language or second language face many problems in delivering their ideas in the new language. This problem might appear because the speakers are still in the process of acquiring a foreign language or second language. In fact when people try to communicate in a foreign language or second language, they often forget the vocabulary or are confused with the grammar. This situation makes the conversation does not run smoothly, and the speakers cannot build a good communication. In order to avoid that problem, the people can use some strategies such as paraphrasing their sentences. The interlocutor can also use gesture to deliver their meaning.

Communication strategies according to William Littlewood are ways that learners use in coping with the situation to get across the meaning, when a foreign language or second language learner faces difficulties to deliver their intentions in communication (cited in Inoi 2008). Since the main concern of the research is communication strategies, therefore researcher wants to show the ideas of other researchers related this component. Tarone and Yule in Saiz (1990) proposed two areas related to strategic competence: the learner's skill in transmitting the message successfully and comprehensibly to the listener and understanding the information received, and the use of communication strategies by both speakers and listeners to solve their problems when arise during the course of communication. Ellis said that "communication strategies are ways to make the conversation go on because every learner in a second language actually has a problem in saying what they want to say because of their inadequate knowledge (cited in Mariani 1994). Communication strategies are used by the speakers when they face some difficulties due to the fact that their communication ends outrun their communication means or when confronted with misunderstanding by the listener (Corder, 1983; Tarone, 1983).

In the research, the researcher chose to identify communication strategies because of being interesting to observe and to identify the way of students in communicating with others using their foreign language that they do not acquire well yet, and also the researcher was interested in analyzing these strategies because he wanted to know the types of communication strategies of students employed and the reasons of strategies employed.

The concern of communication strategies in our context seem to be neglected. It can be proved that most of studies in English education focus on methods in improving English skills. In addition, there is not empirical data in the use of communication strategies in our context. Dealing with this matter, the relevant classification that researcher concerns was the communication strategies as classified by William Littlewood. It is because the kinds of communications strategies are explaining completely and applicable. Moreover, Rubin and Ellis options about communication strategies are similar to Littlewood's opinions.

By looking over the background above, the problems of the research can be summarized in the following questions: what types of communication strategies are employed by the fourth semester students of English department? Why are communication strategies employed by the fourth semester students of English department?

From the two research questions, the researcher also formulated two objectives, namely to identify the types of communication strategies employed by the fourth semester students of English department, and to find out the reasons of communication strategies employed by the fourth semester students of English department.

Theoretically, it explains the employment of communication strategies by the students. It is expected to discover the types and the reasons of communication strategies employed.

Practically, this research is expected to provide references for other researchers or teachers for further research anything related to communication strategies, especially those dealing with the employment communication strategies, as well expected to the teacher for giving extra attention in introducing and explaining the components of communication strategies to students. The scope of the research deals with foreign/second language learning especially the use of communication strategies. Furthermore, the scope of the research is on communication strategies analysis based on Littlewood's theory.

METHOD

The current research is qualitative in nature. To come to the answers of the questions proposed as in the problem statement, the current research was presented descriptively. As a qualitative study, the researcher was the key instrument. The data obtained were in the form of words elicited from the natural setting. In addition, this research gave clear and detail explanation of each communication strategies employed by the students of English Department of State University of Makassar.

The data of the research were obtained from the result of interview and observation. These two methods were conducted simultaneously in the process of eliciting the needed data. The research participants were chosen on purposively for the sake of data enrichment that is to find out the communication strategies employed and to know the reasons the communication strategies employed the fourth semester students who passed Speaking I-III classes. Based on this consideration, those students are believed to have applied certain communication strategies in conversing with others through English. For the current research, they were 25 students who were interviewed.

For the purpose of the research, there were four instruments to use.

1. The researcher as the interviewer and listener. In this case, the researcher asked each of the participants with the questions listed in the interview guides. The researcher then recorded the spoken language of the participants.
2. Interview guide. Researcher used two interview guides with different purposes.
 - The first was used in carrying out the interview process between the interviewer and interviewee. This instrument contains a number of items to stimulate the students in communicating. From this, it answered the first question formulated in the problem statement of the research.
 - The second was used for further information about communication strategies. The instrument contains number of items to elicit answer from the students on why the communication strategies employed by the students.
3. Observation Checklist. In doing the observation, the researcher as the key-instrument used an observation form in gathering the needed data dealing with the communication strategies employed by each of the participants. During the interview process was going on, each of the participants took a seat in front of the researcher. By doing such away, the researcher was able to observe (observable factor such as the physical appearance of participants), hear, and experienced in accordance with the needed data from the process of

interaction. It aimed at obtaining the relevant data on the employment of communication strategies by the participants during the interview process was going on.

4. Tape recorder and field notes. These were used to record the conversation when each of them was speaking, therefore researcher could transcribe some of the data by listening to the tape recorder. From this, the researcher, then, could obtain the more valid data which could not be noted down. In addition, the researcher also took notes for the unrecorded data while each of the participants was giving the reasons of communication strategies employed.

The procedures can be explained in the following steps. First, data were collected (i.e. data collection) from the participants. The next step was selecting, simplifying, abstracting, transforming, and translating the raw data obtained in accordance with the research questions proposed for the research i.e. to find out the communication strategies employed and to know the reasons of communication strategies employed in oral communication by the fourth semester students. These activities were included in the data reduction. In the process of data selecting, the collected data corpus were read and examined thoroughly and marginal notes were added with reference to the focus of the study. In this process any irrelevant data were discarded. The relevant data were selected and organized in such way that final conclusion can be drawn and verified. In the process of data focusing, coding categories were provided to each of the data corpus.

The next step was displaying the data, where the researcher showed the organized assembly of information taken from the data reduction in the forms of quotation, so that the data were accessible to be used as the basis for interpreting and describing the kinds of communication strategies as addressed in the problem statements. Each of the communication strategies employed by the students would be explained in detail in chapter four. The reasons for applying the communication strategies would also be presented descriptively. The last step was drawing conclusions, in which the researcher draws the meaning of the findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings are classified into kinds of communication strategies employed by the students. The researcher analyzed the data based on the theory discussed. As a result, the researcher gives clear explanation of each strategy which is used by the students

Types of communication strategies employed by the students

This table shows the recapitulation of types of the communication strategies employed by the students. The eight types of the strategies as introduced by Littlewood are represented in the table.

Table 1. The recapitulation of types Communication Strategies employed by the students.

Students	Avoiding Communicating	Adjusting the Message	Paraphrase	Approximation	Creating a new word	Switching to the native language	Non-linguistic resources	Seeking help,
1								√
2	√		√	√	√	√	√	√
3		√		√	√			√
4							√	√
5					√			
6		√	√	√		√	√	√
7						√	√	√
8				√		√	√	√
9		√	√	√	√		√	
10				√		√		√
11	√					√	√	√
12						√		√
13					√		√	
14							√	
15					√	√	√	√
16							√	√
17						√	√	
18		√		√		√		√
19		√			√	√		√
20		√	√	√		√	√	√
21	√	√		√		√	√	√
22		√			√	√		
23	√					√	√	√
24						√	√	√
25					√			√
TOTAL	5	8	4	9	9	16	15	19

From the table above, the researcher found the students mostly used seeking help as their communication strategies, the researcher observed that the participants used this strategy because they did not know the English words they wanted to say.

1. Avoiding communicating

Avoiding communicating is used by the students who dislike risks or uncertainties when they have to give their opinion in persuasive ways. From the students' interview, some students avoided giving their personal opinion in the interview. Based on the table above, there were five students applied avoiding communication strategy. As utterances put forward by the participants

from the data obtained through the interview and observation conducted on May 10 and 19, 2009.

*S2. 10. : yes of course, it the unforgettable moment for me.....it
so.....huuuuuuuuuffff I can not explain by using word (1).*

S21.125: yeahI have no idea (1)

From the two examples above, we see that the utterances from the interview show that the students did not give ideas or avoided delivering the arguments. S2 refused to give ideas by saying *I can not explain by using words*. In addition, S21 also did the same thing by saying *I have no idea*. Simultaneously, the researcher observed their behavior when they used this strategy. It can be proved from S2 looked like nervous because his knee got thrilled, whereas, S21 leaned her back to the chair. They used this strategy because they might not seem difficult for them and they are lack of the related vocabularies already aware of weaknesses in their repertoire cause difficulty for them

2. Adjusting the message

In adjusting the message, we can find with the three characteristic which are omitting some item of information, making ideas simpler, and saying something slightly different. The first characteristic of adjusting the message is omitting some items of information; if the student omits some words of opinion or information and then, the listener does not have the same ideas or thought, consequently, the meaning will be different. The listener will be wrong in interpreting what the speaker wants to say. In the research, here, some students omitted some words that actually were the important part in their message. We can see the utterance who omitted some items of information. The example can be found in the data number S2.12 taken from interview conducted on May 14, 2009

*S2.12: I pretend to become the sick one and they forgive that I am sick
.....so..... I never get.....my senior*

Firstly, we can see the appropriate sentence of the utterance above. The appropriate sentence is “I pretend to become the sick one and they forgive that I am sickso.....I never get a hit from my senior anymore.

From the appropriate sentence, we can see that the student omitted the information. He did not explain further what he wanted to say. In the researcher’s observation carried out simultaneously (May 14, 2009), the student thought that by saying like the utterance above, the listener or the interviewer could still understand the speaker’s intended meaning. It was also proved through gazing done by the student as a sign in convening the interviewer. It is because the listener and the speaker have the same idea of thought.

The other characteristic in adjusting the message is making the idea simpler. Here, the speaker only says the main information of what speaker wants to say. Therefore the listener can misunderstand. Here, the researcher found utterance from interview held on May 14, 2009 which belongs to the second characteristics. We can see the example of making idea simpler used by the student in the data number 6. S2:

*S2. 6But actually the question who knows which one is good us is our self is not our
mother.....*

Since the researcher was confused with S2 6' utterance, the researcher asked him what actually he wanted to say. Then, the researcher came up with the appropriate sentence of the utterance. It is "whatever our mother's say is not always true, or sometimes it gives the disadvantages for us and all the things that our mother asks us is for the goodness of ours but the problem is which one is good for ourselves. As the researcher observed in the same time (May 14, 2009) that the student did not explain his intended meaning clearly so the listener (researcher) misunderstood. Then, the student laughed immediately because the misunderstanding.

The last characteristics in adjusting the message is saying slightly different, the speaker may say something or say different word. Here the researcher did not find the student use the last characteristics in the data

3. Using paraphrasing

Using paraphrasing strategy is usually used by the students who do not recall the exact terms of thing. When they use this strategy, the students have to describe thing that they mean in simpler way. Thus, it may be easier for the listener to catch the speaker's intended meaning

We can see the table 1. The researcher found that there were four students produced this kind of strategy. The examples of the students' utterance from interview and observation held on May 11 and 18, 2009. Those can be found in the data number 42 and 109:

S6. 42. ...as a person who have wealthwe have to help the poor people because they ...yeah what do we say ..they really need our help too

S20.109 eeeee I like OSPEK because it is aaaaa..... make me..... discipline.....to didn't late in campus.....

From the two examples above, we see that the utterance of the students become longer. In this case, S3 paraphrased the word *rich person* by saying as a person who have wealth. In addition, S20 also did the same thing which paraphrased the word *be punctual* by saying didn't late. They used this strategy because they might not know or forget the exact term of those words

4. Using approximation

There are two characteristic of using approximation. They are using words which have less specific meaning and using word that may refer to something else. The students do this strategy because they may find difficulty in expressing their idea. The total of the students used this strategy are nine which can be seen in table 1

In the first characteristic of using approximation is using words which have less specific meaning. The speakers say some words that the meaning is closely to the specific one. They use more general words because they might forget the specific term of the thing that they mean. Here, the researcher found some utterances of the students from interview and observation performed on May 10, 2009, which belong to this characteristic. This is shown in the example of the student in the data number S3.32:

S3.32 : no.. Because I usually waiting for someone.....because I am calm man how to say in English.....

From the example above, it can be seen that the student used word which has less specific in meaning. He said the word calm man instead of patient man, as we know calm is general term of the word patient. It might be because he recalled the general term of the word.

The other characteristic of approximation is using a word that refers to something else. The point of this characteristic is that the listener or interviewer understands the ideas of the speaker's intended meaning. Here of the example of the student's utterance from interview and observation done on May 17, 2009 when he used word that refers to something else. It occurred in the data number S18.93:

S18.93 : yeah I will see the criticifhow to sayif it really happenI mean I am doing something bad.....

The data above shows that S18 student might not know the English term for *kritikan*. He did not recall or forget the word criticism for *kritikan*, consequently he said "critic" which is taken from the word "criticize". Here, he might think that critic meant *kritikan* but actually "critic" is *pengeritik*.

5. Create new word

There are two characteristics of creating new word. The first one is translating from first language. The second one is creating new English term. The students may create new words because they may not recall the appropriate terms for certain words, here the researcher found some utterances which were produced by nine students.

The first strategy is translating from their first language. It means that the speaker translates the word directly from their native language since he or she does not recall the exact English term for the certain word. There are some utterances of the creating new words were produced by the students. As we can see an example from the interview and observation conducted on May 13, 2009 in data number and S9 :

S9.71. I don't like because the senior is really hard for us

The example above shows that the student translated the words from their native language directly, which is Indonesian language. It may because they did not know the exact English term for the words "the senior is really rude to us" is the appropriate sentence for the example above. It can be seen that S9 directly translated the words from Indonesian. She used "the senior is really hard for us" for *para senior keras kepada kami*. Actually it was not wrong if we used Indonesian language, on the contrary it was wrong if they used in English. They had to find out the right English for those words. The researcher thought that the student did not know the appropriate English and also the usage of the word. Then, she uttered the words that they remembered the words that which have the same meaning with the intended meaning.

6. Switching to the native language

Switch to the native language means the students may decide to simply lift a word from his or her native language. The students sometimes like to switch into their native language rather than to use approximation or to create new word. It may happen because the students do not know the specific term of the word. As a result, they choose to switch it directly into their first language in order to make the listeners understand what they want to say.

As seen in the observation checklist from interview and observation performed on May 12 and 19, 2009, there are sixteen students applied of this kind of strategy. Here are two

examples of utterance where they switched the words into their first language. The examples occur in the data number S8.57 and S21.123:

S8.57 : *emmmmm I don't want to do demo before but before that I can meet.....I mengajak my friend to talking about*

S21.123: *I don't agree with the statement I think everybody have to eeeeeee punya hak*

From the utterance above, we can see that they switched into their native language. S8 switched into Indonesian to replace “persuade” and S21 also switched into Indonesian for the phrase “have the same right”.

This strategy will be successful if the listener and the speaker have the same background knowledge of language. In this case, it is Indonesian language. Moreover, some listeners may understand better if the speakers explain it in their native language, however, if this strategy will not succeed because the listeners do not understand what the speakers' meaning.

7. Using Non- Linguistic Resources

Using non- linguistic resources means the speaker uses something which is not language to express the speaker's meaning. In this strategy, the speaker may use his or her body language to deliver what he or she wants to say. Moreover, the speaker mostly uses hands to describe the meaning. Sometimes there are some words that are understandable and the speaker uses his or her hands in order to make the listener understands clearly what the speaker wants to say. Here, the speaker may use mime or facial expression and use gesture

We can see in the table 1 above from the interview and observation carried out on May 10 and 19, 2009, that there are fifteen students who used this strategy. Here, S2 and S21 students gesture when they described thing in their utterances. We can see the examples from interview and observation conducted on May 10 and 19, 2009. In this case, the students used gesture to make clear and describe their intended in the data number S2. 8 and S21.120

S2.8 : *we try to force them to give our feeto get our fee (while showing mimic with fingers as sign of money).*

S21.120: *special for my opinion ...emmmmmmm is very much disadvantage because it make me scared....(while doing body language with showing scared).*

From the utterances above we can see that S2 mentioned the word “fee” and she also used her hand to make clear or deliver her intended meaning where she showed mimic action with pointed finger and thumb as sign of money. S21 mentioned “scared” and she used body language and facial expression which were showing characteristic of man who is in the scary condition.

8. Seeking help

Seek help, here, means the speaker may look for help from the listener. There are two kinds of characteristic of seeking help. The first one is the speaker or student seeks help from the listener or the teacher. The second one is the speaker may seek help from bilingual dictionary or textbook

In the table 1 above, the researcher found nineteen students that belong to seek help characteristics which all of them used the first strategy only. It means that the second strategy of seeking help was not applied by the students. We can see the examples of utterances where they needed help in the data number S3.28 and S2.18:

S3.28 :so....mmmmmm we are sure that the company has a big.....what is.....money to pay the.....the how to say karyawan

S2.12 :I came late at the time and then my senior beat mine hehehehehehehe but I have the strategy to solve the problem, Ihow to say berpura-pura yeah.....

The utterances above were taken from interview done on May 10 and 14, 2009. In observation, the researcher (interviewer) saw both students were asking help to the interviewer while one of them (S3) was scratching his head and another (S2) was playing his phone cell. In the middle of conversation, they forgot the exact term for “employee” of S3 and “pretend” of S12. Then each of them asked help from the interviewer who sat in front of them by saying how to say “karyawan” (S3) and “berpura-pura” (S2) in English.

This problem might appear because the speaker is still in the process of acquiring a foreign language or second language. In fact when people try to communicate in a foreign language or second language, they often forget the vocabulary or are confused with the grammar. This situation makes the conversation does not run smoothly, and the speaker can not build a good communication. Finally, from the finding above, it can be concluded that the eight types of communication strategies were employed by the students. These employed strategies are similar with the taxonomy of William Littlewood which previously explained in chapter two.

Why are the communication strategies employed?

There are several research studies why English as a foreign language students employed communication strategies. According to Littlewood (1991), the students are sometimes ashamed of their oral performances which make them to choose to be silent or avoid communicating instead of making mistakes or errors. Ellis (1997) said that communication strategies are ways to make the conversation go on because every learner in a second language actually has a problem in saying what they want to say because of their inadequate knowledge. Communication strategies are used by the speakers when they face some difficulties due to the fact that their communication ends outrun their communication means or when confronted with misunderstanding by the listener (Corder, 1983; Tarone, 1983)

Related to this research, the researcher found some problems faced by the students in speaking, such as misinterpretation, forget intended vocabulary, not self confidence, confused with grammar, diction, lack of vocabularies, difficult pronunciation. So these can cause the following reasons of employing communication strategies. Those reasons are to make communication running well, as the statements put forward by the participants from the data obtained through the interviews conducted on June 25 and 26, 2009

S3: “...memudahkan komunikasi”

S18: “... memudahkan dalam menyampaikan ide”

S12: “... supaya gampang berkomunikasi”

S20: “... mempermudah interkasi”

In order to catch the message easily, that is by trying to say something in other words in place of the actual word he she wants to say. In this case they usually use paraphrasing strategy (see S6.42 data above) some of the participants stated

ST5: “...membuat pesan mudah ditangkap”

ST19: “...orang bisa menangkap”

Participants also said that it made the speaker more creative. That is being creative in speaking or saying something involving the imagination or original ideas especially in the production of an artistic statement.

ST8: “... lebih kreatif”

ST12: “... mengajak orang berpikir dan membuat lebih kreatif”

Researcher found one participant uttered that it could avoid being afraid of making wrong words, as follow

ST12: “... takut berbuat kesalahan”

Communication strategies employed was to avoid the misunderstanding. Misunderstanding in this research is meant by a failure to understand something correctly what is conveyed by speakers to the listeners. It was stated by a participant as below:

ST23: “...supaya tidak terjadi misunderstanding”

The last reason for employing the communication strategies is because of lack of vocabulary. Lack of vocabulary as we have all experienced is one of the problems which may cause the speaker could not express his or her ideas in mind. Therefore, one of the reasons for applying communication strategies is due to the lack of vocabulary. One of the participants stated that.

ST19: “...karena kurangnya kosakata”

Finally, from the finding above, it implies that the participants, in this case, the students of English department who have been studied understand the main purposes of communication strategies. Even though, they still need more information theory which can enrich further understanding in order to make the conversation going on smoothly

CONCLUSION

In the research, the researcher wanted to know the communication strategies employed and why the communication strategies employed by students at State University of Makassar in their oral communication. The researcher did this research based on Littlewood's taxonomy about communication strategies.

Since the researcher's study focused on the communication strategies employed in oral communication by the students, the researcher analyzed the strategies in communicating or speaking of fourth semester students of State University of Makassar. The researcher expected to see what communication strategies employed and why the communication strategies employed by the students while they were talking with the interviewer

From the data that the researcher could collect, the researcher found that the students employed the eight types of communication strategies. The researcher divided the interview into two main sessions. The first session was interview guide that could stimulate the students to employ communication strategies which was elaborated with observation to identify

communication strategies employed, and the second was interview guide on why communication strategies employed.

From the discussion, the researcher found that students employed were seeking most in their utterances. When students faced difficulty to express the meaning, then they asked for help from the interviewer. When students asked help, they switched to their native language in order to clarify the intended meaning.

From the discussion, the researcher found some reasons of communication strategies, among to make communication running well, to catch the message easily, to make the speaker more creative, to avoid being afraid of making wrong words, to avoid the misunderstanding, and lack of vocabularies

Finally the researcher thinks that this research in communication strategies is still limited in numbers. It will be interesting and valuable if in the future research, the researchers more developed the research. For further research, the researcher suggests the others to provide more accurate data by improving the instruments. It means that the next researcher may provide camera in recording the data. When the data are recorded, the future researchers can see the facial expression, and the gesture, instead of just using tape recorder and taking note; therefore there will be more great evidence. Hopefully, this research can give more contribution to the theory of foreign language learning in Indonesia context, especially in communication strategies

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