

Communication Strategies in the English Classroom: A Case Study of Junior High School Teachers

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Abstract

Communication takes a big role in the teaching and learning process. Communication Strategies act as a tool for solving communication problems. The teachers need to use strategies in communicating to keep conversations with both teachers and students. This research aimed at investigating the type of Communications Strategies (CSs) used by Junior High School English teacher. The data was classified into thirteen strategies based on Dornyei taxonomy. The subjects were two English teachers in the academic year of 2018/2019. This research was descriptive qualitative and the data was collected by observation, interview, and documentation. The results showed that there were five types of Communication Strategies (CSs) found in teaching and learning process used by junior high school English teachers. English teachers used non-linguistic means, code-switching, prefabricated, appeal for help and stalling or time gaining. The use of nonlinguistic means was a strategy most often used by the teachers. This is since students still have less knowledge of English. The teachers were expected to use and choose the best strategies to overcome the communication problem in the classroom.

Keywords: Communication Strategies (CSs), English Teacher, Teaching and learning process.

The strategy is planning which contains some activities to achieve goals in certain education. Teaching strategies is a learning activity teacher and students must do. So, learning objectives can be achieved effective and efficient. Learning strategies is a set of materials and procedures learning used together to produce results learning to students (Sanjaya, 2007:126). Dick & Carey (2005:7) stated that "Learning strategies are components of a set of materials including activity before learning, and student participation, which is learning procedure, used next activity". From some of the meanings above, it can be concluded that the learning strategy is a plan action (series of activities) which including the use of methods and utilization of various sources' power or strength in learning.

Therefore, strategies in communication are necessary used by the teacher in order to achieve his intended meaning on becoming aware of problems arising during the planning phase of an utterance due to linguistic shortcoming (Poulisse, 1990 in Ellis, 1994). Strategies communication can be defined as a strategy for solving someone's problem in reaching the purpose of communication. These strategies will help the teacher to reduce or remove student difficulties while transferring their thoughts and ideas to others.

The students study English language as a foreign language. "For a big people, communicate with the target language is the first purpose in English as foreign language learning", (Soler, 2008). The use of communication strategies is important in the context of learning English as a foreign language.

Based on the interview with the English teacher, the students usually faced some problems. One of the problems is communication. They also usually ignored their teacher's explanation. It is caused they did not understand what their teacher said. Sometimes, when the teacher asked them some questions using English, there were some students who answered and some were silent. It is because they didn't understand with the utterances or they would feel embarrassed if the answer was wrong.

Considering that communication strategies could help the students in communication and also the teachers in the learning process. The researcher is interested in analyzing communication strategies used by junior high school English teacher in SMP N 7 of Ternate. SMP N 7 of Ternate will chose as a place of taking the data because this school is one school that has A accreditation in Ternate and the researcher will chose the first grade because based on the interview with the teacher, she stated that “when teaching in the first grade of Junior High School, I faced difficulties in communicating with the students, because most of them did not get English lessons in the elementary school, it makes difficult for me to communicate using English”. Based on the observation, the researcher found that the English teacher in SMP N 7 of Ternate especially in VII K class had a good motivation in teaching and building students’ desire in the learning process. It could be seen when she told the students to introduce themselves in the front of the class and when the students forgot what the word to use, she tried to give a keyword, so the students could recall the word.

By looking at the students’ condition in the teaching and learning process, it was hard for the teacher to teach the students and deliver her knowledge to them. It made the teacher could not use full English to communicate and explain the topic to the students. Sometimes, the teacher had to translate some words from English to *Bahasa* in order to make the students understood the topic.

Based on the phenomenon above, the researcher found it interesting to conduct the research about analyzing communication strategies used by Junior High School English teachers in Teaching and Learning Process at the First Grade of SMP Negeri 7 Kota Ternate.

2. Theoretical Basis

2.1. Communication Strategies (CSs)

In foreign language communication, we try to communicate with using hand movements, mixing language, trying to describe the words they want to convey, it called communication strategy. Communication strategy has been important since there is a foreign language.

A communication strategy is defined as “a systematic technique employed by a speaker to express his or her meaning when faced with some difficulty” (Corder, 1981, in Dornyei, 1995, p. 56). Communication strategy is an individual’s attempt to find a way to fill the gap between their communication effort and immediate available linguistic resources, (Malekki, 2007).

Based on some definition above, communication success can be seen when the receiver can understand the message of the sender. In a conversation, the sender has difficulty to convey the message, then she or he tries to find a way to overcome the problem, it is known as communication strategies. Communication strategies are a tool to help the speaker to overcome communication problems.

2.1.1. Types of communication strategies (CSs)

This taxonomy was developed by Dornyei (cited in Brown, 2000) he classified thirteen types of communication strategies consisting of avoidance strategies, compensatory strategies, and time gaining strategies.

Avoidance includes:

Message Abandonment: It means leaving the message unfinished because there is language difficult. For example, *he made the message because mm... or I can tell you that I want ee...*

Topic Avoidance: Topic avoidance is the strategy of avoiding the topic because of language difficulties. For example, someone avoids saying certain words because she or he doesn’t know the term in English.

Compensatory strategies include:

Circumlocution: Circumlocution is the strategy of describing the target object of an action. For example, she or he wants to say the thing that you use to open the bottle.

Approximation: The strategy is to be an alternative term to express the meaning of the target lexical item as closely as possible. For example, *ship* for a *sail boat*.

Use of the all-purpose word: The strategy will use when someone extends an empty lexical item to a context where specific words are lacking. For example, to overuse thing, stuff, make, do and using the word like, what-do-you-call-it.

Use of non-linguistic means : The strategy is using non-linguistics resources such as mime, gesture, facial expression, sound imitation to help in expressing meaning. For example, we use our hands to act like flying to refer to *birds*.

Literal translation : The literal translation is the strategy of translating a lexical item, an idiom or structure from native language to the target language. For example, *don't enter a sign for no entry sign*.

Foreignizing: The strategy that using native language words by adjusting it to target language phonologically. For example, to say the word tap, someone uses native language words (kran) and pronunciation to a target language (kren).

Code-switching : The strategy used other language variations to adjust to the roles or situations because of other participations. According to Maysken (1995) "it is generally defined as a nonstandard true of L2 within an L1 situation by bilinguals or even those who speak two or more languages in the same conversation".

Appeal for help: The strategy used to ask for help to partners when the speaker loses the idea when speaking. For example, it is like... According to Bagozzi and Moore, (1994, 56) "fear appeals are one of the most frequently used motivators to get people to help themselves".

Prefabricated : This strategy using memorized stock phrases usually for 'survival' purposes plus a slot into which different noun phrases may be inserted E.g. where is the...? what is your name?

Word coinage: Word coinage is the strategy of creating the target language term based on someone's knowledge of morphology roles. For example, is vegetarianist for vegetarian.

Stalling or time gaining includes:

Use of fillers: The strategy used to gain time to think. For example, I think you know mmm,eee or you see yea, eee, hmm, Etc. According to Wanjnryb (1987) added examples such as *I think, um, mm, ah Etc.*

3. Methods

The research uses qualitative descriptive research which aimed to know types of communications strategies that were used by English teachers at the first grade of SMP Negeri 7 Ternate by using the communication strategies from Dorney taxonomy when teaching and learning process. There was two English teachers who became the subject of this research. The instruments used in this research were observation, interview, and documentation.

The data was collected in two meeting classes. The process of teaching and learning were recorded and observed. The data collected in observation were cross-checked in the observation sheet. The interview was also conducted to gain additional information about the reason for the use of communication strategies used by English teachers.

4. Findings and Discussions

After analyzing and classifying the data, the researcher found that from thirteen types of communication strategies by Dorney taxonomy, there were five types of CSs that were used by English teachers in teaching and learning process, they were *the use of non-linguistic means, codeswitching, prefabricated and stalling or time gaining and appeal for help*. Meanwhile, eight types of CSS were not found such as *message abandonment, topic avoidance, circumlocution, approximation, use of the all-purpose word, literal translation, foreignizing, word coinage*.

The data was presented on the table. The findings of this research showed that only five types of communication strategies used by junior high school English teacher in teaching at SMP N 7 Ternate. The researcher got the data by observing two English teachers in the teaching and learning process. The researcher recorded the English teacher two times in two weeks during the teaching and learning process. The researcher used an observation sheet to check types of communication strategies used by English teacher occurred in the learning process. Table 4.1 below is the general finding of using communication strategies according to Dornyei (cited by Brown, 2000, p 128). The results of the data analysis may refer to this table.

Table 4.1

The result of communication strategies used by the English teachers in the teaching and learning process in the first grade of SMP N 7 Ternate.

No	Types of Communication Strategies	Teachers	
		I	II
1	Message Abandonment (the message unfinished because there is language difficult. E.g. I can tell you that I want mm or ee...)		
2	Topic Avoidance (strategy to avoiding the topic. E.g. she or he doesn't know the English term)		
3	Circumlocution (strategy to describing the target object of an action. E.g. she or he wants to say the thing that you use to open the bottle)		
4	Approximation (strategy to express the meaning of the target lexical item. E.g. ship for a sailboat)		
5	Use of all-purpose words (strategy will use when someone extends an empty lexical item to a context where specific words are lacking. E.g. overuse of thing)		
6	Word coinage (strategy of creating the target language term based on someone's knowledge of morphology roles. E.g. vegetarianist for vegetarian)		
7	Use of non-linguistic means	√	√

		<i>(strategy is using non-linguistics resources such as mime, gesture, facial expression, sound imitation to help in expressing meaning. E.g. we use our hand to act like flying to refer to birds.)</i>	
8	Literal translation	<i>(strategy of translating a lexical item, an idiom or structure from native language to the target language. E.g. don't enter sign for no entry sign.)</i>	
9	Foreignizing	<i>strategy that using native language words by adjusting it to target language phonologically. For example to say the word tap, someone uses native language word (kran) and pronunciation to the target language (kren))</i>	
(a	10	Code-switching	√
		<i>strategy used the other language variations to adjust with the roles or situations because of other participations)</i>	
(a	11	Appeal for Help	√
		<i>strategy used to ask for help to partners when the speaker loses the idea when speaking. E.g. it is like...)</i>	
	12	Stalling or time gaining	√
(a		<i>strategy used to gain time to think. For example, I think you know mmm,eee or you see yea, eee, hmm, Etc)</i>	
	13	Prefabricated	√
(a		<i>strategy using memorized stock phrases usually for 'survival' purposes plus a slot into which different noun phrases may be inserted E.g. where is the..., what is your name?)</i>	

Based on the observation, it could be seen that teachers use communication strategies in the class. In this research, the participants were identified by the first letter of their names: Mrs. Y as Teacher 1 and Mrs. DJ as Teacher 2. The researcher chooses Mrs. Y as teacher 1 because Mrs. Y was the first participant and based on the interview there was many explanations that Mrs. Y gave for the researcher to discuss. Meanwhile, Mrs. DJ as teacher 2 because Mrs. DJ was the second participant.

The table above showed that teachers didn't use all types of communication strategies in the teaching and learning process. The communication strategies used by English teachers were varied. From thirteen types of communication strategies, the teachers used four types in the teaching and learning process.

In addition, by doing observation two times, the researcher found that teacher 1 only uses one strategy communication. It was the *use of a non-linguistic* strategy. Meanwhile, the researcher found that teacher 2 used five strategies for communication. They were the *use of non-linguistic means, code-switching, prefabricated and stalling or time gaining and appeal for help*.

4.1. Result of interview

The researcher used the interview to investigate the reasons of the English teachers used Communications Strategies in the teaching and learning process. The researcher interviewed the English teachers to get the data. There were some questions that the researcher asked English

teachers. The questions based on the interviewed guide which consisted of 10 questions. The questions related to the Communication Strategy theory proposed by Dornyei (cited in Brown, 2000).

The first Communication Strategy used by teachers was the *use of non-linguistic means*. *Use of nonlinguistic means*, this strategy happened when teachers used non-linguistic resources such as mime, gesture and facial expression. Teacher 1 and Teacher 2 used this strategy in the teaching and learning process. Each teacher had different reasons for using this strategy. Based on the interviewed with Teacher 1, she said that “kita buat seperti apa ee ini batu loncatan. Batu loncatan Hai, ana-ana perhatikan kita mulai tara bole langsung ini. Kita putar bahasa itu seperti apa supaya ana-ana tu bisa menarik perhatian mereka.” Teacher 1 used this strategy because it made the students pay attention to the teacher’s explanation.

Meanwhile, teacher 2 had different reasons for teacher 1. The reason teacher 2 used this strategy because it helped the teacher to make the students easier to understand what the teacher means. The researcher found that this strategy used by teacher 2 repeatedly in the teaching and learning process. According to teacher 2 “ya saya sering menggunakan gerakan tubuh untuk membuat siswa lebih memahami apa yang saya maksud”.

The second strategy used by the teacher based on observation was code-switching. This strategy only used by teacher 2. Based on interviewed Teacher 2 said that “...Bahasa Inggris diimbangi dengan bahasa Indonesia. Kita menggunakan Bahasa Inggris itu supaya siswa termotivasi...” it means *code-switching was a strategy* to make students motivated in English lessons. Other than that according to Teacher 2 “ya itu karna, masih ada siswa yang belum paham beberapa kata dalam bahasa inggris. Makanya ee saya sering bilang kalau belajar bahasa inggris tu harus menggunakan kamus”. She used the *code switching* strategy because there were students who didn’t understand some words in English.

Based on observation in the class Teacher 1 didn’t used *code switching* strategy but based on the interviewed Teacher 1 said that “saya awal tu, saya pake bahasa Inggris. Mm awal kan pake bahasa Inggris, barang torang pe pelajaran kan Bahasa Inggris. Disamping itu harus torang lampirkan dengan Bahasa Indonesia, Karena pemahaman dorongan belum luas too...”.

The third strategy used by the teacher was the *Appeal for help*. This strategy only used by teacher 2. Teacher 1 didn’t use this strategy. Based on interviewed teacher 2 said that “ya, kadang kita ini mengajar terlalu terbawa suasana, jadi kadang kita bisa lupa satu atau dua kata. Jadi saya kadang ee menanyakan ke siswa agar mereka bisa memberi jawaban”. So, this strategy used by Teacher 2 because sometimes the teacher had no idea or loses the words in the teaching and learning process. So, that situation made the teacher asked help to the students.

The fourth strategy used by the teacher was the *use of fillers*. Based on the table above, this strategy only used by teacher 2. The reason of teacher 2 to used this strategy because this strategy can help the teacher when she didn’t know how to express something in English and she used this strategy because sometimes she forgot the words in English so she needed time to thought the words that she will use to continue the utterance. According to Teacher 2 “aa kadang-kadang kita lupa beberapa kata, seperti yang atdi saya bilang mm jadi kalo saya Tanya ke siswa mereka juga tidak bisa jawab saya perlu waktu untuk mengingat kembali apa yang ingin saya bilang”.

The last strategy used by the English teacher was *prefabricated*. Based on observation this strategy only used by teacher 2. But based on the interviewed teacher 1 explained that she used this strategy E.g. “... what is your name? my name is Muhidin...”. in that situation she used this strategy to asked the student about information.

The strategies that unused by the teacher 1 in teaching and learning process were *message abandonment, topic avoidance, circumlocution, approximation, use of the all-purpose word, codeswitching, stalling time-gaining, appeal for help, prefabricated patterns, literal translation, foreignizing, and word coinage*. Based on the interview the reasons for teacher 1 didn’t use this

strategy because “mm tong mengajar ini ka nee tong tara sadar to tong mo pake strategi komunikasi apa, yang jelas tong Cuma komunikasi deng ana-ana saja. Nanti ini ada ngonni pe penelitian ini baru eee tong tau ee oo itu strategy dia pe nama ini” and the different reason by teacher 2 didn't use this strategy because “mungkin pada saat mengajar strategy itu tidak terpakai karena keadaan mm situasi saja”.

4.2. Discussion

Based on the findings above the research found that teachers used a communication strategy to solving the communication problem with their students. According to Poulisse (1990, in Ellis 1994) “strategies in communication is necessary used by the teacher in order to achieve his intended meaning on becoming aware of problems arising during the planning phase of an utterance due to linguistic shortcoming”. The teacher used communication strategies in the teaching and learning process to help them to communicate with students. A communication strategy is defined as “a systematic technique employed by a speaker to express his or her meaning when faced with some difficulty” (Corder, 1981, in Dornyei, 1995, p. 56).

In the teaching and learning process many reasons to used communications strategies by the teachers. One of the reasons for teacher 2 used communications strategies can make students easier to understand the teacher's explanation. According to (Brown, 2000:7) “Teaching is a process of guiding and facilitating learning encouraging the learners knows something”. Based on the observation at class VII K, VII J and VII C teachers used communications strategies in their teaching and learning process made students understand something that teachers give. So the objective of teaching can be achieved.

“Communication is a process of information exchange carried out by two people or more who will give each other deep understanding” (Komala, 2009:73). Based on the data when the researcher interviewed the teachers 2 said that “without communications teaching and learning process will not work”. Meanwhile, Teacher 1 said that “... tanpa komunikasi ana-ana mo tau apa, tong Cuma maso di dalam kong Cuma badiam kan tara mungkin. Musti tong bicara dulu tanpa komunikasi ana-ana Cuma manganga...”. It's mean that in teaching and learning process we need communication to transferring information to students. Without communication teaching and learning process will not happen.

Based on the finding above, the researcher will give more explanation of how the teacher used communication strategies in conversation during the teaching and learning process. Based on the findings, from five types of communication strategies used by teachers, the *use of non-linguistic means* was the strategies most often used by teachers in conversation with her students. It showed that the teacher used many mime and gestures in explaining the lesson. In the conversation, the teacher showed hand gestures to explained the meaning of ‘things’ (table, book, lamp, Etc) without saying the name of those things. They used gesture in order to made students easier to understand what they mean.

Code-switching was a second strategy used by the teacher in the teaching and learning process. English teacher mixed the language, English to Bahasa to made students were easier to understand what the teacher said. According to Maysken (1995) “it is generally defined as a nonstandard true of L2 within an L1 situation by bilinguals or even those who speak two or more languages in the same conversation”. Based on observation Teacher used *code-switching* happened when students didn't understand what they said so in that situation teacher must to mix language English with Bahasa.

Appeal for help strategy was a third strategy used by the English teachers in the class. This strategy happened when suddenly in the teaching and learning process, the teacher lost the idea or the words that the teacher wants to say. In that situation the teacher needed help to get the idea again. According to Bagozzi and Moore, (1994, 56) “fear appeals are one of the most frequently used motivators to get people to help themselves”. This strategy can use when we asked help to people for ourselves.

Use of fillers, the strategy was the fourth strategy used by an English teacher in the class. This strategy happened when a teacher may use filling words to pause and to gain time to think. According to Wanjnryb (1987) added examples such as *I think, um, mm, ah Etc.*

Prefabricated was the last strategy used by an English teacher in the class. This strategy happened when teachers asked the student “where is the...: or what is your name?”

Based on observation and interviewed there were the different situations that the researcher found. There were some strategies of communication that didn't use by English teachers in the teaching and learning process. But in the result of the interview, there were some statements that explained if they used the strategy of communication that happened in the teaching and learning process.

5. Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion in the chapters above, it can be concluded that the teachers did not apply all types of communication strategies based on Dornyei (cited in Brown, 2000, p 128). There were five of thirteen communication strategies by Dornyei (cited in Brown,2000,p 128) which found in the teaching and learning communication. They were *Prefabricated, Use of nonlinguistic means, Code-switching, Appeal for help, and Use of Filler*. The strategy which didn't find in this research was *message Abandonment, Topic Avoidance, Approximation, Use of allpurpose words, Word coinage, Literal translation, Foreignizing, Prefabricated*.

The type of communication strategies which is dominantly appeared in the communication strategies used by the English teachers in the teaching and learning process at the first grade of SMP Negeri 7 Ternate in the academic 2018/2019 is the *Use of non-linguistic*. This is due to the fact that students still have less vocabulary of English and the teachers adapt the situation by using mime and gesture in order to make her students easier to learn English.

Besides that, the *use of non-linguistic* strategy was also *code-switching, appeal for help, prefabricated and stalling or time-gaining* that used by the English teachers in teaching and learning process at the first grade of SMP Negeri 7 Ternate.

In this research, the researcher only focused on communication strategies that used by the English teachers in the EFL classroom. It is limited in verbal communication. So, for the other researcher, it is expected to conduct the research about communication strategies used by some English teachers both verbal and non-verbal communications. It is also recommended that further research study will compare the strategies used by the English teacher in one school with another school and for investigating the influence of teacher's Communication Strategies on students' abilities.

Communication strategies are the way to solve a problem in communication. The use of communication strategies makes teachers are easier to convey their message in the teaching and learning process and students are able to understand the teacher's explanation. For the teachers, they have to learn more about communication strategies. Teachers should more interaction with students. So, there is communication that exists between the teachers and students. So, the teaching and learning process will occur well. For the students, they must be bolder in communicating with English.

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