

## COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES APPLIED BY HIGH LEVEL OF EFL STUDENTS IN EXTENSIVE SPEAKING CLASS

**Khoiriyah**

khoir.khoiriyah@yahoo.co.id

### Abstract

Communication is interaction between one person and others through verbal and nonverbal communication. Being able to communicate effectively is the optimal goal of all language learners; therefore, despite difficulties they face and restrictions they have while expressing themselves, they rely on employing diverse communication strategies (CSs). This case study was set to describe the types of communication strategies applied by high level of EFL students in extensive speaking class and to identify types of communication strategies are frequently used by high level of EFL students in extensive speaking class. Third grade of English department at Nusantara PGRI Kediri University students of EFL were assigned to participate in the present study. The participants' speaking performances were analyzed qualitatively using Dornyei's (1995) taxonomy of CSs. The results of the study revealed that the context of communication plays a significant role in the use of communication strategies. The high level students applied seven communication strategies out of the twelve types of communication strategies such as: message abandonment, topic avoidance, use of non-linguistic signal, literal translation, code switching, appeal for help, and stalling for time gaining. The most frequently used were time gaining and non-linguistic signal strategies.

**Key words:** communication strategies, speaking, extensive speaking class, EFL students

### INTRODUCTION

Communication is to transform information, thought and ideas from one person to another. Weiner, Devoe, Rubinow, and Geller (1972: 15) in Buck (2002:523) defined communication as necessarily involving a socially shared symbol system, or code, which is symbolic in nature. As social human being, people need interaction with others to pass information through communication.

Communication with others plays an important role. Nowadays, along with the role of English as a language for International communication, speaking skill has become crucially important in English as a second or foreign language (Midiati & Cahyono, 2006). Moreover, the indicator of someone acquire a language can be known from their ability in oral communication.

Speaking is the way to deliver the ideas, what to say, language, how to use grammar and vocabulary, pronunciation as well as listening to and reacting to the person you are communicating with, Pollard (2008:33). It is the most basic means of communication; therefore, for most people knowing a language means being able to speak it. However, speaking appears to be demanding for foreign language learners (Lazarton, 2001). In order to speak, one should not only know the language, but also social and pragmatic rules to perform appropriate structures of the language (Martinez-Flor, Uso-Juan & Alcon-Soler, 2006). CSs are inevitable in oral communication for language learners. These strategies keep speakers flexible, and confident, and make their communication more effective.

Getting students to speak in the class can sometimes be extremely hard. In fact, majority students-even the third grade students of English department seem that they are shy and less confident to speak English. It is because they get difficulty to convey the message in EFL/ESL speaking. They do not know how to say the message in appropriate words although they have some ideas and intend to express it. This condition tends to create un-effective in communication. It is in line with Harmer's explanation (2007: 345) that students are often reluctant to speak because they are shy and are not predisposed to expressing themselves in front of other people, especially when they are being asked to give personal information or opinions. When the students get problem in communication, they can apply some strategies to overcome their problems. These strategies are called Communication Strategies (CSs).

Communication strategies (CSs) are defined as the way a person uses to overcome problems or difficulties in oral communication, Dornyei (1995: 56). CSs as potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal (Faerch and Kasper, 1983: 36). Gass and Selinker (2008: 285) also stated that "a communication strategy is a deliberate attempt to express meaning when faced with difficulty in the second language". Thus, CSs can help the students overcome their problems in oral communication.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The present study used a qualitative method and case study approach to reach the aim of the study. The subjects are third grade students of English Department at Nusantara PGRI Kediri University. It is limited to 2 high level students of extensive speaking class based on the score of speaking IV who have score A. This study focuses on discussion activity in extensive speaking class.

The steps in conducting the research are: first, observation to observe the student's activity and the situation in extensive speaking class by recording and taking field note about those communication strategies applied by the students. The aim is to describe the types of communication strategies applied by high level of EFL students. Second, questionnaire is given to the students which contains of twelve types of communication strategies based on Dornyei's taxonomy (1995) to identify the types of communication strategies applied frequently by high level of EFL students in extensive speaking class. Third, documentation is used to know the students' score of speaking IV as documentation to classify the high level. Then, analyzing and reporting the result.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

*The types of communication strategies applied by high level of EFL students in extensive speaking class.*

As the result, it can be seen that during discussion activity, high level students only applied seven types of communication strategies out of the twelve types of communication strategies from Dornyei's taxonomy

(1995). They applied message abandonment, topic avoidance, use of non-linguistic signal, literal translation, code switching, appeal for help, and stalling for time gaining. The short description can be seen on the table 1.1.

**Table 1.1**  
Types of CSs applied by high level students

No	Name	MA	TA	Cir	AP	Use- PW	W C	N- LS	LT	F	CS	A FH	TG	
1	Student 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	1	1	3	9
2	Student 2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	2	9

Note:

Communication strategies:

1. MA : Message abandonment
2. TA : Topic Avoidance
3. Cir : Circumlocution
4. AP : Approximation
5. Use PW : Use of all-purpose words
6. WC : Word coinage
7. N-LS : Non-linguistic signal
8. LT : Literal Translation
9. F : Foreignizing
10. CS : Code-switching
11. AFH : Appeal for help
12. TG : Time gaining

From the table above, it can be seen that student 1 applied the communication strategies 9 times: using non-linguistic signal, literal translation, code switching, appeal for help, time gaining. While student 2 also applied the communication strategies 9 times: message abandonment, topic avoidance, literal translation, code switching, appeal for help, time gaining. The following is description of each utterance produced by high level student.

### a. Student 1

Student 1 produced 3 utterances containing communication strategies. Thus, the utterances are discussed below:

#### 1). Utterance 1

*"I will choose the role play to the model of classroom interaction because in the role play ... em... the teaching activities not monoton."*

In the utterance 1, student 1 used time gaining and literal translation. In time gaining was indicated by the use of "em". The use of "em" was classified as fillers devices. While Literal translation strategy was indicated by translating directly a lexical item, idiom, compound word, or structure of L1 to L2 and he did not know the appropriate structure because of lack of linguistic. For example, he said "because in the role play the teaching activities not monotone" to explain "karena didalam role play aktifitas di kelas tidak monoton". The sum up strategy and indicator can be seen through the table below:

**Table 1.2**  
The type of CSs applied in utterance 1

Strategy	Indicator
Time gaining	Use "em"
Literal Translation	Use of L1 rule into L2

#### 2). Utterance 2

*"The student is very enjoy, very happy because the students ...e... give ...e... different in the drama so in the role play...e...the student not easily to bored"*

In this utterance found that he used time gaining, literal translation and also Non-Linguistic Signal (NS). In this utterance, he talked about the students' feeling in joining role play. But he apparently found the difficulties in describing it. To compensate, he used the fillers "e" while pause. It was evident that he used time gaining strategy to overcome the problem in communication. In literal translation strategy, he said "the student is very enjoy, very happy", "the student not easily to bored". Literally the expression was Indonesian for the utterance "siswa sangat senang, sangat bahagia", and "siswa tidak mudah bosan". The last, he used non linguistic signal. He tried to make an explanation using gesture and facial expression, he used his hand and said "the student is very enjoy, very happy because ...". The sum up strategy and indicator can be seen in the following table:

**Table 1.3**

The type of CSs applied in utterance 2

Strategy	Indicator
Time gaining	Use “em”
Literal Translation	Use of L1 rule into L2
Non-Linguistic Signal	Use gesture and facial expression

## 3). Utterance 3

*“The student can explore, can to express their ...e... idea and their...e... apa? Their skill”*

Utterance 3 showed that he talked about the benefit of using role play for the students. By uttering “their ...e... apa.?, he produced four strategies in a single utterance. They were time gaining, code switching, appeal for help, and use of non-linguistic signal. In time gaining, it could be identified from the use of “e” for filler as he pauses. While in code switching he switched into his native language when asking the benefit of role play. It was proved that he said “their ...e... idea and their...e... apa?”. Next, in giving the explanation to the interlocutor he used appeal for help by saying “their idea...e...apa?” and emphasized it by using non-linguistic signal strategy, which were gesture and facial expression. The sum up strategy and indicator can be seen in table 1.4 below:

**Table 1.4**

The type of CSs applied in utterance 3

Strategy	Indicator
Time Gaining	Use and repetition the filler “e”
Code Switching	Use of “apa” for asking their skill
Appeal for Help	Use of “their idea...e...apa?”
Non-Linguistic signal	Use of gesture and facial expression

**b. Student 2**

The result of this study showed that student 2 used 3 utterances containing communication strategies. Thus, the utterances are discussed below:

## 1). Utterance 1

*“I will answer the question number. .e. . the question from siapa namanya? How effective the snowball in classroom interaction.”*

In this utterance, student 2 wanted to answer the question from his friends about how the snowball effective in classroom interaction. By uttering the sentence, he actually performed three strategies: topic avoidance, code switching and appeal for help. In topic avoidance was indicated by changing the sentence “I

will answer the question number (paused) to I will answer the question from.” He did not finish the first idea and moved to the new idea to complete the utterance because he found some difficulties in delivering his idea. While in code switching and appeal for help were indicated by uttering the question from siapa namanya? He used the native language in the utterance to ask his friend's name who asked him and he also needed help from his friends. The sum up strategy and indicator can be seen in table bellow:

**Table 1.5**  
The type of CSs applied in utterance 1

Strategy	Indicator
Topic Avoidance	He did not finish the first idea and moved to the new idea
Code Switching	Use of “siapanamanya” for asking name
Appeal for help	Use of question “siapanamanya?” for asking help

## 2). Utterance 2

*“Actually ...e... all of the technique is have the same point I think to take attention of the student. But why we use the snowball, it is very interactive, I think.”*

Out of this utterance, he delivered his idea about the benefit of snowball in classroom interactions. He used four strategies: time gaining, message abandonment, literal translation and non-linguistic signal.

In time gaining strategy was indicated when he started speaking with “Actually...e...” then paused temporally, appears in the middle of that quotation, because he needed to think the idea that he was going to say. In message abandonment, he did not continue his utterance and left unfinished message when he expressed about the technique in classroom interaction. He omitted the item of information because he found the difficult language in conveying his intended meaning. The words which were omitted were actually an important part of the information. If he omitted some words of information and the listeners did not have the same idea, then, the meaning would be different. Thus, the listeners would be wrong in interpreting what he wanted to say. The next, he used literal translation to utter “all of the technique is have the same point” which mean “semua teknik memiliki poin yang sama”. The last, he used non-linguistic signal by using gesture to emphasize an explanation by uttering “it is very interactive, I think. The sum up strategy and indicator can be seen in table 1.6.

**Table 1.6**

The type of CSs applied in utterance 2

Strategy	Indicator
Time Gaining	Use of a pause
Message abandonment	Leaving message unfinished
Literal Translation	Literally translate from L1
Non-linguistic signal	Use of gesture

## 3). Utterance 3

*“The teacher must give the... feedback...(in this part a friend next to him helps by saying ‘feedback’) to the student so if you throw the ball may be the student gets the ball and the student should answer. So, I think, it is very effective.”*

In this utterance, he talked about the role of the teacher in classroom interaction should give feedback to the students performance by giving comment or reward. He applied three strategies; they are message abandonment, time gaining and appeal for help. In message abandonment, he left unfinished messages because of lacking of vocabulary. He did not continue to give more explanation and preferred to stop it. Then, he gave the example about using snowball technique in the classroom. While in time gaining and appeal for help were indicated when he paused for a while to think what idea he wanted to express. And also, his friend who sat next to him was tried to help by saying “feedback”. The sum up strategy and indicator can be seen in table bellow:

**Table 1.7**

The type of CSs applied in utterance 3

Strategy	Indicator
Message Abandonment	Leave message unfinished
Time Gaining	Use of pause
Appeal for help	Ask help for “feedback”

*The types of communication strategies are used frequently by high level students in extensive speaking class.*

Based on the result of questionnaire that was given to the 2 high level students showed that high level students were frequently used time gaining and non-linguistic signal strategy.

The first type of CSs was stalling for time gaining strategy. It was indicated that 100% students answered yes to use time gaining strategy. It means that this strategy helped them to solve the problem in communication by using the words and phrases or filler “e” to fill the pauses and gain time to think when they are facing communication problems.

The second type of CSs used by high level students were non-linguistic signal. The questionnaire showed that 100% students used gesture to explain and emphasize the interlocutor during discussion activity. In this case, sometimes there were some words that were understandable and the students used their hands and facial expression in order to make the listener understand clearly what they wanted to say.

## Discussion

From the result of this study, it can be described that high level students used communication strategies more frequently. It can be seen that they applied communication strategies 18 times in speaking. It was because they knew how to use communication strategies to solve the problems and they had good ability to apply communication strategies in their speaking. This statement is supported by Dornyei (1995: 56) he stated that "a communication strategy is a systematic technique employed by a speaker to express his or her meaning when faced with some difficulty". Moreover, high level students applied seven types of communication strategies, they were message abandonment, topic avoidance, non-linguistic signals, literal translation, code switching, appeal for help and time gaining. They also frequently used time gaining and non-linguistic signal strategy in speaking.

They applied message abandonment when they could not give more explanation. The next, the students who used topic avoidance usually did not remember a lot of vocabularies in their mind and he was confused with the chosen of vocabularies when he wanted to speak. So they lost the ideas. High level students applied the use of non-linguistic signal strategy in many times such as gesture and facial expression to emphasize their explanation in speaking English to make their friends understand more about their explanation. It supported by Ambady (1998: 775) that said Nonverbal communication includes communication through any behavioral or expressive channel of communication such as facial expression, bodily movement, vocal tone and pitch, and many other channels. Then, high level students applied literal translation to translate the expression from first language to second language when they found the difficulties to say the word or sentences.

Code switching was applied by high level students because sometimes they liked to switch into their native language than to use new word to make the audience understand what they wanted to say. It might happen because he did not know the specific word. Then, they applied appeal for help to looked for help from their friends next to him because he was lack of vocabulary. Finally, high level students applied time gaining such as "e" or "em" to get enough time in order to think the next words. It was supported by Dornyei (1995:58) defined "Stalling for time-gaining strategies is using fillers or hesitation devices to fill pauses and to gain time to think."



## COCLUSION

In extensive peaking class during discussion activity, high level students of third grade of English Department at Nusantara PGRI Kediri University applied seven types of communication strategies out of twelve, they are: time gaining, literal translation, non-linguistic signal, code switching, and appeal for help, topic avoidance and message abandonment. Only certain types of communication strategies were frequently applied in their speaking such as: time gaining and non-linguistic signals strategy. It shows that high level students of the third grade of English Department at Nusantara PGRI Kediri University are still influenced by using filler or hesitation devices to fill pauses and gain time to think so that they have enough time to get idea to continue their EFL speaking. They also use gesture and facial expression to emphasize their explanation.

## REFERENCES

- Buck, R., & Vanlear, C.A. 2002. Verbal and Nonverbal Communication: Distinguishing, Symbolic, Spontaneous, And Pseudo Spontaneous Nonverbal Behavior. *International Communication Association*.
- Dornyei, Z. 1995. *On the Teach Ability of Communication Strategies*. *Tesol Quarterly Journal*, 1 (29): 55 – 85.
- Gass, S. M. and Selinker, L. 2008. *Second Language Acquisition, An Introductory Course, Third Edition*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Harmer, J. 2007. *The Praticice Of English Language Teaching, Fourth Edition*. Cambrige, UK: Longman.
- Lazarton, A. (2001). Teaching oral skills. In M. Celce Murcia (Ed). *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed, pp. 103-115). Mexico: Heinle & Heinle
- Martinez- Flor, A., Uso-Juan, E., & Alcon- Soler, E. (2006). Toward acquiring communicative competence through speaking. In E. Uso-Juan & A. Martinez- Flor (Eds.), *Current trends in the development and teaching of the four language skills* (pp. 139-157). Berlin, New York: Mount de Gruyter.
- Pollard, L. 2008. *Guide to Teaching English, A Book to Help you through your First Two Years in Teaching*. Lucy Pollard All Rights Reserved.
- Tarone, E. 1981. *Some Thoughts of the Notion of Communication Strategy*. *Tesol Quarterly Journal*, 15(3): 285-295
- Widiati, U., & Cahyono, B. Y. 2006. The Teaching Of Efl Speaking: In The Indonesian Context: The Stated of the Art. *BAHASA DAN SENI*. th 34 No.2. Pp.269-292.