

The Communication Strategy Used By Japanese Learner at the Basic Level

Dyah Prasetiani*, Lispridona Diner

Department of Education Japanese, Semarang State University, Indonesia

Article Info

Article history:

Received Sep 01, 2017

Revised Dec 27, 2017

Accepted Jan 15, 2018

Keywords:

Communication strategy

Japanese language

Japanese speaking

Kaiwa

ABSTRACT

Students at the basic level in Department Education Japanese of Semarang State University have difficulties in Japanese speaking. They could not produce oral Japanese smoothly. Sometimes they said couple words in Bahasa Indonesia to express their ideas. In communication strategy there is a systematic technique used by foreign language learners to express their ideas when faced with the difficulty of communicating because of the limitations of second language mastery. The findings are the learners already have passed the stage of mastery of simple-level linguistic rules, so they have a tendency to pursue in various ways to make their message acceptable. The characteristic of communication strategy they used are directly translated an utterance literally in the concept of their mother tongue, and use those terminology in their mother tongue and English in Japanese utterance. The reasons that influence the use of these communication strategies are that students' grammar and vocabulary skills are insufficient to communicate in various fields as they are still in the early learning stages.

Copyright © 2018 Institute of Advanced Engineering and Science.
All rights reserved.

Corresponding Author:

Dyah Prasetiani,

Departement of Education Japanese,

Semarang State University,

Building B9, FBS, Kampus Sekaran Gunungpati Semarang, Indonesia

Email: dyahprasetiani@mail.unnes.ac.id

1. INTRODUCTION

Learning Japanese is a new challenge for early learners especially for learners in Indonesia. This is happen because of the difference in Bahasa Indonesia and Japanese language is quite prominent. Among them are: 1) Differences in letters, Japanese use the letters *katakana*, *hiragana* and *kanji*, while Bahasa Indonesia uses Latin letters. 2) Different sentence patterns, Bahasa Indonesia patterned: Subject Predicate Object (SPO). The Japanese language patterned: Subject Object Predicate (SOP). 3) Japanese language has more vocabulary than Bahasa Indonesia.

The above differences become difficult for Japanese language learners, especially for the first year students of Education Japanese program at Semarang State University. These difficulties experienced by students especially when they learned *kaiwa* (Japanese speaking). They could not produce oral Japanese smoothly. Sometimes they said couple words in Bahasa Indonesia to express their ideas.

Meanwhile, the target of this course is to produce Japanese oral speaking smoothly and could respons other person speaking. So, if the student can't master Japanese well (by means understand the vocabulary or intentions of the other person), there will be misunderstandings. Therefore, to avoid misunderstandings in a conversation, it is necessary to have a communication strategy in speaking. To know what kind of communication strategy that used by students are interesting.

Communication strategy is a systematic technique used by foreign language learners to express their ideas when faced with the difficulty of communicating due to lack of perfect second language mastery. In using appropriate communication strategies influenced by several factors, namely internal and external

factors. According to Tarone [1], the strategy used by second learner is influenced by various factors, including intercultural system in less competent learner, learning situation and communicative experience of learner.

Based on the above facts, there is a need for a deeper and more detailed assessment of the communication strategies used by Japanese language learners when they learned speaking. It is expected that through these activities, lecturer can get input and suggestions in teaching Japanese language. Therefore, this paper entitled "The Communication Strategy Used by Japanese Learner at The Basic Level"

2. THE COMPREHENSIVE THEORETICAL BASIS

2.1. Communication Strategy

The communication strategy relates to the output of how we productively express the meaning, and how we convey the message to others. To describe the language learners well in terms of personal characteristics, styles and strategies, Rubin [2]. This categories are:

- (1) Find their own way, be responsible for their learning.
- (2) Organize information about the language.
- (3) Creative, develop a "sense" of language by experimenting through grammar and words.
- (4) Create opportunities for yourself to practice using language in and out of the classroom.
- (5) Learn to live with uncertainty by not being nervous and continuing to talk or hear without understanding every word.
- (6) Using mnemonics and other memory strategies to remember what has been learned.
- (7) Make mistakes useful and not obstructive.
- (8) Using linguistic knowledge, including knowledge of the first language while learning a second language.
- (9) Using contextual guidelines to assist them in understanding.
- (10) Learn to make smart guesses.
- (11) Learn the pieces of language as a whole and practice the routine to achieve a performance that "exceeds their competence".
- (12) Learn certain tips that help keep the conversation going.
- (13) Learn certain production strategies to close the gaps in their own competencies.
- (14) Learn different styles of speech and writing and learn to vary the language according to the formality of the situation.

Below are the description of communication strategies according to some linguists:

- (1) Corder (1983)[3] communication strategy is a systematic technique used by the individual to express meaning, when he is faced with difficulties.
- (2) Tarone (1983:5)[3] defines the following:
 - Communication strategy is an individual effort systematically to express meaning in the target language when it can't form or choose the rules of the target language.
 - Communication strategy is an individual's conscious effort to communicate his thoughts when interlanguage is inadequate to convey the thought.
- (3) Faerch and Kasper (1983)[3] define that communication strategy is a potentially conscious plan for solving problems in achieving specific communication objectives. The types of communication strategies used by the speakers are as follows:

(a) Avoidance Strategies

Avoidance is a common communication strategy that can be broken down into several subcategories. This strategy is used by the learner due to fear of errors in communicating. This strategy can be categorized into two forms: a) Avoidance of Topics, due to limited language skills and knowledge of the theme being discussed, b) Message Cutting, Cutting a message occurs when communication is running, but not completed because the learner encounters difficulties in language.

(b) Paraphrase Strategies

Paraphrasing done by substituting a particular form or concept in a second language, such as: using your own words, using examples and reconstructing sentences.

(c) Transfer Strategy

Transfer is used by borrowing a form from another language that is more mastered to communicate its intent in communicating with a second language.

(d) Appeals for Assistance

The learner asks for help or cooperation from his interlocutor when facing obstacles in communication about a matter in a second language, either directly or indirectly.

(e) Mime Strategies

Learners use mimic and gesture to explain the meaning.

2.2. Japanese Language Learning at Basic Level in Semarang State University

Basic Japanese language teaching on the Japanese language education program of Semarang State University uses *Minna no Nihongo* books 1 and 2. *Minna no Nihongo* I is for semester 1 - 3 students with division: chapters 1- 6 for students of 1st semester, chapters 17-22 for students of 2nd semester, and chapters 33-45 for students of 3rd semester.

Therefore, Japanese language is taught using structured method that is *Bunpo* (structure), *dokkai* (reading), *choukai* (listening), *kaiwa* (speaking) and *sakubun* (writing) courses are related. The *bunpo*, *dokkai*, and *choukai* (receptive skills) courses are taught in advance of the *kaiwa* and *sakubun* (productive) courses. It is expected that this elementary level students after passing the 3rd semester can pass Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) level 5 and 4.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach because it aims to describe communication strategy in learning Japanese language at the elementary level students. This research data is nonverbal data that is written data in the form of field note and result of evaluation. Technique of collecting data which done is: (1) listen, (2) omitting, (3) note, (4) record (Mahsun, 2013).[4]

The data are then analyzed through the following steps: (1) Data collection, for example data of observation result is transcended first(2) Data reduction, which is to identify and description of the utterances to see whether the utterance is one communication strategy or not(3)Presentation of data, data classified by types of communication strategies(4) the conclusions and verifications are based on interpretation and data analysis according to the focus of the research.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of data analysis, can be found some avoidance strategies that have been done by students when communicating Japanese language. The most widely used form of communication strategy is the transfer strategy and paraphrase strategy. While the mimic strategy is the least used strategy by students.

Here are some data from students' utterances that use various forms of communication strategy.

4.1. Avoidance Strategy

Data 1

A : 休みの日に何をしたか。

B : 何もしてませんでした。

This conversation is done during the exam. The answer from B, is not wrong, because the limited ability of mastery of eating language B avoids by replying 何もしてませんでした. That way, B hopes that the topic of conversation is over. The above conversation can be an interesting topic if B replied as below.

A : 日曜日に何をしますか。

B : Simpang Lima へ行きます。

A : ああそうですか。誰と行きましたか。 ect...

4.2. Paraphrase Strategy

Data 2

私の家族は4人います。父と母と兄と兄と私です。

The above sentence is said by the students when explaining the number of families, the strategy used to replace the word number of people by repeating the word 兄と兄. The correct sentence is私の家族は4人います。父と母と兄が二人と私です。

Data 3

A : どうして遅く来ましたか。

B : 道に車がたくさんありますから。

The above conversation is done when the student is late to class. The teacher asks "the student's reason is late", student (B) replies by changing the exact sentence pattern 「道が込んでいますから。」 Means "jam" to 「道がたくさんありますから」 meaning because "because of many cars". The sentence pattern is correct, but by mistaken meaning, this is because the basic level student of the sentence pattern studied is still limited, the above example the student uses the sentence pattern 「～に～が～あります。」

Data 4

- A: お父さんの仕事はなんですか。
 B: テープレコーダーやテレビを売っています。 ①
 A: 妹は？
 B: 幼稚園の生徒です。
 A: 母は？
 B: 服を作ります。 ②
 A: お兄さんは？
 B: 海で魚を取ります。 ③

The above conversation when the lecture *kaiwa* asked about the profession of the family. In the conversation above the student using paraphrase strategy is to replace the vocabulary that has not been mastered/studied by example. As seen in the data 4①: テープレコーダーやテレビを売っています.

The vocabulary in question is the work of the father is 商人 (trader), students replace it with an example: テープレコーダーやテレビを売っています (Sells tape recoder and television).

Data 4②: 服を作ります. The vocabulary is a tailor (仕立て職人. 4③: 海で魚を取ります. The vocabulary in question is 魚師 (fisherman). The examples spoken by the student can be understood by the speaker even though they are unaware of the professional vocabulary in the example of the data. However, the paraphrase strategy they use can be understood by the other person.

4.3. Transfer Strategy

Data 5

- A: ～さんは趣味はなんですか。
 B: 小説を読むことです。
 A: 今まで何の小説を読んだことがありますか。
 B: Laskar Pelangiの小説を読みました。
 A: どうでしたか。
 B: 面白いand①よかったです。 インスピレーションになりました②。

The above conversations are done during the course of the course. Students use a more mastered language such as data 5 ①: and ("and" the sentence pattern that combines two adjectives), in vocabulary and there are errors in the use of vocabulary and sentence patterns. The correct sentence is 「面白くてよかったです。」 "Interesting and good".

Data 5②: インスピレーションになりました. The word inspiration is not a problem that is a problem is the pattern of sentences used, the correct sentence pattern is 「インスピレーションを受けました。」 "Get inspired". So not all transfer strategies can produce the wrong vocabulary as in the 5② data, the word inspiration used comes from English is also used by the Japanese.

4.4. Appeals for Assistance

Data 6

- A: インドネシアの中で観光地が何が一番有名ですか。
 B: そうですね。すみません、もう一度お願いします。 ①
 A: インドネシアの中で観光地が何が一番有名ですか。
 B: 観光地はインドネシア語で何ですか。 ②
 A: 「Tempat wisata」です。
 B: ああ、観光地がバリが一番有名です。

The above conversations are done by the students when talking about the sights. Data 6 ① student B seems less understanding student's question A, therefore student B uses sentence 「もう一度お願いします」. (Please again).

Then on the data 6 ② student B also do not understand the word 観光地, then student B asked again using the sentence 「観光地はインドネシア語で何ですか」 (what is *Kankouchi* in Indonesian). The strategy used by student B is the strategy of appeals for assistance, the strategy of asking for help directly or indirectly. Student B uses this strategy by using sentence patterns that have been studied so that received messages can be answered well

4.5. Mime Strategy

Data 7

When they asked to read 「カメラ」

A : 何と読みますか。

B: (do not know). すみません. (Shaking my head)

Questionnaire in data 7 above, asked by the teacher (A) to the student (B) at the start of a lecture as the introductory stage (導入). Student B cannot answer in perfect Japanese, but student B uses mimic strategy in the communication. If the above question and answer is verbally expressed by student B, then the spoken sentence is 「すみません, わかりません」. Student B, using the strategy of mimic, because student B does not master the word 「わかりません」 means "do not know".

Data 8

A : 誕生日に家族に何をもらいましたか。

B : ううん。 (pointed watch) もらいました。

A : ああそうですか。

Questionnaire in data 8 above, asked by student (A) to student (B) at *kaiwa* activity in class. Student B cannot answer in perfect Japanese, but student B uses mimic strategy in the communication. If the above question and answer is verbally expressed by student B, then the spoken sentence is 「腕時計をもらいました」 (*udedokei womoraimashita*). Student B, using mimic strategy, because student B does not control the word 「腕時計」 which means 'watch'.

5. CONCLUSION

The findings are the learners already have passed the stage of mastery of simple-level linguistic rules, so they have a tendency to pursue in various ways to make their message acceptable. The characteristic of communication strategy they used are directly translated an utterance literally in the concept of their mother tongue, and use those terminology in their mother tongue and English in Japanese utterance. The reasons that influence the use of these communication strategies are that students' grammar and vocabulary skills are insufficient to communicate in various fields as they are still in the early learning stages.

Related to the theory, the communication strategy that often used by students of the basic level of Japanese language education program in Semarang State University are transfer strategy and paraphrase strategy. The reason are the transfer strategy has characteristics that directly translate Japanese into a language that is more controlled by students such as English. Meanwhile the paraphrase strategy is used by students because it is easier to them to use some examples by said a simple vocabulary.

REFERENCES

- [1] Tarone, Elaine, "Some Thoughts on the Notion of Communication Strategy - Faerch, Claus. & Kasper, Gabriele" in *Strategies in Interlanguage Communication*, ed: Longman, 1983.
- [2] Rubin, J, and Thompson, "Studying Learning Strategies-Wenden, A.L. & Rubin, J" in *Learning Strategies in Language Learning*, ed: Englewood Cliff Prentice Hall Regents, pp. 132-133, 1987.
- [3] <http://nayanrises.wordpress.com/2012/11/23/strategy-communication-in-the-second-language-learning>
- [4] Mahsun, "Metode Penelitian Bahasa: Tahapan Strategi, Metode dan Tekniknya", Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, pp. 8, 2013.
- [5] Brown, Douglas H, "Principles of Language Learning and Teaching", New York: Pearson Education, 2007.

BIOGRAPHIES OF AUTHORS

Lecturer at Department of Education Japanese, Semarang State University
Master of Japanese Language and Education
Research on Japanese Language and Teaching; Japanese Speaking; Japanese Culture



Lecturer at Department of Education Japanese, Semarang State University
Master of Japanese Language and Education
Research on Japanese Language and Teaching; Japanese Speaking; Japanese Culture