THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OF STAIN GAJAH PUTIH TAKENGON

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Abstract. In an educational world, communication is seen as a necessity,as education is a communication process. When communicating, the EFL students often face many obstacles that make them use communication strategies. However, in the same time, theyare required to use the appropriate strategies, as the use of communication strategies contribute to the development of their communicative competence.There are several factors affecting the use of communication strategies by the EFL learners,one of them is gender. Communication between men and women in the classroom is considered as cross-cultural which potentially causes communication breakdown. Pertaining to this problem, this study was conducted to provide answers about the types of communication strategies used by male and female students to overcome their communication problems, and revealing the reasons why they used the strategies. The investigation is based on Bailystock (1990) classification of communication strategies. The study employed a qualitative research design. The subjects were the students who enrolled in Speaking IVcourse of the English Department of STAIN Gajah Putih Takengon. The data were collected through communication tasks (oral presentations), observations, interviews and video recordings. The findings showed that the male and female subjects used L1-based and L2-based communication strategies. Male subjects used mostly the L1-based communication strategies, meanwhile the female subjects dominantly employed the L-2 based communication strategies.The findings also indicated that the male subjects used more L1-based strategiesto help them reaching the communication goal rather than the communicationeffectiveness. In contrast, female subjects dominantly used L2-based strategies to communicate effectively.To sum up, the subjects still used the strategies, which are not beneficial to the development of their communicative competence. Therefore, these findings finally leads to a suggestion thatthe teachers should consider introducing the appropriate communication strategies to make students communicate effectively by incorporating them in the teaching and learning through the classroom activities.

Keywords: English as Foreign Language (EFL), Commnnicaion Breakdown, Communication Strategies, Communication Task.

Introduction

English is the language of international communication, and its worldwide expansion has increased the demand to acquire good communication skills. Good communication skills are closely interrelated with the ability of speaking. The presence of speaker and listener is necessary to build up a mutual communication in speaking activity.Thus, speaking is considered to be inseparable to something we call "communication".Little (1982)states that communication is the way by which we can get in touch with each other, and how we show our feelings to each other; tell each other our thoughts; ask questions; ask for help; pass on facts; argue; persuade others to do what we want them to do; explain; and give orders.

In fact, thisis also required in educational world, as Daly (1991,cited inTanveer,2007) states, we live in an educational world where orality is seen as a necessity--a positive personal characteristic.In other words, education is a communication process. Students must use speaking, listening, and writing skills to receive instruction, clarify their understanding, and demonstrate learning.However, in Indonesia, English is considered as a foreign language, the cultural differences havecontributed more problems to students' communication.

Regarding to explanation above, communication between men and womenare also considered as cross-cultural communication. When people speak in different cultures they speak various dialect. There are numerous general differences that characterize gender communication. Fasold (1990) stated that compared to women, men are more likely to interrupt the speaking of other people. Meanwhile, according to Tannen (1990), men and women express themselves in different ways and for different reasons. Men use communication to maintain independence, while women talk to maintain intimacy. Whether consious or unconsious, men often talk to establish status from others. Women use words to comnnect themselves emotionnaly, to express feelings, or to build rapport. Men often share acts and figures as in report. Tannen labels these communicative differences as "rapport-talk" and "report talk".

The using of body language between men and women is also different(Tannen, 1990). While women typically use nonverbal communication directly, men use it indirectly. Women stand in close proximity of each other and maintain eye contact and gesture more frequently. Men hold their distance, rarely establish eye contact and gesture less dramatically. Men and women also handle conflict directly. Women avoid conflict in order to ensure closeness, while men use conflict to gain status. These are just a few of the common differences in gender communication.

Men and women express gender communication diferences in content, style, and structure (Tannen, 1990). In particular, men often talk about sports, money and bussiness. They often express themselves to fix a problem, converse for competition, and talk to resolve problems. On the other hand, women most often discuss about people, feeling, and relationship. They most often express themselves to understand, converse to support, and talk to connect. When talking, women are more detailed, apologetic, and vague.

The cultural differences between men and women in communication has sometimes lead tocommunication breakdown. Based on the researcher observation, the English department students in STAIN Gajah Putih Takengonare considered as the perfect example of the issue. The researcher found that both male and female students were having communication problems; it could be seen from their performance in speaking class. In order to cope with communication difficulties, those learners used various communication strategies.

Maleki (2010) defined a communication strategy as an individual's attempt to find a way to fill the gap between their communication effort and immediate available linguistic resources.Communication strategies are also defined as the ways a person uses to overcome problems and difficulties in oral performance (Dornyei, 1995). What is meant by communication problems here may be due to their linguistic deficiency and/or a lack of content knowledge on certain topics.

Based on the aforementioned background, the researcher finds that it is very challenging to conduct the research, because for most of time people investigated the use

of communication strategies without considering the students'gender factor that affect the using of the communication strategies. That is why this present studyis aimed at investigating the communication strategies employed by the EFLstudentsof different sexes.

Methodhology

This research employed the descriptive research. This is in accordance with the objective of the study; that is to describe the type of communication strategies used by the students with different sexes. As the data are collected in the form of words rather than numerical scores, and the natural setting is the direct data, the qualitative is the most appropriate approach to be used in this study (Fraenkel and Wallen, 1993). Therefore, although there are some figures in the form of percentages,are not simplified into judgments. Instead, they are discussed, analyzed, and explained using a qualitative approach. Furthermore, this study is also in accordance with the features of qualitative study described by Bogdan and Biklen (1998) that it is naturalistic, gains descriptive data, concerns with process, and focuses on meaning. That is to say, qualitative research is done in a natural setting; one of which is in the classroom.

The subjects of the research were the fifth semester of English department at STAIN Gajah PutihTakengon. The subjects were those who enrolled Speaking IV course, which are two males and two females. In order to get the data about the communication strategies used by the subjects, they were asked to do communication tasks. The tasks were telling a pictorial story and pictorial instructions; (the pictorial story is about *Tom who went fishing*. The pictorial instructions is about *how to make vegetable omelet*. The reasons why oral presentation used in this research was because this type of communication task was frequently used by the English speaking lecturers as the task in the classroom, e.g.: retelling short stories, telling personal experience etc, therefore, the students are considered familiar with this type of the task.Initially, the students were asked to do communication tasks (oral presentations) in front of the class. Their performances were video-recorded as the source of data, and then transcribed to be analyzed. Afterwards, a focus group interview was conducted to disclose the reasons for using the communication strategies.

Result and Discussion

The result of the data analysis showed that the learners employed both L1-based and L2-based communication strategies. The L1-based communication strategies found included language switch, foreignizing, and transliteration.

Language Switch. *According to Bialystock (1983), language switch refers to the insertion of a word or a phrase in a language other than the target language, usually in the learners' native language without bothering to translate. For example:*

(1) and *memanggang*the fish …to roastthe fish...(FI)
(2) Tom is *melemparumpan*to fishing the fish (MI)
(3) and I think it's *merica* uh…salt (MI)
(4) and the last the ingredients prepare to *penggorengan* (MI)

This strategy occurred 5 times in the data. There were some reasons why the subjects used Indonesian words in their speech production. First, the subject were unaware of the English equivalents for such Indonesian words. Second, they had limited vocabulary,

which prevented them from using the intended words. Third, when the subjects faced difficulties in communicating, they used their mother tongue to achieve their communication goals.

Foreignizing. *Foreignizing is the strategy to use a word from the native language with phonological and morphological adaptation to the target language. For example:*

(5) to make fire with *BBM*. (MI)
(6) Tom does not forget to bring *BBM*. (M2)

This strategy was employed 7 times. The subjects used foreignizing since they did not know the equivalent words in English. Therefore, they foreignized their phonological system as it was in English. For instance, the subject expressed "BBM" by pronouncing it as */bi-bi-em/* and not */be-be-em/.*

Transliteration. *This strategy involves the use of L2 lexicon to create literally L1 phrase. The subjects tended to translate word –for-word from their native language as shown in the following examples:*

(7) and he try touh…he want to *burn* it (fish) (Tom tried to grill/roast the fish)
(8) *in the back tree,* there a dog to…there a dog uh (menggonggong?) barking (there is a dog barking behind the tree). (F2)
(9) then he… he …he make fire to *burn* or toast the fish maybe (to make fire to roast the fish) (F1)
(10)   and the fish…is *burned* on the fire (the fish is roasted over the fire) (F2)

This strategy was the most commonly employed by the subjects (52 times). The main reason was that Indonesian subjects tended to think in Indonesian style when the attempted to speak and, consequently, interference from the Indonesian language took place. The expressions used by the subjects always sounded odd and sometimes did not make any sense. The expressions did not convey the intended meaning in the target language. The data also revealed that the subjects first did their thinking and formulation in Indonesian before coming up with a literal equivalence in English. These examples indicated that "transliteration" had taken place.

The L2-based communication strategies found included semantic contiguity, word coinage, repetition, and self-improvisation.

Semantic Contiguity. *Semantic contiguity involves the use of lexical items to cover the meaning of a certain word, which the learners do not know. For examples:*

(11)   During Tom *when fishing* (Tom's fishing time). (F2)
(12)   Because it is *old tradition* (previous tradition). (F1)
(13)   Make the fishing a better the *exception* (except).(F1)
(14)   *I think like that*(I think so). (F2)
(15)   That so *she* (he). F1
(16)   Tom*needed* (needs). F2
(17)   Her (his). M1
(18)   *She*had nothing *(he had nothing). (M1)*
(19)   *Advantage with (*profit from*). (M2)*

Semantic contiguity appeared only 13 times. The subjects adopted this strategy when they faced difficulties in finding the appropriate word for a particular context. As shown

in the examples above, the subject used pronoun she instead of he because in Indonesia there is only one third personal pronoun, namely *dia.*

Word coinage. *As a strategy, word coinage creates L2 lexical item by selecting a conceptual feature of the target language item. It usually produces items, which do not exist in the target language, or if they do, they are contextually incorporate. For examples:*

(20) His fishinghas no moreimprove (improvement). (F1)
(21) Tom pain (Tombeing suffered). (F2)
(22) I want to say…it's more bad (worse). (M2)

This strategy was employed 5 times by the subjects. The data revealed that the subjects had problems in selecting and using the selected words in appropriate contexts. They used the words, which existed in English irrelevantly to the intended meaning, for example, the word "reinforce" exists and was used by the subject. However, it was unacceptable or irrelevant in this particular context. The subject adopted this strategy because they had limited vocabulary. As a result, they used lexical items, which were contextually inappropriate.

Repetition. *Repetition is a communication strategy in which the subjects repeat the same word or phrase of a clause twice or more. The purpose is to search other utterances to say further; therefore, it is better for the subject to repeat the same utterance as he or she seeks another utterance in their minds. For examples:*

(23) he can get the fish…uh…at…uh…*for a long ...for a long*time (F1)
(24) *he try to uh...he try to*pull the…(what is the meaning of pancing?) fishing rod (F2)
(25) *he try to...he try to*(what is mean of memanggang?) (F1)
(26) and the dog just *wait...wait...wait the...wait the*fish that is given by Tom (F2)
(27) and*Tom...Tom* after that the uh**…**a little bit of fish for the dog (M1)
(28) and uh… the dog *doesn't...doesn't* disturb Tom (M2)
(29) …*cooking... cooking* is…uh…the skill (M1)
(30) and we try to *fill...fill* it uh…egg (M2)

The repetition strategy was employed 34 times in the present study. This indicated that before they continued their further utterances, they had to think, unfortunately, because of limited vocabulary and ideas, they repeated their previous utterances to avoid being silent.

Self-improvisation. *Self-improvisation is the strategy employed by the subjects to improve their previous utterances. It is a means of self-correction or clarification on what the subjects intend to say. For examples:*

(31) there is no…there are no much. (F1)
(32) and then some fish…uh…one of fish in the river eat the fish bait. (F1)
(33) become …ee…he had tried to…(F1)
(34) Tom try to…ee..He had tried to… (F1)
(35) but we can…ee…we have. (F2)
(36) the only…he only. (F2)
(37) he needs to…to take…ee…he needs to concern. (F2)
(38) she…eh he is very surprised. (M1)
(39) he must…ee…Hehas to. (M1)

(40)   sometimes we can said…we can say…(M2)
(41)   and thenhe**…**he start…he begin to eat the fish. (M2)
(42)   we need two…uh… tomato…tomatoes sorry. (M2)

In this study, the self-improvisation strategy happened 30 times. As shown in the examples, the subjects tried to improve their previous utterances because they realized that their previous utterances were wrong. The distribution of communication strategies used by male and female subjects is shown in table 1:

Table 1. The distribution of Communication Strategies

Strategies	Basis	Sex	Total	%	Total for Each Strategy	%
Language Switch	L1	Male	4	80	5	3.42
		Female	1	20		
Foreignizing	L1	Male	7	100	7	4.80
		Female	0	0		
Transliteration	L1	Male	21	40.4	52	35.6
		Female	31	59.6		
Semantic Contiguity	L2	Male	3	23.1	13	8.90
		Female	10	76.9		
Word Coinage	L2	Male	3	60	5	3.42
		Female	2	40		
Repetition	L2	Male	18	53.0	34	23.3
		Female	16	47.0		
Self-improvisation		Male	12	40	30	20.5
		Female	18	60		
Total					146	100

From the data distribution in Table I, it shows that all subjects used communication strategies to deliver information; with the result that the male subjects used less strategies than the female subjects did; male subjects used 68 (47%) strategies, and female subjects used 78 (53%) strategies. We can also see in detail that from the 7 categories of communication strategies proposed by Bailystock (1990), male subjects used all 7 strategies, and the female subjects used 6 (six) out of 7 communication strategies.

The language Switch categorywere used 5 times; 4 times (80%) by male and 1 out of 5 (20%) by female subjects. It means that male subjects tended to switch their language to their L1 when they did not know or forget the vocabulary in L2. The foreignizing category were all used by the male subjects that is 7 out of 7, meanwhile female subjects did not used it at all. It indicated that the male subjects tended to pretend that they fluent enough to speak English by resembling the native speakers speaking. The transliteration category were used 52 times, 21 (40%) were employed by the male subjects, and 31 (60%) were used by female subjects. It explained that the female subjects preferred to use their L1 based language to overcome the problems in their communication. Semantic Contiguity category were employed 13 times; 3 times (23%) by the male subjects, and 10 times (77%) by the female subjects. From 5 times (3.42%) used of Word Coinage, 3 times (60%) were employed by the male subjects, meanwhile the rest 2 times (40%) were used by the female subjects. Meanwhile, from 34 times used of Repetition Category, 18 times (53%) were employed by the male subjects, and 16 times (47%) were employed by the female subjects. Repetition category was the second most dominant strategy used by

the subjects. There were 23.3% (34 times) of repetition; 18 times (53%) employed by male subjects, and 16 times (47%) employed by female subjects. The last strategy employed by the subjectsis Self-Improvisation category. It got 20.5% (30 times), which 12 times (20%) employed by the male subjects, and 18 times (80%) used by the female subjects.

The findings displayed and described above has given a clear description that both subjects-both male and female used all types of L1-based and L2-based communication strategies. Most of the subjects' problems were dealt with linguistic deficiencies and limited vocabulary mastery. As a result, when they wanted to express their idea they were confronted with problems, and so they used communication strategies. Unfortunately, despite of using L2-based strategies, they decided to use L1-based strategies, which were unbeneficial to their communicative competencies.

The findings above are relevant with the belief that communication strategies deal with the use of linguistic knowledge. Tarone (1981, cited in French & Casper, 1983) says that communication strategies are used to compensate for some lacks in the linguistic system, and focus on exploring alternate ways of using what one does know for the transmission of a message without necessarily considering situational appropriateness. The subjects used transliteration as an L1-based strategy because they did not know the appropriate lexicons to produce. However, their lexical limitation did not result in their halting. They used a wide range of strategies to achieve their communication goal.

If we take a closer look, male learners seems to employ a greater number of L1-based strategies. Bailystock (1990), called this as achievement strategies; a strategy which help a speaker to reach the communication goal not the communicative competence. This is because, the male subjects were assumed to have more knowledge about the topic being discussed; *"Tom Went Fishing"*. As a result, they had more to say. In contrast, female learners dominantly used L2-based strategies. theydid not face many troubles to express their ideas in L2. Due to their limited knowledge of the topic being discussed, they did not speak too detail. Therefore, they tried to communicate effectively. However, one thing in common for both male and female subjects were their troubles with linguistic deficiencies and limited vocabulary.

Additionally, summing up from the interview result from the subjects, overall they agreed that the using of communication strategies were very helpful in accommodating their communication difficulties, whichare mainly based on their lacking of content/concept of the topic given, and their linguistic deficiency. By employing communication strategies, they managed to deliver their message easier and clearer, and so help them to solve their problems at the time of difficulty.

Referring to the aforementioned interview results, it can clearly be seen that overall, the major goal of why both group of subjects employed communication strategies is for the sake of their communicative effectiveness despite of their communication competencies in doing the communication task given. This is actually what Canale (1983 cited in An Mei, 2010) called as strategic competence; one of communicative competences besides grammatical, sociolinguistic, and discourse competences. Furthermore, Canale& Swain (1980) suggested that this type of competence is demonstrated when individuals use communication strategies. Typical examples include the use of paraphrase, avoidance of difficulties, and requests for repetition, simplification, clarification, or slower speech. In short, even though the students might not aware that they were applying the strategic competence; their efforts apparently direct them to have

the communicative effectiveness by avoiding communication breakdown and making their communication fluent with communication strategies. Thus, these efforts actually give a significant contribution for their communicative competence. As Clouston (1997 cited in Maleki 2010), states that communication strategies contribute to the development of the communicative competence of L2 learners.

Therefore, language teachers aiming at developing the communicative competence of learners should be familiar with communication strategies. However, teaching communication strategies is not that easy because teachers should be able to select the appropriate communication strategies for their students, since not all communication strategies are beneficial for the students' language development.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, it is concluded that all subjects--both male and female employed communication strategies to tackle their communication difficulties. The linguistic deficiencies, and limited vocabulary mastery when communicating in target language, have made them aware of using various communication strategies in their communicative production. Their prior knowledge of the target language has determined their adoption of the strategies. The more language problems they have in communication, the more strategies they adopted.

The result of the study described that all subjects used achievement strategies to overcome their communication problems. When confronted with problems like being unable to recall relevant vocabularies, concepts, or things in the target language; they tended to resorted to strategies. By expanding their communicative resources, they used various types of achievement strategies of which the most dominant ones were: "transliteration", "repetition", and "self-improvisation". Due to their strong desire to communicate, the subjects used "Language Switch" and "Semantic Contiguity". In line with the aforementioned result, the interview result has revealed that the male subjects affirmed that by employing communication strategies, they were able to deliver the messages more smoothly and clearly. Meanwhile, the female subjects believed that by employing various kinds of communication strategies, their communication would be more fluent and so they would not be stuck in the middle of the communication. The male subjects used communication strategies in order to avoid communication breakdown, meanwhile, female subjects used communication strategies for their communications fluency. To conclude, to communicate effectively, the subjects used the strategies, which were relevant with their knowledge of the target language.Based on the findings, findings then lead to the suggestions that teachers should consider introducing the appropriate communication strategies to students and incorporating them in the teaching and learning through the classroom activities. This is to build communicativecompetencies, which will enable them to communicate effectively.

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