

Communication Strategies Used By Students of English Conversation Club Of Sragen Bilingual Boarding School

Begench Soyunov, Dewi Rochsantiningih, Suparno

**English Education Department
Sebelas Maret University
Surakarta**

Email: begench86@gmail.com

Abstract: This study was aimed to find out the types of communication strategies used by the learners of one Bilingual Boarding School at Sragen year X and to figure out the most types used by the learners. The subject of the study was 20 members of ECC Students (English Conversation Club). Interview was conducted to collect art of in this research. The interview was used to help the researcher set the classroom with debate classroom, recorded, and then transcript the conversation. The researcher recorded the conversation. The result of the study shows that there are eleven types of communication strategies used by the learners; circumlocution, approximation, word coinage, code switching, use of nonlinguistic means, appeal for help, use of all-purpose words, using fillers, using wrong terms, self-correction, and repetition. Fillers, Circumlocution and Repetition are the strategies mostly used by the learners. Based on the result of the study, the researcher inferred that the learners of Sragen Bilingual Boarding School (SBBS) face difficulties in their communication. The higher number of learning using fillers, indicates that they hesitate too much in delivering their opinion. They are also nervous, afraid to make mistakes, and not confident enough to give their opinion.

Keywords: *communication, communication strategies, type of communication strategies, qualitative research.*

INTRODUCTION

English is very important for students in Bilingual School because it is used as a medium of teaching and learning process. Moreover, this kind of school needs to give more time to make their students get a better understanding in English. It is difficult for the students of Bilingual School to develop English speaking ability because of the absence of natural input in the environment outside the classroom. Their exposure to English is intermittent and mostly in the classroom setting. As a result, most students are still unable to use the knowledge that

they have learned in the classroom in real situations outside the classroom.

Since English is very important, the ability to communicate in English becomes more important. Communication means a way of giving information to others. In other words, communication is to get our messages across (Savignon, 1983). It means that communication is a way of transferring messages from the addressor (the speaker/writer) to the addressee (the listener/reader). Some students may have better communication abilities but some students may not. Dealing with the reality

above, learning how to be a better communicator is important for all of us. Better communication means better understanding of us and others. Moreover, it is important that people should understand with what they are trying to say. Practically, they sometimes face a difficulty in conveying their message, especially in second language. This phenomenon also appears with second language learners (L2), they are often confronted with this linguistic problem. Although this occasionally leads to a breakdown in communication, L2 learners generally manage to overcome the problem by employing what are known as communication strategies (CS).

Non-native and native speakers of a given language sometimes try harder to get appropriate words when attempting to communicate their meaning. The ways in which an individual speaker manages to compensate for this gap between what he/she wishes to communicate and his/her immediately available linguistic resources are known as CS (Bialystok, 1990). In addition, CS are defined as a “systematic technique employed by a speaker to express his/her meaning when faced with difficulty” (Dornyei, 1995:56). The word of “difficulty” here, means that a lack of vocabulary and basic grammar of the target language. This difficulty appears not only to EFL learners but also L2 learners. In reality, both of them face the same problem. Observing people’s way to communicate with others using their second language (English) that they do not mastered yet is interesting, because each learner has their own way to overcome their problem. Even sometimes they do not realize that they apply certain CS in their conversation. According to Fiske (Fiske (1990:1) assumed that communication involves signs and codes, in which signs are artefacts or acts

that refer to something other than themselves; that is, they are signifying constructs. Codes are the systems into which signs are organized and which determine how signs may be related to each other. From the statement above, it can be concluded that communication is the combination between signs and codes. Here, signs represent the way of someone to refer something, while codes show the form of the system which determine how those signs may relate to each other.

According to Ellis (1997) CS are ways to make conversation go on, because every learner in second language actually has a problem in saying what they want to say because of their inadequate knowledge. The kinds of strategies are avoid problematic items, borrow a word from their first language, or use another target language word that is approximate in meaning, paraphrase, and creates an entirely new word. Littlewood (1984) states that CS are actually used by the learners in coping with the situation and also get the meaning across. There are eight types of CS. Those are avoiding communication, adjusting the message, using paraphrase, using approximation, creating new words, switching to native language, using non-linguistics resource, and seeking help. In addition, Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics stated that CS are ways used to express a meaning in second or foreign language, by a learner who has limited command of the language.

Tarone (1980) said that CS are a cooperation of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared. Moreover, CS is a systemic technique employed by a speaker to express his/her meaning when faced with difficulty, Dornyei (1995:56). In addition, CS are a

way of speakers to overcome their problem in expressing their meaning in conversation using L2. According to Dornyei (1995), there are twelve types of CS. In this research, the researcher used CS theory proposed by Dornyei (1995:58).

The taxonomy of CS based on Dornyei (1995: 58). (1) Message abandonment: Leaving a message unfinished because of language difficulties. (2) Topic avoidance: Avoiding topic areas or concepts that pose language difficulties. (3) Circumlocution: This is the strategy used by learners, in which, they describe or paraphrase the target object or action. For example: if a learner does not know the word *corkscrew*, he/she replaces it by saying „*the thing that you use to open the bottle*’. (4) Approximation: a learner uses an alternative term to express the meaning of the target lexical item as closely as possible. For example: *ship* for *sail boat*, *pipe* for *water pipe*. (5) Word Coinage: a learner creates an L2 word based on his/her knowledge of morphological rules. The words are not stated in the dictionary; so, the learners create those words by themselves based on morphological rules that they know. For example: *vegetarianist* for *vegetarian*. (*vegetarianist* is not stated in the dictionary). (6) Code Switching : learners use their L1 with L1 pronunciation. For example: if a learner does not know the English word for *baki*, he/she will say *baki* with L2 pronunciation. (7) Use of Non-linguistic Means : a learner uses non-linguistic resources such as mime, gesture, facial expression, and sound imitation to help him/her in expressing the meaning. For example: a learner uses his/her hands and gets like flying refer to *birds*. (8) Appeal for Help: learners ask their friends or teacher for help because they do not know or forget some words, structures, and idioms. For

example: *What do you call ...?*) or indirectly (e.g., rising intonation, pause, eye contact, puzzled expression). (9) Foreignizing : learners use L1 word by adjusting it to L2 phonologically. For example: a learner does not know the word *tap*, he/she uses the L1 word that is *kran*, but with L2 pronunciation, he/she says *kren*. (10) Literal Translation: learners translate lexical item, an idiom, or structure from their L1 to L2. For example: when a Mandarin speaker describes two people toasting one another by translating the equivalent Mandarin expression as; ”*He invites him to drink*”. (11) Use of all-purpose words: learners expand an empty lexical item to context where certain words are lacking. For example: the over use of the words *thing* (*stuff, make, do, what do you call it, what is it*). (12) Use of fillers/hesitation devices: a learner may use filling words to fill pause or and to gain to think. For example: *well, let me see then, as a matter of fact*.

RESEARCH METHODS

This qualitative research was carried out at the tenth grade of SMP-SMA Sragen Bilingual Boarding School in 2013-2014 academic year. The classroom is at the second floor. The class is large, so it has enough places for managing every activity. Moreover the campus of the SBBS is available for more extracurricular activities. The research was carried out in February 2014 – May 2014 by students of English conversation club. In order to collect data about the group discussion, the researcher used audio recording. In this study, the researcher set the class into debate discussion. The students were divided into affirmative and negative groups. The debates were meant to be casual, so that they were provided with some topics to be debated. They were informed that their

communication performance was important and their discussion would be audio-taped. The researcher got the data from the transcription as the main source. The transcription was taken from the recording and note taking done by the researcher while he observed the class. He recorded the conversation in the class to help him to recheck his notes. He also transcription the data contains with CS. Then, he classified those data recorded to the types of CS.

The researcher used role-play situation. In this case, the researcher made group and created a debate competition with three topics discussed by the respondents. In other words, this technique was not a natural event. The researcher made an appointment to the ECC teacher for dealing with the research. After that, the researcher made six groups. Those groups consisted of three affirmative groups and three negative groups, and each group consisted with three students.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study was conducted to find out the types of CS used by the learners. This research was also conducted to find out the CS mostly used by the learners. Based on the data analysis, there were eleven (11) types of CS found in conversation of the

Sragen Bilingual Boarding School (SBBS) Sragen Year X. There were; circumlocution, approximation, word coinage, using nonlinguistic means, code switching, appealing for help, using all-purpose words, using fillers, using wrong terms, self-correction, and repetition.

The researcher found eleven (11) types of CS with eight (8) types of CS based on theory from Dornyei and three (3) additional CS. The additional CS found are using wrong terms, repetition, and self-correction. The subjects of the research did not use topic avoidance, message abandonment, foreignizing, and literal translation might be because they had to give their opinion about the topic given no matter how hard they should try to speak. It might be because they were not brave enough in adjusting their L1 words into L2 phonologically and translating lexical item, an idiom, or structure from their L1 to L2. However, they used additional strategies such as using wrong terms, repetition and self-correction because these subjects were hesitate too much so they needed time to think of certain words by repeating some words, they made some errors so that they needed correction, and they were anxious so that they used wrong terms. Table 1 shows the CS used the most by the learners.

Table 1: The types of Communication Strategies Used the Most by The Learners

Topic	C	A	WC	CS	UN	AH	UP	UF	UW	SC	R	CS	Total
1.	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	2	-	5	12
2.	-	1	-	4	-	2	-	1	-	-	-	4	8
3.	9	2	1	4	1	1	1	13	3	8	11	11	54
Total	11	6	1	8	1	3	1	16	5	10	11	11	73
Used of the Most CS	11			8				16		10	11	5	56
Notes: C : Circumlocution A : Approximation WC : Word Coinage CS : Code Switching			UN : Use of Non-linguistics Means AH : Appeal for Help UP : Use of all-purpose Words UF : Use of Filler/hesitation devices					UW : Using Wrong Terms SC : Self Correction R : Repetition					

Table 1 show that using fillers is the Communication Strategy mostly used by the learners. Using fillers appeared sixteen (16) times. Which include fillers: *hmmm, eehh, aahh, like that, let say, I think, may be, and you know*.

1. The next highest CS were Circumlocution and Repetition. Both of them got the same point. Circumlocution appeared eleven (11) times. The example of using circumlocution in this research were; *lose our existence* to refer to “*extinct*”, *they who suffer* to refer to “*sufferer*”, *people who smoke* to refer to “*smokers*” etc. As the additional strategy, repetition got eleven (11) total number too. Here were the examples of repetition; *...why, why... the right, the right..., take example, example..., the ashes, the ashes etc*.
2. Self-Correction, as the additional strategy appeared after repetition. It got the total number of 10. As it had been stated before, self-correction was the strategy in which the subjects corrected the utterances they had uttered before so that the listeners could understand what he/she actually meant; for example, *... for them to keep money... I mean keep earning money.....*
3. The communication strategy mostly used by the learners was Code Switching. It got eight (8) points. Most of the code switching appeared using learners’ L1. Here were the example; *public wartel* to refer to “*payphone*”, *demi tuhan* to refer to *oh god*, *kenapa* to refer to “*why*” etc.
4. The communication strategy was Approximation. It got six (6) points. The example of approximation were; *lessons* to refer to “*practical life skill*”, *the study system* to refer to “*learning process*”, *it’s a kind of stupid* to refer to “*silly*”, and *time by time* to refer to “*soon or later*”.

5. The communication strategy was Using Wrong Terms. As a new strategy, it got the total number of five(5). As it was mentioned before, it was the strategy in which the speaker used other words, it could be English or Indonesian, but with different meaning from the target words. Here were the example of using wrong terms strategy; *very equally* to refer to “*useful*”, *it used* to refer to “*before*”, *decrease our country* to refer to “*destroy our country*”, and *human rule* to refer to “*ordinary rule*”.
6. The next CS were Appeal for Help. This strategy got three (3) points, *apa namanya?, apa?*. Here, the speaker asked their friends directly for some certain words. Such as “*public wartel*” to refer to “*payphone*”, “*iri*” to refer to “*envy*”, and “*kebakaran*” to refer to “*fire*”.
7. The last CS were Use of Nonlinguistic Means and use of all-purpose words. Each of them got only one (1) point. It meant that they got the lowest number. Here was the example of use of nonlinguistic means; *gesture (the speaker made a shape of box using his hands to refer to smoking room)*. The example of use of all-purpose words; *what is it?*.

In this research, the researcher used the types of CS proposed by Dornyei (1995). There have been some previous researches that investigate the types of CS in conversations. A research conducted by Ikawati (2011) showed that the students employed ten out of twelve Dornyei's Classification of CS (1995). The two strategies which are not employed by the students are Circumlocution and Word Coinage. However, there are also other CS employed by students which do not belong to Dornyei's Classification of C S (1995) i.e: Repetition Strategy, Trial/Self-Correction

Strategy, and Combination of Some Strategies.

The learners tended to use fillers as their strategy when facing the difficulties rather than the other strategies. Most of these subjects gained time to think if they faced difficulties in debating. The aim of this strategy was to gain time to think. In this strategy, they used hesitation device such as; *hmm*, *eehh*, and *ahh*, to gain time to think, like this sentence... It is *more eeeh...more* save our country. The other example; He just throw the cigarette and *the ashes...eeeh...the ashes* everywhere. The sentences were containing with fillers strategy, but sometimes accompanied with repetition strategy. So, they used fillers and repetition strategies together to get more time to think of certain words or linguistic structures. Circumlocution means describing or paraphrasing the target object or action. The subjects described the word with *the people who smoke* to refer to “*smokers*”. The other strategy got the same number was Repetition. In this strategy, the subjects gained time to think in giving their opinion. So, this additional strategy can be included in time gaining strategy since the purpose of this strategy is to get more time to think. Here, the subjects repeated the same word or words to gain time to think. It could be because they were nervous to speak in front of the class or they forgot words or structures they actually knew. In other words, they could not concentrate well.

The utterances like *It is not the room is very... very.... dangerous if they are smoking together* contain repetition strategy that usually accompanied with long paused too. It had the same common with the utterances which contain with fillers. This strategy was also aimed to gain time to think.

Next is an additional strategy, self-correction. In this strategy, the subject corrected the utterances they had uttered before so that the listeners could understand what he/she actually meant; for instance, a subject said “... *about giving money to charity, because **most eh not most** some charities*”.... In this utterance, the subject corrected the word “*most*” into “*some*”. The other examples were; ..”.*to keep money... I mean keep earning money*”... , “*you can make **ten eh no no no thousand million** rooms*”..., etc. From those examples, the subjects actually wanted to correct the words “*keep money*” into “*keep earning money*”, “*ten*” into “*thousand million*”. In this strategy, the subjects usually corrected misspelling, grammatical mistakes, etc.

Based on this finding, the researcher concludes that the subjects who correct their words want to give explanation as clearly as possible to their listener, so that the listener could get better understanding about the utterances being told. In code switching, the subjects switched the difficult words into Indonesian the student’s L1 For instance, the subjects said “*public wartel*”, “*demi Tuhan*”, and so on to refer to “*payphone*”, and “*Oh God*”.

Approximation is the strategy in which a learner uses another term to express the meaning of the target lexical item as closely as possible. They usually forget what they wanted to say or lacked vocabularies. As the consequence, they used similar words to the target words. Furthermore, the use of approximation by the subjects was usually accompanied by using fillers like; *hmmm*, *eee*, and repetition. The words that had been approximated in this research were; “*the learning process*” changed into “*the study system*”, “*silly*” changed into “*stupid*”, “*soon or later*” changed into “*time by time*”, etc.

The next is about using wrong terms, in which the subjects used other English or Indonesian words but with different meaning from the target words. So, in this case, it can be stated that they used the wrong terms to refer to the target words. The words they had chosen did not have any relation to the target words at all. The use of the words; “*very equally*”, “*it used*”, “*human*”, to refer to “*useful*”, “*before*”, and “*ordinary*”. The example of the utterances containing using wrong terms strategy are; “*..and it will be very equally..*” “*...and or even more...worse than it used*”... Here, “*very equally*” is used to refer to “*useful*”, “*used*” is used to refer to “*before*”. “*very equally*” and “*useful*” do not have any relation, and so do “*used*” and “*before*”.

From this finding, the researcher concludes that the subjects used this strategy because they want to keep their explanation going well without many pauses. The researcher assumes that these subjects might know that they have chosen the wrong terms, but they still use them in order to keep their conversation running smoothly. Instead of thinking too hard for certain English terms, they change them into different or wrong terms to state the target terms. In appealing for help, the subjects asked their friends of certain words directly; such as, “*...public cellular...apamamanya?*”..

The lowest number strategies were word coinage, using of nonlinguistic means, and using of all-purpose words. In word coinage, the subject only did only once from all utterances. That was “*unsmokers*” to refer to “*nonsmokers*”. The subject used gesture in using nonlinguistic means. Thus, they used “*what is it*” words in using of all-purpose words.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

In this research, the learners discussed three topics; “Prohibit People for Giving Money to Beggars,” “Banned Junior High School Students to Bring Cellular Phone and Prohibit People Smoking in Public Places”. Based on the result of this study, and the discussion above, it can be concluded that there are eleven (11) types of CS used by the learners; circumlocution, approximation, word coinage, code switching, use of nonlinguistic means, appeal for help, use of all-purpose words, using fillers, using wrong terms, self-correction, and repetition. So the researcher suggest that by knowing, understanding, and using the types of CS which can help the learners in order to make their conversation run smoothly and clear, the researcher hopes the learners can improve their speaking performance in communication with English. For the next researcher, this research can give contribution for those who want to conduct further research; such as, communication apprehension related to CS, finding the reasons of having communication apprehension, and finding the appropriate style of teaching speaking in a foreign language classroom which can reduce anxiety

Circumlocution and repetition are also the Communication Strategies mostly used by the learners. In circumlocution, the learners describe the target objects or actions. It may happen because the learners face difficulties in giving their opinion. And then, repetition, in this strategy, the subjects gained time to think in giving their opinion.

To sum up, in this research, the researcher finds that it is absolutely true that the learners of Sragen Bilingual Boarding School (SBBS) face difficulties in their communication. The higher number of using fillers indicates that they hesitate too much

in delivering their opinion. They are also nervous, afraid to make mistakes, and not confident enough to give their opinion.

There are some suggestions addressed for Learners. First, this research about the Communication Strategies used by the learners is useful for learners who learn English as second language. Learners, who learn English, especially in classroom situation, are usually worried, anxious, and nervous to communicate. By knowing, understanding, and using the types of Communication Strategies which can help the learners in order to make their conversation run smoothly and clear, the researcher hopes the learners can improve their speaking performance in communication with English.

At the end of this research, the researcher hopes that this research can give contribution for those who want to conduct further research; such as, communication apprehension related to communication strategies, finding the reasons of having communication apprehension, and finding the appropriate style of teaching speaking in a foreign language classroom which can reduce anxiety.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Benz, C. & Newman, I. (1998). *The Qualitative-Quantitative Research Methodology: Exploring the Interactive Continuum*. Northern: Illinois University Press, 176.
- Bialystok, E. 1990. *Communication Strategies*. Blackwell: Oxford.
- Bogdan, R. C. & Biklin, S. K. (1992) *Qualitative research for education: an introduction to theory and methods 4th edn*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon
- Brown, H.D. (1995). *Teaching by Principles. An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.
- Cohen et. all. 2007. *Research Methods in Education 6th Edition*. New York: Routledge.
- Creswell, J. W. (1994) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five traditions* (Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage). London: SAGE
- Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994) *Introduction: the discipline and practice of qualitative research, in: N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds) Handbook of qualitative research (2nd edn)* (Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage). London: SAGE 1_28.
- Dornyei, Z. 1995. *On the Teachability of Communication Strategies. TESOL QUARTERLY*. London: Sage Publications. 29, 55-85.
- Dornyei, S. & Scott, M. L. 1997. *Communication Strategies on Second Language: Definitions and Taxonomies*. Budapest: Eotuos University, pp 173-210.
- Ellis, Rod. 1997. *Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Fetterman, D.M. 1989. *Ethnography Step By Step*. London: SAGE Publication.
- Fiske, J. 1990. *Introduction to Communication Studies (2nd Edition)* by Routledge. New York: Oxford University Press
- Guba, E.G., and Lincoln, Y.S. (1994). *Effective Evaluation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Ikawati, T. 2011. *Communication Strategies Employed by the Students at SMA Negeri 8 Malang*. Graduate Program in English Language Education. Malang: State University of Malang.
- Littlewood, William (1984). *Foreign and Second Language Learning*. England: Cambridge. C.U.P.
- Patton, J. (2002). *Analysis of thinking and research about qualitative methods*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Rahayu, F. 2004. *The Communication Strategies Produced by Good Students and Poor Students of Speaking 4 of the English Department of Petra Christian University*. Indonesia, Surabaya: English Department of Petra Christian University.
- Sugiyono.2008. *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan: Pendekatan Kuantitatif, kualitatif, dan R&D (Research Development)*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
- Tarone, E. 1980. *Conscious Communication Strategies in Interlanguage: A Progress Report*. TESOL 77: Teaching and Learning ESL. Washington: TESOL.
- Wongsawang. 2001. *Culture Specific Notions In L2 Communication Strategies*. Thailand: Faculty of Arts of A University in Thailand.