

# COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES USED BY ENGLISH TEACHER IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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## Abstract

The aim of this study is to find out the communication strategies used by English Senior High School Teachers in Bengkulu Tengah. This study belongs to mix method which involved questionnaire and interview to collect the required data. Questionnaire was distributed to 21 teachers who were teaching at the senior high school 2020/2021 academic year. Then interview, was employed to enrich the data. The data were analyzed by using Dornyei & Scott's (1997) taxonomy of communication strategies. The results show that the English teachers in Bengkulu Tengah more prefer to use communication strategy in the form of prefabricated patterns, nonlinguistic mean and stalling or time gaining. They also try to use those communication strategies in good order from change the word that the student unfamiliar with to familiar word, then they use the body gesture to stress the meaning and last, they use code mix or partial translation to make students get the meaning. The use of those communication strategies is underlying two main reason which are solving the speaking problems and making interactive speaking situation. Teachers employed the various communication strategies to stimulate students to be more active during teaching and learning process.

**Keywords:** Communication Strategies, English Teacher, Teaching English as Foreign Language

## INTRODUCTION

Teaching English as a foreign language is not easy to do. There are a lot of research try to find out the effective way in teaching English as foreign language. The process of teaching and learning has purpose to help the students in learning the English and acquire four English language skills like writing, speaking, reading and listening. Thus the students can use English appropriately in real communication (Renandya, 2018). So many challenges are faced by teachers in Teaching English as Foreign Language. The common challenges that has been faced by the English teacher are low of language proficiency, lack of material resources, less of participation and enthusiasm. Those challenges make the teacher have to think and initiate innovative idea in teaching and learning. Moreover, lack of environmental support such as no one want to use English and help other individual to acquire the language and communication gap between teacher and student are the problems which are not easy to be solved (Agung, 2019). The teacher have to create supportive environment and interactive situation in communication in order to achieve the purpose of teaching and learning English which are be able to use the language in the communication and language function such as leave taking, feeling sorry, giving advice, apologizing and greeting (Hery, 2017).

However, in order to achieve the goal of teaching and learning English as foreign language, most of student faced many problems, especially in speaking activity or where the language is used in oral communication. The speaking problems that faced by student are lack of lexis, lack of listening and practicing, and psychological problems such as shy, less of motivation and

willingness to communicate. Moreover, the student also get used to use their first language (L1) therefore they feel difficult to learn and to use English in daily communication. They tend to be afraid in making mistakes and feel that they do not understand what someone is going to say in English (Alaraj, 2017).

From the challenges and the problems faced by the teacher and students to achieve the purpose of teaching and learning English as a foreign language, the role of teacher is important to be considered. The teachers have to have good English language proficiency, good ability in managing classroom and having good confidence and self-control (Alzeebaree & Hasan, 2020). Furthermore, good English teachers should be involved in the recent field, use effective instructional techniques, and having individual initiative. The last criteria of good teacher that has big role are having linguistic competence, sociocultural competence, strategic competence, and discourse competence.

The linguistic competence is the knowledge of language which contains about phonology, morphology, syntax, and grammar. The sociocultural competence is how the social and cultural rules can influence the development of language. While discourse competence is the form of language and communication structure. The last is strategic competence. It is the most important skill that they teacher should have because this competence will be proved the ability of teacher in overcoming language difficulties and enhance communication (Al-seghayer, 2017).

One of the best strategic competence is providing appropriate communication strategy for the students. According to Dornyei (1995) communication strategy is a systematic technique employed by a speaker to express his or her meaning when faced with some difficulty. It is a systematic technique employed by speakers to express the meaning of words or utterances. Communication strategies are important in helping second or foreign language learners to communicate successfully when they face the production problem due to their lack of linguistic knowledge. Dornyei classifies communication strategies into 13. They are message abandonment, topic avoidance, circumlocution, approximation, use of all-purpose words, Word-coinage, Prefabricated patterns, Use of nonlinguistic means, literal translation, foreignizing, code-switching, appeal for help, use of filler/ hesitation devices.

Boxer and Cohen (2004) define Communications strategies as "a systematic attempt by the speakers or the learners to deliver or give the exact meaning that is not proportionate with the rules of the target language. Tarone (1981) has defined communication strategy is an attempt by two speakers to agree on a meaning in the target language. Learners usually use these communication strategies to compensate for the insufficiency of knowledge. These strategies will help the speaker to pass his/her message effectively.

Due to the important of communication strategy, several previous work are interested to investigate this case in depth. The first study has been conducted by Permana, Sofyan & Kasmairi (2019) analyzed communication strategies applied by English study program students in Speaking Presentation. The second study is done by Jumiaty, Gani, and Sari (2017) researched communication strategies used by the English teacher in SMAN 3 Banda Aceh.

From those previous work, the researcher interest to have the preliminary study on October 2020, in some senior high school at Bengkulu Tengah. The preliminary study was done through observation process. The researcher tried to follow the English class and did the observation. The result of preliminary study showed that there were a lot of speaking problem faced by the

students such as the student did not want to participate, did not understand well when their teacher used English and there is big influence from their mother tongue when they were in English class. However, the researcher also saw that the teacher tried to use their body gesture or use synonym word in order to make the students more understood about what they were talking to them. Those action were included in the communication strategy. The preliminary study also showed that most of senior high schools in Bengkulu Tengah have unique condition where the students are reluctant to speak English and they more tend to use their mother tongue language.

The finding of preliminary study and the result of previous work that showed difference result in using communication strategy thus the researcher would like to do further research about the communication strategy. Even though, there are many prior studies which had been conducted in communication strategy but only few studies find out the reason of using communication strategies based on teacher perception. Therefore, the researcher decided to have a study about the communication strategy used by teacher in the English as Foreign Language and the reason why they use the strategies.

## METHOD

This study used mix method to collect the data. Öztürk & Şahin (2019) stated that the use of mixed method gives deeper and richer finding to answer the research problem by combining quantitative and qualitative research. The subjects of this research were twenty-one Senior High School English teachers in Bengkulu Tengah. The researcher decided to use two instruments for this research which were the interview guideline and questionnaire. The use of questionnaire collected the data related to common communication strategies used by the English teachers in Bengkulu Tengah after they filled the questionnaire (Creswell, 2012). Meanwhile the interview was used to find out the reasons on why the English teacher used certain communication strategies.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

From twenty one respondents, they have variance answers about the communication strategy. To classify the answer of respondent, the researcher set the indicator which had been explain in detail through table 4.3.

Table 4.3 The Indicator of Category

Range	Category
0 % – 19%	Never
20% - 39%	Rarely
40% – 59%	Sometime
60% – 79%	Often
80% – 100%	Always

From this indicator, the result of communication of strategy were classified and presented in table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Communication Strategies used by the English Teachers

Type	Score	Category
1. Message abandonment	42,27%	Sometime
2. Topic avoidance	52,42%	Sometime

3. Circumlocution	67,88%	Often
4. Approximation	67,73%	Often
5. Use of the all-purpose word	67,27%	Often
6. Word coinage	50,54%	Sometime
7. Prefabricated patterns	70,91%	Often
8. Use of non-linguistics means	77,27%	Often
9. Literal translation	65,27%	Often
10. Foreignizing	62,27%	Often
11. Code-switching	54,09%	Sometime
12. Appeal for help	60,91%	Often
13. Stalling or time gaining	68,79%	Often

Table 4.4 showed that from thirteen types of communication strategy, only two categories were identified which were often and sometime. Nine types of communication strategy which were type 3,4,5,7,8,9,10,12, and 13 involved in Often category. It meant that teachers used those communication strategies actively. The use of those communication strategies proved that the teacher were quite familiar with those strategies.

While for other four types of strategies which were type 1, 2, 6 and 11 were included in sometime category. It meant that, the teacher did not well those category or they were in doubt whether they used one or more those types of communication strategies.

However, since the objective of this research focused to find out the communication strategy that used the most, therefore detail explanation were given for the types that were included in often category.

The result of questionnaire showed that type 3,4,5,7,8,9,10,12 and 13 were the common types of communication strategy. Based on this result, the researcher did the interview to respondents to find out the reasons on why the do those types of communication strategies.

Depend on the result of interview, the researcher got some reasons why the respondents use those types of communication strategy. The first reason is that the students do not get the meaning when their teacher are speaking English. Since, English is a foreign language for them and they are not get used to use it therefore sometime the students do not understand about what the teacher said. They also have problem in term of vocabulary. They do not have sufficient vocabulary to speak and to understand unfamiliar word. Thus, the English teacher tried to use type 7,8, and 9 to overcome the problem. The respondent 5 said that:

*“The students do not understand when I use full English so I have to mix my language with Bahasa and emphasize the meaning by using body gesture. Those action will make them more understand what I meant and we can have good interaction in communication.”*

Agreeing with respondent 5, respondent 3 narrated that:

*“The conversation will stop if the students do not understand what the speaker says to them. Therefore, I prefer to use body gesture and mix some word in Bahasa. Sometime, I also tried to translate from bahasa to English or vice versa but I think it is the last option of communication strategy. For me, the most important thing in communication is the intention of listener and speaker can be conveyed well.”*

The second reason is that the students do miss understanding and give unappropriated responses for the teacher. When it happened to the teacher as the speaker and the students as the listener. The teacher chose to have type 3, 4 or 5. Respondent 4 argued that:

*“When I teach and use full English, sometime I find the students give wrong responses. For instance, I order to do something then they do it but not appropriate with my order. I think because my students do not have sufficient vocabulary so I choose to search the example or to give the description of something that I want to say. Sometime, I also use some synonym word to make them understood”*

Respondent 2 added that:

*“When the students do not give response to me when I speak to them, firstly, I will change my word with the word that the students familiar with. If they still do not understand, I will use the body gesture and last try to translate some word to bahasa. The word such like, call, are used to show the students what the teacher are going to say”*

Lack interaction and confidence are the last reason of using common communication strategies. The respondent 1 tells that when the students do not understand what the teachers says in English, they are reluctant to speak and lose their confidence to speak. To overcome this situation, most of the teacher prefer to use 10, 12, and 13 type of communication strategies. By taking time and appealing for help, the teacher tried to show that losing idea or do not know some words while we have speaking activity are common problem. So the students do not need to be shy or reluctant to speak.

The respondent 1 narrated that:

*“My student always keep silent when they do not understand what I say to them. They seem like losing the confidence and they tend not to participate in speaking activity. To face this problem, I often ask my student to open the dictionary when they do not know some words in English. I also never be shy when I lost my ideas when I speak I really want to show with them that losing the idea or do not know some words are the common problem so no need to be worry.”*

From the result above, it can be summarized that the use of those common type of communication strategies because the English teachers have the intention to solve the problem such as miss understanding, lack of interaction and confidence. Furthermore, they also want the meaning of what they say which can be conveyed well.

## Discussion

The finding of study show that there are nine types of communication strategy that used in common by English teacher. They are Circumlocution, Approximation, Approximation, Word coinage, Prefabricated patterns, Use of non-linguistics means, Literal translation, Foreignizing, Appeal for help, Stalling or time gaining. The influence of this factor is supported by the study showed that experienced teacher is someone who already teaches at least four or five years use communication strategy less than inexperienced teacher and less of redundant (Rahmani Doqaruni, 2017).

The results of the research showed that most of teacher use it because they want to solve students' speaking problem such as lack of vocabulary and less motivation in speaking. The



reasons that have been found in using communication strategy are also supported by the result of previous studies stated that the communication strategy bring a lot of advantages for the user such as decreasing speaking anxiety, improving the ability of conveying the meaning in order to keep the conversation going (Isai et al., 2018; Tsai, 2018)

## CONCLUSION

Based on the result and the discussion of study, The teacher preferred to use Circumlocution, Approximation, Use all-purpose word, Prefabricated patterns, Use of non-linguistic means, Literal Translation, Foreignizing, Appeal for help and Stalling or time gaining to solve the speaking problems and to make interactive speaking situation.

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