

## Communication Strategies of Indonesian Bilingual School Students: An Analysis in One Way Communication Context

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**Abstract:** Considerable bodies of the study reveal that communication strategies are very critical in the communication process. They functioned to solve the linguistics insufficiency or breakdowns in communication and to help learners communicate effectively. Besides, undoubtedly, these strategies contribute not only in two-way communications but also one-way communications. This study was, therefore, to investigate how Indonesian EFL students in a bilingual school utilize communication strategies in their speech in the public speaking training and the reason why they use those strategies. The participants were 4 students from a bilingual boarding school. All of them were female who used Javanese as their mother tongue. The data were collected by observations and interviews. The students' speech performances during the speech training program were video recorded and then transcribed and analyzed. The result revealed that students tended to use *self-repair*, *fillers* and *hesitation devices* in their speech. They used *self-repair* and *filler* mostly when they needed time to think what they wanted to say. However, *self-repair* was also used by students when they were aware of their mistakes, so they repeated their utterances. Furthermore, the students' linguistic limitation also became problematic in the students' speech process. The study revealed that students lacked vocabulary and understanding grammar became an obstacle in students' speech.

**Keywords:** Communication Strategies; EFL learners; Speech training; one-way communication.

## **Introduction**

As a global language, English has become the most studied language in the world. Crystal (2003) stated that English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) in over 100 countries, likewise in Indonesia. For EFL learners, speaking or communicating in English is not as easy as communicating in their native language. Students may overcome many problems during the communication process. Especially, speaking in front of people such as a presentation or public speaking is more challenging. The students may nervous or afraid their message cannot be transferred effectively to the others. In accordance with that, some previous studies revealed that communication strategies become an important element in the process of communication as a problem solver (Tarone, 1981; Dörnyei & Scott, 1997, and Nakatani, 2006). This strategy can help students to overcome some problems in the communication process.

The present research was written based on the findings in the preliminary study conducted in a bilingual boarding school which provided a speech training program in order to improve the students' speaking ability and encourage them to be brave to speech in front of the audience. Speech training is like public speaking training where students communicate in a one-way communication context. Students who become a speaker dominates and responsible for the smoothness of the communication process. There is no direct feedback from the audience. From the preliminary study, it was found that some students were shy and lack of confidence to speak in front of the audience. They have also encountered some difficulties in their speech because of the lack of vocabulary mastery and grammatical understanding. Hence, this paper focuses on addressing the following questions:

1. What are the types of communication strategies used by Indonesian bilingual boarding school students in speech training (one-way communication context)?
2. What are the students' reasons to use communication strategies?

The main presumption of this paper is that to probe the students' problem in communication especially in one way communication, students need more effort to convey their message in an understandable way without any direct feedback from the interlocutor. By knowing the students' problem in communication, teachers can improve the way of their teaching to help students communicate better in English.

## **Literature Review**

### *EFL context in Indonesia*

In Indonesia, English is learned as a foreign language (EFL) not as a second language. It cannot be denied that some people also use English as their second language. As Musyahda (Musyahda, 2002) stated, in Indonesia, English has been used for various objectives that also promote some people to use it as a second language. As in the academic level, some people use English as their means for communication. By the same token, some schools especially boarding schools set English as their main language used in communication.

However, in order to communicate effectively in English, improving the speaking skill is advocated. Speaking becomes a fundamental factor particularly in communication (Derakhshan, Khalili, & Beheshti, 2016). Evidently, many studies about Indonesian EFL students' speaking revealed various problems encountered by them. As Abrar et al. (2018) discovered that most Indonesian students have difficulties in speaking and communicating in English due to some obstacles in language-related barriers (vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and fluency). Consequently, there should be an appropriate way to overcome this problem.

### *Communication Strategies*

Communication strategies (CSs) become phenomenal since Selinker (Selinker, 1972) introduced the term in his study of interlanguage. He believed that CSs occurred in many interlingual of second or foreign language learners and it is beneficial when the

learners have some difficulties during the communication with the native speakers of the target language.

Since then, various discussions on CSs have been conducted that lead into the uncertain meaning and the taxonomy of CSs. There is no agreement on several perspectives of both the definition and the taxonomies of CSs. Some researchers defined and classified CSs based on the different parts of language phenomenon.

Tarone (Tarone, 1977) define CSs as "Conscious communication strategies are used by an individual to overcome the crisis which occurs when language structures are inadequate to convey the individual thought". Meanwhile, Faerch & Kasper (1980) define CSs as "... potentially conscious plans for solving what an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal". This definition refers to the psycholinguistic approach which some experts believed that communication strategies, in this case, are focused on learners' cognitive process rather than the interactional process.

Following the different definition of communication strategies, some experts also divide the taxonomy of communication strategies differently. Faerch & Kasper (1983) identified the taxonomy of CSs into two types of behavior as *avoidance behavior* and *achievement behavior*. The student can either maintain the original aims of communication by applying *achievement strategies (achievement behavior)* or leaving the original message or communication aims by applying *reduction strategies (avoidance behavior)* when they encountered some problems in the communication process. In the same vein, Willems (1987) and Dörnyei (1995) also divide the typology of CSs into *reduction strategies* and *achievement strategies*. Moreover, both Faerch & Kasper (1983) and Willems (1987) categorized achievement strategy into several parts of strategies based on the speakers' interlanguage system or based on the resources used by the speaker. Meanwhile, Dörnyei (1995) add pausing, using filler or hesitation devices as

*stalling or time-gaining strategies.* Students can use this strategy to gain time to think when they encounter communication problems. In the present study, all of those three kinds of the typology of CSs were used to analyze the data.

**Table 1.** The Taxonomy of Communication Strategies Proposed Faerch & Kasper (1984), Willems (1987) and Dörnyei (1995).

<b>Reduction Strategies</b>		
1	<b>Phonological:</b> Speaker avoids using words that contain difficult segments or cluster of segments.	Formal reduction strategies
2	<b>Morphological:</b> Speaker avoids talking about something in the past because avoiding the use of past tense form.	
3	<b>Syntactic:</b> Speaker avoids speaking about something that may make fear of using conditionals	
4	<b>Lexical:</b> Speaker avoids discussing the certain topic because of insufficient vocabulary.	
5	<b>Message Abandonment:</b> Speaker keeps away from a certain message of topic or leaves message incomplete because of some linguistic problems.	Functional reduction strategies
6	<b>Meaning Replacement:</b> Speaker says something less respectfully than it would in his/her native language.	
7	<b>Topic Avoidance:</b> Speaker intended not to say anything and avoiding the topic because of language difficulties.	
<b>Achievement Strategies</b>		
8	Use some gestures, mime or facial expression in order to replace speech or trying to explain some object using it rather than explain it in speech.	Paralinguistic strategies
9	<b>Borrowing/ Code-switching:</b> Use some words or phrases of native language or other than the target language to express something in conversation using the target language.	Interlanguage Strategies
10	<b>Lexical translation:</b> Translate literally from native to target language.	
11	<b>Foreignizing:</b> Using native language but pronounce it in the target language.	
12	<b>Substitution:</b> the replacement of a missing item or rule that in the learners' mind it conveys the same meaning.	Intralingual Strategies
13	<b>Approximation (Generalization):</b> Use the target language to express object that semantically resembles the target word.	

14	<b>Word Coinage:</b> Made a new word in the target language based on the supposed rule but actually that word does not exist in the target language.
15	<b>Paraphrase:</b> a. Description b. Circumlocution c. Exemplification
16	<b>Smurfing (use all of the purpose words):</b> In order to fill the gaps in vocabulary command the speaker use a meaningless or empty word.
17	<b>Self Repair (Restructuring):</b> When the speaker feels that his/her speech fails, he/she tries to set the new one.
18	<b>Appeals for assistance:</b> a. Explicit b. Implicit c. Checking Questions
19	<b>Initiating Repair:</b> e.g., <i>"I am sorry, there must be some misunderstanding. Does... mean ...?"</i>
20	<b>Retrieval Strategy:</b> In order to retrieve the lexical item, the speaker pronounces a series of the incorrect term to reach the right one.
<b>Stalling or Time-Gaining Strategies</b>	
21	<b>Use of filler or hesitation devices:</b> Use fillers or gambits to add time to thinks when speaker encountered some problem in the communication process.

However, CSs takes an important role in the second language or foreign language learning process. CSs were seen as a problem solver in the communication process of the target language. As Faerch & Kasper (1984) explained that the two main concepts to define CSs which also distinguish CSs from other verbal plans are *consciousness* and *problem-orientedness*. Dörnyei & Scott (1997: 182) added that communication strategies deal not only with the problem related to speakers' insufficient linguistic knowledge (*source deficit-problem* ) but also three other problem-orientedness; *own-performance problem*, *other-performance problem* and *processing time pressure*.

### **Speech Training**

Speech training is a public speaking training program. Public speaking itself means delivering a speech in front of an audience in a structured manner in order to

entertain, persuade, or inform to the audience (Yee & Abidin, 2014). It enables students to present some issues in front of the audience. As confirmed by Al-Tamimi (2014) that public speaking training is effective in increasing students' communicative competence and reduces their communication apprehension. In the same vein, Lucas (2009) stated that training in public speaking makes someone able to adapt communication in various situations such as conversation, classroom discussions, interviews, and business meetings.

However, public speaking is a kind of one-way communication models where there is no direct feedback from the audience as the interlocutor. As (Lunenborg, 2010) asserted that when the speaker does not get any feedback in the communication process it is referred to as one-way communication.

## **Research Design**

### *Participants*

The participants were chosen purposively. They were 4 students of Al-Mawaddah Islamic Boarding School for Girls who were experienced in joining public speaking contests and were active in speech training program. According to the language department of boarding school regulations, all of the students are required to join the weekly speech training program. They also have to use English or Arabic in their daily conversation although their mother tongue is Indonesian. The participants were the seventh and eighth grades of Junior High School students who studied English since their elementary school. And all of them are female.

### *Instruments*

In the present study, the data were collected through observations and interviews. The observations were conducted in order to observe the students' use of communication strategies in their speech. Meanwhile, the semi-structured interviews were conducted

in order to know the students' intention and the reason for using communication strategies.

### ***Procedure***

In order to get appropriate data, the researcher did some steps in collecting the data. Firstly, the researcher conducted the observation by attending the speech training class and video recorded the students' speech performance. Then, the video recording was transcribed, coded and analyzed based on the taxonomy proposed by Faerch and Kasper (Faerch & Kasper, 1984), Willems (Willems, 1987) and Dörnyei (Dörnyei, 1995). The following was the detailed taxonomy of communication strategies used in the present study.

After that, the researcher interviewed the students using a semi-structural interview. Through this interview, the researcher asked the students' comment related to their experience and intention of using certain CSs in their speech in order to analyze the students' problem in communication.

### **Findings and Discussion**

#### ***Types of communication strategies used by students***

The objective of this study was to classify the CSs used by students in speech (a one-way communication context). In order to do this, after the observation data were transcribed and coded, the data were identified and classified per each CS as presented in Table 2 below.

As shown in Table 2 below, a total of 200 strategies have been used by the participants of the study. The most favorite communication strategy used by students in their speech is "self-repair (restructuring)" 93 times. The second communication strategies mostly used by students is "Use of filler or hesitation devices" (70 times). And the least strategies used by students are "smurfing" and "paralinguistic strategies". Each of them



was only used by students once. However, out of 21 strategies, only 10 strategies were used by students in their speeches.

**Table 2.** Communication Strategies Used by Students in Speech.

No	Communication Strategies		Freq
1	reduction strategies	Message Abandonment	5
2	Achievement (compensatory) strategies	Self Repair (Restructuring)	91
3		Appeals for assistance	7
4		Borrowing/ Code-switching	10
5		Literal translation	4
6		Generalization	6
7		Word Coinage	4
8		Use all of the purpose words (Smurfing)	1
9		Paralinguistic strategies	1
10	Time gaining strategies	Use of filler or hesitation devices	71
TOTAL			200

Furthermore, Table 2 also revealed that students used more of *compensatory strategies* rather than *reduction strategies*. They only used *message abandonment* 5 times. These findings indicate that students intended to remain their original communication goal rather than change it due to some problems encountered during the speech.

***The students' reasons for using communication strategies***

As has been presented before, communication strategies are able to help students to solve some difficulties in their communication process. With the result, the students employed each strategy for a particular intention. Accordingly, in order to investigate the students' reason for using CSs the interview data were analyzed qualitatively following four types of communicative problems. Therefore, the example of students' use of CSs and the review comment from the students would be presented as follows.

1) *Problem-related Time pressure*

Sometimes students need to gain more time to plan or process their speech in the target language (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997). Therefore, the students used certain strategies in order to gain more time to think.

a) Self Repair (restructuring) and pause, using fillers and hesitation devices

As seen in Table 2, *Self Repair (restructuring) and pause, using fillers or hesitation devices* are the most strategy used by students. All of the students were also used these strategies.

Example 1 (*Self-repair and using filler*)

SC: "Eum.. the third, er.. third, we can, we can er.. we can pray to God Allah, we can ask for His help and to protect us every, every our step and every our step and action".

Example of Interview 1

SC: I repeated it maybe because I did not prepare it well so I bewildered what I wanted to say. I tried to search the next word so I repeated my speech to get an appropriate one.

SB: Sometimes I use fillers or remain silent (pause) in order to think what I should say afterward.

From the transcribed data it was found that both of these strategies sometimes were used simultaneously. Like in example 1 above, Student C used some fillers "eum", "er" and used *self repair strategy* by repeating her speech many times in order to gain time to think. However, as Junior Secondary School students, students lack the ability to process the language quickly. Consequently, they need more time to think and produce the language properly. As Maldonado, (2016) who has observed this matter

before stated that in order to be able to continue communicating, students seem to repeat words to fill in pauses and to gain time to think.

2) *Source deficit problem*

The insufficiency of linguistics knowledge can cause several problems in the students' communication process of the target language. In order to deal with this matter, students can use several communication strategies so that they can communicate effectively.

a) *Appeals for assistance*

The students used *Appeals for assistance* 7 times. According to Willems (1987), there are three kinds of *appeals for assistance strategy; implicit, explicit and checking question*.

Example 2 (appeals for assistance)

SB : Please.. please come to Islam because eh, come to Islam because Islam is so very the best eh [*paused 4*] (SB took a glance to the audience to their assistance, but she pretends to be fine).

A : Religion (whispering)

SB : Is so very the best religion.

Example of Interview 2

SB : I will give a hint to the audience if I wanted to ask their assistance when I have difficulties in remembering the vocabulary.

In example 2, Student B was silent for about 4 minutes and asked the audiences' assistance implicitly by glancing at the audience so the audience helped her with the vocabulary 'religion'. This happened because the student had a limited vocabulary.

b) Borrowing (Code Switching)

Students use *borrowing strategy* by using Indonesian in their speech of English.

Example 3 (code-switching)

SB: "Rude character the mean of, rude character the mean '*perilaku yang kasar*' [literally "*rough behavior*"] dan foolish and foolish the mean is '*bodoh*'.

Example of Interview 3

SB: Sometimes I use Indonesian (code-switching) unconsciously.

In example 3 above, student B used Indonesian to express the meaning of difficult vocabulary so that the audience would understand her speech easily because they share the same native language (Indonesian). The student used it accidentally when they encountered vocabulary problem. This finding correlates to Sukirlan (2014) who argued that the students with the same native language background may if they encountered difficulties in communication they will use *borrowing or code-switching*.

c) Literal translation

The students used *literal translation* 4 times by translating their utterances word per word from Indonesian to English as seen in example 4 below.

Example 4 (*Literal translation*)

SB: "We, we'll aaa we must speak for both of parents by, by aaa by impoli [/*impəl*/] by *polite*".

Example of Interview 4

SD: When I did not know the vocabulary, I will look for the word that has a similar meaning and if I could not find it, I will use Indonesian or translate it literally.

SC : If I knew the pattern, I would use the correct sentences. But if I did not, I will translate my speech literally.

Through the interview, student D revealed that in order fill the gap in vocabulary she would either translate the intended meaning literally or use Indonesian if they could not find a similar vocabulary. Moreover, student C said that she would translate her speech literally if she did not know the pattern of the correct sentence. It can be concluded that students used *literal translation* due to vocabulary limitedness and the lack of grammatical understanding.

d) Word coinage

Some previous studies reveal that the use of word coinage can cause errors in the students' speech. Nakatani, Makki, & Bradley (2012) also asserted that students would not use *word coinage* because afraid of being laughed by their friends. Moreover, to apply *word coinage* students need to think twice to construct the new word (Romadlon, 2016).

Example 5 (*Word coinage*)

SD : "Then, *the patienest* the luckiest and the survivor er.. keep survives till the end".

Contrary to the previous related study, the finding of the present study showed that students use *word coinage* in their speech by producing unavailable English term based on the supposed rule. Like in example 5 above, student D used the word "the patienest" to express the term "the most patient".

e) Generalization

Example 6 (*Generalization*)

SB: "But I will, but I in I in my in my *street* you in your *street* but I loyal for you".

Example of Interview 6

SD: In order to keep the communication channel open, I will use the word that has the nearest meaning when I do not know the vocabulary.

In the above example, Student B used the word “street” rather than “way”. Both of them semantically have the same meaning in Indonesian (“jalan”), but both of them have different connotations. Students use *generalization* by using the term that lexically has a similar meaning in order to maintain the communication process. This finding correlates to (Al alawi, 2016) who stated that when students encountered the vocabulary gap, they will look for alternative terms that have as closely as possible meaning to the target vocabulary in order to convey the expected meaning.

f) Message Abandonment

Example 7 (*Message Abandonment*)

SB : Yes, I will loyal for both parent and I will remain, remain for both of parents is the aaa *is the...* We as Muslim...”

Example of Interview 7

SB : I leave my message unfinished because I am not sure about what I wanted to say.

Student B preferred not to continue her speech because she was not sure about what she was going to explain to the audience. This happened due to her language limitation so that she was not able to continue her speech.

All the examples and interview results on the use of the communication strategies related to the resource deficit problem above revealed that most of the linguistic problems encountered by students were the limited vocabulary and lack of grammatical competence. In the same vein, Rohani (Rohani, 2013) has found out that

there were three kinds of linguistic problems encountered by students in their communication process. They are: (a) limited vocabulary, (b) difficulty in arranging sentences into appropriate sentences, and (3) low speaking fluency. However, the difficulty in arranging the sentences is related to the students' limited grammatical competence. Students would be able to produce appropriate sentences if they have good grammar competence.

3) *Own-performance related problem*

This problem was related to one's problem when she realized her own mistake in producing the language.

a) *Self-repair (restructuring)*

Example 8 (*self-repair*)

SD : *And chances is, and chances are sometimes that Allah give a.. for upgrading ourselves.*

*Retrospective comments*

SD : *I prefer to restructure my speech when I wanted to fix my speech with the next utterances.*

Self-repair or the restructuring strategy was not only used in order to gain time to think, but it was also employed to repair the students' own mistake. From Example 8, first, the student said: "and chances is" and she realized that chances should be followed by 'are' as it is plural. Then she repaired and restructured her speech by saying "and chances are". This finding indicated that students were aware of their own mistake and solved it by restructuring the correct one.

**Conclusion**

The result of the present study revealed that *self-repair or restructuring* to be the most frequent strategy used by the students on the speech. Students used *self-repair or*

*restructuring* 91 times, followed by *pause, using filler or hesitation devices* 71 times. However, a detail looks into that strategy revealed that students used these two strategies for gaining more time to think. Furthermore, *self-repair or restructuring* was also used by the student in order is to repair their own problems. The students were aware of their mistakes so that they attempted to fix the problem rather than to leave it incompletely.

Another fact was revealed from the present study that the students used CSs mostly to encounter some problems related to linguistic insufficiency especially limited vocabulary and lack of understanding the grammar rule. Students used some strategies such as *generalization, word coinage, code-switching, literal translation, appeals for assistance, smurfing and paralinguistic strategy* due to the limitation of vocabulary.

Realizing the important of CSs is one of the important devices to help students encounter their communicative problems, teaching students to use appropriate CSs is necessary. In consequence of the students' linguistic insufficiency, the teachers also need to determine an appropriate method, technique, and material to help students improve their language proficiency and increase their vocabularies. So that the students can communicate better in English.

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