

THE USE OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGY IN INTENSIVE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

Communication strategy is the way to help the speakers when facing difficulties in communication using Foreign Language (English). When learners do not know how to say a word in English, they can communicate effectively by using their hands, imitating sounds, inventing new words, or describing what they mean. These ways are the kinds of communicating with communication strategies. This paper is focused on the use of communication strategy in Intensive English classroom. It also describes the theory of communication strategies that can be used for learners in Intensive English classroom. The aim of this paper is to provide several ways of communication strategies that can be used for teacher in classroom and to facilitate learners' communicative competence in English.

Key words: *communication strategy, Intensive English classroom, communicative competence.*

INTRODUCTION

Intensive English is one of the compulsory subjects in English Study Program of STKIP Insan Madani Airmolek. One of the goals of teaching Intensive English is to develop the students' communicative competence that is, having substantial ability to communicate in variety of communicative situations. When language learners do not know how to say a word in English, they can communicate effectively by using their hands, imitating sounds, inventing new words, or describing what they mean. These ways of communicating are communication strategies. EFL teachers are not always aware of the importance of teaching communication strategies to their students or, if they are aware, they do not explicitly train their students to use them. They do not use these strategies themselves to serve as a model to their students. Very often, what we have observed is that teachers switch to the first language directly to avoid communication problems in the classroom. These problems also happened in English students of STKIP Insan Madani Airmolek. Students ignore for using any strategies, they used the first language automatically transfer to the second language or they just say the first language.

To contribute to the knowledge on the use strategies in the foreign language classroom and provide recommendations for language teachers and language teacher educators, this paper provides the communication strategies used teachers in a beginner EFL classroom especially for Intensive English class that aimed for students to improve their communicative competence. Besides that, some problems which occur among students during communication when using English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Intensive English class are also presented.

Communication Strategies

Communication Strategy is related to a useful way for helping students to communicate in foreign language that is English. As stated by Selinker in Bialystok (2008: 285) "Communication strategy is a deliberate attempt to express meaning when faced with difficulty in the second language." Therefore, communication strategies aim to help the

speakers while they face difficulties with their language in order to communicate. In addition, (Dornyei, 1995, in Nani I. Tiono, Agatha Sylvia 2004: 33) defined a communication strategy as “a systematic technique employed by a speaker to express his or her meaning when faced with some difficulty”. Communication Strategies help the learners to keep on using the language in communicating with others. Communication strategies are generally defined as the ways in which a speaker attempts to solve communication problems to reach particular communicative goals (e.g. Faerch & Kasper, 1983; Dörnyei, 1995; Faucette, 2001; Tarone, 2005; Lam, 2006; Maleki, 2007; Aliakbari & Allvar, 2009, Sukirlan, 2014). It means that using this strategy focus on the way to help speaker to communicate. Communication strategy also deals with using several ways in communicating a language without switching to the first language. By using communication strategy, a speaker may have an option to use an appropriate expression or available grammatical language when communicate each other.

There are several ways that can help speaker in using communication strategy. Dorny in Brown (2000:128) states the strategies often used may include message abandonment, topic avoidance, circumlocution, substitution, coining new words, code switching to the first language, and asking for clarification. Sukirlan (2014: 36) features of communication strategies are approximation, circumlocution, exemplification, comparison, word coinage, code-switching, foreignizing, repetition, non-verbal, time-stalling device, and appeal for assistance. Meanwhile, Dornyei (1995, in Nani I. Tiono, Agatha Sylvia 2004: 33), there are eleven types of communication strategies; (a) Message abandonment: the strategy of leaving message unfinished because of language difficulties, (b) Topic avoidance: the strategy where learners try not to talk about concepts which they find it difficult to express, (c) Circumlocution: the strategy used by learners in which they describe or paraphrase the target object or action, (d) Approximation: the strategy in which a learner uses an alternative term to express the meaning of the target lexical item as closely as possible, (e) Word coinage: a learner creates an L2 word based on his/her knowledge of morphological rules, (f) Use of nonlinguistic means: a learner uses non-linguistic resources such as mime, gesture, facial expression, and sound imitation to help him/her in expressing the meaning, (g) Literal translation: the strategy in which learners translate a lexical item, an idiom, or a structure from their L1 to L2, (h) Foreignizing: learners use L1 word by adjusting it to L2 phonologically, (i) Code switching: the strategy in which learners use their L1 word with L2 pronunciation, (j) Appeal for help: the strategy where the students ask other students or teacher for help because they do not know or forget some words, structures, or idioms, (k) Use of fillers/hesitation devices: a learner may use filling words to fill pause and to gain time to think.

Communication Strategy in Intensive English Classroom

During my two-year teaching career in STKIP Insan Madani Airmolek, I have observed several problems when students communicate in English.

1. It is so hard to ask students to speak in front of the class. They seems afraid, not confidence, and most of them have no intention of communicating in English even though they are an English students. The reason for this may contribute to their limited acquisition of the language and their limited interest in it.
2. Students tend to be silent when they don't have any idea or they don't know how to say in English word. It made them feeling anxiety in Intensive English class. This will undoubtedly result in practicing of a conversation. Consequently, a silence will occur until the teacher cannot tolerate it and offers help. For instance, if two students are asked to talk about the media , one may say, “ one of example media is an internet!” The other will respond, “Yeah, I use internet for ...” The second speaker is trying to say “for what?”. However, he cannot find the word. Thus, they may just stop there and fall into silence.

3. Students always ask each other when practicing English that makes the conversation are not effective. Sometimes, they speak their mother tongue to find out English word in conversation. They couldn't speak naturally in English because of limited vocabulary. It seems that English is not for communicating but it just for completing their tasks.

From students' problems and features of communication strategies above, there are seven communication strategies that can be used in Intensive English Classroom for beginner in STKIP Insan Madani Airmolek. These strategies are recommended as follow:

1. Circumlocution
This refers to learners using different words or phrases to express their intended meaning. For example, if learners do not know the word *grandfather* they may paraphrase it by saying "my father's father".
2. Semantic avoidance
Ellis (1997:60) states that "Learners may avoid a problematic word by using a different one, for example substituting the irregular verb *make* with the regular verb *ask*. The regularity of "ask" makes it easier to use correctly".
3. Word coinage
This refers to learners creating new words or phrases for words that they do not know. For example, a learner might refer to an art gallery as a "picture place".
4. Language switch
VanPatten & Benati (2010:73) state that "Learners may insert a word from their first language into a sentence, and hope that their interlocutor will understand".
5. Asking for clarification
The strategy of asking an interlocutor for the correct word or other help is a communication strategy.
6. Non-verbal strategies
Richards & Schmidt (2009) state that Non-verbal strategies refer to strategies such as the use of gesture and mime to augment or replace verbal communication.
7. Avoidance
Tarone (1981) states that Avoidance, which takes multiple forms, has been identified as a communication strategy. Learners of a second language may learn to avoid talking about topics for which they lack the necessary vocabulary or other language skills in the second language. Also, language learners sometimes start to try to talk about a topic, but abandon the effort in mid-utterance after discovering that they lack the language resources needed to complete their message.

CONCLUSION

Communication strategies can influence learners directly in acquiring English language. Learners have an experience in using communication strategies when they communicate each other. By using communication strategies, learners can communicate fluently into target language without feeling anxiety. Furthermore, several communication strategies will help learners for speaking in English. In this case, teacher has to reinforce the learners to use communication strategies in the classroom and teachers should also notice that the learners have to work hard to improve their speaking in English.

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