

ELT Students' Communication Strategy on Speaking Performance Defined by Gender in Universitas Negeri Padang

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ABSTRACT

The communication strategies implemented by ELT students may vary depending on their oral ability. This research aims to analyze the strategies most commonly used by English language learning male and female students and the communication strategies that affect their oral performance. English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang is the object of this research who is the representative of ELT students. This research is a descriptive research, using qualitative methods to directly observe human natural things and phenomena from the scene. The data were derived from video recordings of conversations and oral reports to investigate the students' communication strategies and problems in communication. The design is still in the preliminary stage and still continuing. The data will come from the observation of students' utterances on their speaking performance. As a result of the study, the ability of male and female students in speaking performance is identified and categorized into sixteen types of communication strategy by Kongsom (2009).

Keywords: *ELT students, communication strategy, speaking performance, gender difference*

1. INTRODUCTION

Education in the 21st century is full of competition and challenge. The students need to be competent to meet the demands of science development and technology and the industrial world. There are several competencies that must be mastered by students. The competencies involves 4C skills, they are Creativity, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, and Communication [1]. Communication is one of the competencies that are needed by the student in order to interact competently and respectfully with others especially across cultural, diverse and multinational communities in our global and digital era. Keyton [2] explained that the process of delivering something and building the comprehension between the speakers is known as communication. In order to prepare students to have competence in communication, UNP English language education facilitates students with several courses that can support their speaking skills such as public speaking, speaking for informal interaction, speaking English activities.

To convey a message or express ideas appropriately, speaking skill is important for creating proper communication for ELT students. However,

there are problems usually experienced by ELT students when communicating such as lack of vocabulary, lack of grammar competence, and difficulty to express the ideas. First, the students could not express well their ideas because they do not have many vocabularies. Fuad [3] found ELT students only say few sentences because they could not find the appropriate vocabularies to be used in expressing their ideas. Thus, the students need to have vocabulary mastery to produce an appropriate word for responding to the conversation with interlocutors. Second, the student often produces the utterance or sentence with inappropriate and incorrect syntactical patterns. Rahmatiah [4] reveals that most ELT students have difficulty in using grammar. They do not understand how to use grammar properly like they do not know the correct formula of simple present tense. Third, the students found it difficult to express their ideas because they did not know what to say in a particular situation and they did not know the English grammar [5]. These three problems make the communication between students and interlocutors do not run well.

From these problems above, the communication could not running well because they could not use appropriate communication strategies to avoid and overcome such problems. Communication strategy is an alternative way of conveying the meaning. It is the way of someone to organize something they want to communicate and the source of its linguistics system. According to Littlemore [6], CS is one of ways to increase the effectiveness of communication.

In other words, Maleki [7] adds that a communication strategy is the way of someone to try to keep the communication efforts and the language resources directly available. These strategies aim to help students to say something they need to rand to develop their communication by using languages. Tarone [8] supports this view because when EFL students use wrong grammar and vocabulary in communication in the classroom, they need communication strategies by building their in using the strategies so that they goals are achieved. If ELT students have overcome problems and obstacles in communicating and apply communication strategies properly, then their speaking skills can be improved.

Obviously, there are certain factors that seem related to the communication strategy. Gender is one of the factors. It affects everyday communication language learning communication. Sometimes, It also affects the process of communication. Males sometimes tend to be to the point when saying something while females do not like that. They tend to use long words or can be said giving definition firstly before coming to the points. Thus, it is known how gender affects the way of someone in communication. In conclusion, it influences the process of communication and the number of communication strategies. Some studied were also conducted to understand the frequency of the communication strategies used. One of the studies was conducted by Lai [9] The results revealed that between males and females did not have significant difference in adopting communication strategies. In addition, Moazen [10] found that between males and females did not have significant difference in using the number of communication strategies. Based on those studies, this study aims to find out the significant differences between male and female students in using the number of communication strategies and the types of communication strategy that are frequently used.

2. METHOD

This was a descriptive study with a qualitative approach. Qualitative approach was chosen because the natural phenomena of using communication strategies by EFL students in the classroom were observed. This research was conducted at Universitas Negeri Padang. In this preliminary research, the participants were 26 postgraduate English students who were taking *Landasan Ilmu Pendidikan* course chosen by using the simple random sampling technique.

The researcher has prepared all stages of the research, collected all the necessary data, analyzed the data and reported the data to the reader by using several instruments such as, *first*, Observation sheet will be carried out to write down the teacher's talk in the classroom, it will be used to find out the types of communication strategies used by the students and their communication strategies.

Second, recorders will be used to support the observation. During the observation, the researcher will record the whole communication that will be happened in the classroom. Then the result of recording will be transcribed as soon as the activities of recording were over. In this study, the researcher will transcribe the data related to the research problems. Digital camera will play important part in collecting the data. It will be used to record the participant voice and performance during the conversation.

Third, field note will be used to write the data that cannot be recorded, such as mime, eye contact, facial expression etc. Besides, it will be used to confirm the situation, setting and condition that cannot be recorded and to avoid the possibilities of losing data because of recorder's problem.

The data was the students utterances during the teaching and learning process. To identify communication strategy used by English Department students based on their speaking ability level, the data will be analyzed based on Kongsom [11] Communication Strategy (CS) theory and categorized into sixteen types of Communication Strategy by Kongsom. Then, divide the male and female students' communication strategies into two categories.

The theory used as the indicators in this research can be seen in the table below:

Table 1. The theory

No.	Communication Strategy	Indicators
1.	Topic Avoidance	Discussing specific topics are avoided because the students may need unfamiliar vocabulary or structures
2.	Message Abandonment	A concept is started to discuss, but the students cannot continue and stop mid-sentence.
3.	Circumlocution	The students describe the characteristics or elements of the things and activities rather than they use the suitable grammar of the target language
4.	Approximation	The incorrect vocabulary items or structures of a single target language are employed by the students,, but for speakers' satisfying they give enough semantic features with the desired item

5.	Word Coinage	Based on the fictitious rule, the students invent a new L2 word (e.g., <i>vegetarianist</i> for <i>vegetarian</i>).
6.	Use of all-purpose words	The broad, empty the lexical item which is broad and empty is applied by the students to contexts of the missing certain words (e.g., something is overused).
7.	Appeal for assistance	directly (e.g., what do you call...) or indirectly (e.g., what do you call...?) the students ask for help from the listener (e.g., intonation is raised, pause, eye contact, puzzled expression are showed).
8.	Literal Translation	The lexical item, idiom, compound word, or structure is translated by the students literally from L1 to L2.
9.	Code Switching	An L1 word is used with an L1 pronunciation or an L3 word with an L3 pronunciation by the students when speaking in L2.
10.	Foreignizing	An L1 word is employed by the students by adapting it to phonology of the second language (i.e., with pronunciation) and/or morphology of foreign language (e.g., adding to it an L2 suffix).
11.	Non-linguistic Strategy	The students use all Mime, gesture, facial expression, and sound imitation
12.	Self-repair	When the students do the correction by themselves by using their own word when speaking in the second language
13.	Confirmation check	The words said by the listeners are repeated by the students the correctness of the information they heard.
14.	Comprehension check	The questions are asked by the students to see if the listener understands the information in the communication
15.	Clarification request	The explanation of an unfamiliar meaning structure is requested by the students (e.g., Again, please! or Pardon?)
16.	Pause fillers and hesitation devices	The students use fillers or hesitation devices to fill pauses and gain time to think (e.g., well, now let's see, uh, as a matter of fact).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

It was found that males used 14 of 16 communication strategies proposed by Kongsom [11]. The strategy that was not used is *foreignization* and an *appeal for assistance*. Similarly, female students used 14 of the 16 communication strategies classified by Kongsom. They also did not use *foreignizing* and *appeal for assistance* strategies. As an example of *self-foreignization*, say "merica" from the L1 word. The reason why participants do not use *foreignizing* could be due to their proficiency level. It is due to the fact that in *foreignizing* the students use their first language words while adapting to the second language phonology. As a result, the ELT students' level causes them to try to solve problems using L2 pronunciation rather than L1 words.

According to the findings, both men and women use fillers the majority of the time. Fillers mean a strategy in communication used by the speakers to have time to think or fill the clear discussion.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, fillers were frequently used by both male and female students. It may be caused by the oblivious cycle and they are ELT students. Regardless, non-semantic sign is more often used by female students rather than male students because of their expressiveness in talking, which causes them to use non-phonetic sign to show and communicate their emotions. Last, there is no huge impact of gender on

correspondence techniques, particularly in the quantity of utilization.

At last, subsequent to examining this examination, educators should do whatever it takes not to separate the capacity of the understudies dependent on their sexual orientation particularly in utilizing the procedures in correspondence since there are different components which influence all the more like inspiration. Since there are more perspectives influencing correspondence methodologies, it is feasible for additional exploration to research those different angles. It is additionally feasible for additional exploration to research about the utilization of fillers in understudies' talking exercises further.

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