STUDENTS' COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES BASED ON SPEAKING

PROFICIENCY LEVEL IN UNIVERSITAS NEGERI PADANG

Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master Education

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ABSTRACTS

Sarah Madina. 21178020. Students' Communication Strategies based on Speaking Proficiency Level in Universitas Negeri Padang.

Communication strategy is believed by the researcher in overcoming the problems shared by speakers and the interlocutors in communication. This study purposed at investigating the use of communication strategies employed by English department students based on their speaking proficiency level in the speaking class. In gathering the data, the speaking test was conducted to measure the students' level of speaking proficiency. After that, classroom observations were conducted by the researcher to obtain the use of communication strategies by the students. The result of this study reported that most of the students were identified as having higher speaking proficiency level (HS). It revealed that HS students performed communication strategies more frequently than MS and LS students did. Furthermore, it also reported that stalling or time-gaining strategies were the most dominant strategies used by the students. The popular use of these strategies was that they have to improve more on their speaking fluency

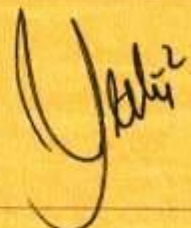**Keywords:** Speaking, Communication Strategies, Proficiency Level.

ABSTRAK

Sarah Madina. 21178020. Strategi Komunikasi Siswa berdasarkan Level Kemampuan Berbicara di Universitas Negeri Padang.

Strategi komunikasi dipercaya oleh para ahli dapat mencegah masalah yang dihadapi oleh pembicara dan intelocutornya dalam komunikasi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menginvestigasi penggunaan strategi komunikasi siswa dari departemen Bahasa Inggris berdasarkan level kemampuan berbicara dalam kelas berbicara. Dalam pengumpulan data, tes berbicara dilakukan untuk mengukur level siswa pada kemampuan berbicara. Setelah itu observasi kelas dilakukan untuk memperoleh penggunaan strategi komunikasi siswa. Hasil dari studi ini menunjukkan bahwa kebanyakan dari siswa dikategorikan sebagai kemampuan berbicara level tinggi (HS). Penemuan studi ini juga menunjukkan bahwa siswa HS lebih sering menampilkan strategi komunikasi dari pada oleh siswa HS dan MS. Selain itu, juga dilaporkan bahwa strategi mengulur-ulur waktu merupakan strategi yang paling dominan digunakan oleh siswa. Penggunaan yang populer dari strategi-strategi ini kemudian menandakan bahwa mereka perlu untuk meningkatkan kefasihan berbicara mereka.

Kata Kunci: Berbicara, Strategi Komunikasi, Level kemampuan

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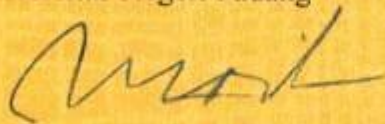|	
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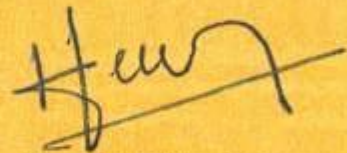Program Studi   : Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris (S2)

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Saya yang menyatakan

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

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Padang, 29 May 2023

Sarah Madina
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ABBREVIATION LIST

NO.	Abbreviation	Information
1.	CS	Communication Strategies
2.	HS	Higher Speaking Proficiency Level
3.	MS	Middle Speaking Proficiency Level
4.	LS	Lowest Speaking Proficiency Level
5.	MR	Message replacement
6.	TA	Topic avoidance
7.	MA	Message abandonment
8.	CR	Circumlocution
9.	AX	Approximation
10.	APW	All-purpose words
11.	NLM	Non-linguistics means
12.	RT	Restructuring
13.	WC	Word-coinage
14.	LT	Literal translation
15.	FN	Foreignizing
16.	CS	Code-switching
17.	RV	Retrieval
18.	FHG	Fillers, hesitation devices, and gambits
19.	SOR	Self and other repetition
20.	SIR	Self-initiated repair
21.	SR	Self-rephrasing
22.	AFH	Appeal for help
23.	MNS	Meaning negotiation strategies

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Problem

In Indonesia, English is perceived as a foreign language and taught in secondary school up to the university level as a compulsory subject. Despite the many years spent studying English, some studies (Fitriani, Apriliaswati & Wardah, 2015; Saragih & Listyani, 2021; Wahyungsih & Afandi, 2020) reveal that Indonesian students are still struggling to speak English well. More surprisingly, this phenomenon is also found in university students majoring in English.

Concerning this phenomenon, it might initially be caused by the influence of the curriculum that is more likely oriented to examination. Leight (1999) argues that Indonesian students are engaged to participate in intellectual exercises intended to get the pupils to be ready for school tests. The pupils are charged to pay attention more to several assessments such as quizzes, daily-task, daily-tests, and other tests that might encourage them to memorize and cheat more than studying. This pattern gives them little space to practice their critical thinking, struggle to share their ideas, and of course, also little space to practice speaking foreign languages such as English. Consequently, students are not confident to speak English and are struggling to speak English up to the university level.

It is also reported that English students lack knowledge of vocabulary, has poor grammar mastery, influent pronunciation, and lack confidence while speaking (Fitriani et al., 2015; Heriansyah, 2012; Saragih & Listyani, 2021;

Wahyuningsih & Afandi, 2020; Zainurrahman & Sangaji, 2019). Fitriani et al. (2015) state that English students at the university in Pontianak even faced psychological problems and linguistical problems in oral performance. Those problems involve grammar problems, anxiety, vocabulary matter, self-confidence, and pronunciation. In the same domain, Heriansyah, 2012 and Zainurrahman & Sangaji (2019) claim that the capacity of vocabulary was a common problem and a crucial role in speaking proficiency. Furthermore, Wahyuningsih & Afandi (2020) and Saragih & Listyani (2021) report that English students faced speaking obstacles related to anxiety, overuse of mother tongues, and encounter difficulties in giving quick responses, expressing ideas, locating appropriate lexicon, arranging appropriate grammatical patterns, and coping with a competitive atmosphere.

Concerning those issues, many decades ago, experts suggest language users use communication strategies to resolve the constraint and mistakes in communication (Bialystok, 2014; Celce-Murcia, Dornyei & Thurrell, 1995; Dornyei, 1995; Dörnyei & Scott, 1997; Faerch & Kasper, 1983; Kasper & Kellerman, 1997; Tarone, 1981). Communication strategies refer to those strategies used by second or foreign speakers to enhance the communication breakdown so that the goal of communication can be achieved (Faerch & Kasper, 1983). The learners must master communication strategies because, in the natural setting, they may find themselves in an unpredictable conversation and need to overcome the problem they face.

However, English department students do not learn communication strategies explicitly in their speaking class (Pratama & Zainil, 2020) which consequently makes it difficult for them to extend their communicative ability. Indeed, people who learn a language will unintentionally use strategies while they are in communication trouble. Dörnyei (1995) highlights that those communication strategies will be systematically applied by the speakers when they find difficulties in conveying the word/phrase in the communication. Hence, they probably already practice it in their ordinary communication but might have no idea about what exactly the types of communication strategies, their significance, and how to maximize this strategy as competence.

Without recognizing the communication strategy, the students in the English department might feel ashamed to be involved in classroom interaction in their speaking class. They are likely difficult to start a conversation in English with their English teacher or with their classmates without switching it to their mother tongue. The absence of this ability pushes them to get the problem when they are in a conversation because they are unable to keep the conversation going and close it favorably. As how Willems (1987) says, learners require to know how to overcome when they would like to deliver an uncertain word or describe a concept they do not know or hardly to retrieved.

Moreover, the essence of communication strategies has been stated in the notion of communicative competence in the domain of strategic competence (Bachman, 1990; Canale & Swain, 1980; Celce-Murcia et al., 1995). According to Celce-Murcia et al. (1995), strategic competence is a set of abilities to overcome

obstacles when communication breakdowns happen and is made possible by the learner's understanding of communication strategies for verbal and nonverbal language that improve communication effectiveness. Hence, it is clear to say that communication strategies are crucial to be carried out by every learner to master communicative competence and to raise the goal of communication.

There are considerable studies that criticize communication strategies in classroom interaction. The first group has mostly concentrated on the definitions, identifications, classifications, and reasons for using communication strategies (Ardianto, 2021; Ka-j & Teo, 2016; Nurteteng, 2018; Parcon & Reyes, 2021; Romadlon, 2016). Parcon & Reyes (2021) conduct a qualitative study to identify the type of communication strategies and figure out the factors that influenced them in using specific types in online discussion studies.

Research by Nurteteng (2018) also conducts a descriptive qualitative on the communication strategies of English department students. It finds that there is six communication strategy utilized by students in classroom presentation consists of approximation, circumlocution, exemplification, word coinages, code-switching, and use of fillers. In a different domain, Ka-j & Teo (2016) examine the types of communication strategies selected by EFL undergraduate programs in Thailand focusing on oral narrative tasks with different hemispheric brain dominance and discovered they are different in using communication strategies.

A study by Ardianto (2021) acknowledges that strategies used by the students in classroom interactions facilitate students in maintaining conversations and bridging the speaker-to-interlocutor gap. Meanwhile, Romadlon (2016)

conducts a study on communication strategies to discover that lack of meaning, social use, speech, voice, and fluency are some of the elements that lead students to the employment of techniques in the use of communication strategies.

The second group focuses on the factor affecting the performance of communication strategy and its relation to the variety of several branches of education field such as gender, language proficiency, different programs, and tasks (Hajiesmaeli & Darani, 2017; Maldonado, 2016; Saidah, Munir & Anam, 2020; Su, 2021; Vafadar, Foo & Rouhi, 2019; Zhao & Intaraprasert, 2013). Vafadar et al. (2019) implement experimental research on the use of communication strategies by Iranian intermediate students by dividing the students into Low Willing to Communicate (LWTH) and High Willing to Communicate (HWTH) according to their personalities. Research by Hajiesmaeli & Darani (2017) on communication strategies is conducted to see the differences between male and female EFL learners as well as male and female native speakers while encountering communication disintegration at Iranian University. In terms of implementing communication strategies, the researcher's findings show no significant variations between male and female Iranian EFL learners, but there is an obvious distinction between male and female English native speakers.

Su (2021) occupies a study to correlate the choice of communication strategies into some factors namely self-perceived overall English proficiency, speaking confidence, and communication anxiety/apprehension (CA. In the same domain, Maldonado (2016) compares the use of communication strategies by EFL university learners and explains the connection between the use of communication

strategies and the degree of learner's proficiency. Moreover, Saidah et al., (2020), relate communication strategies to the model of Talk-based English debate to see their preference for the category of communication strategies. Zhao & Intaraprasert (2013) explore the relationship between gender and perceived language ability toward communication strategy used by tourism-oriented EFL learners.

However, even though the relationship between communication strategies toward several variables such as English oral proficiency level and gender in different learning programs and situations have been conducted by many researchers (Ardianto, 2021; Hajiesmaeli & Darani, 2017; Ka-j & Teo, 2016; Maldonado, 2016; Nurteteng, 2018; Parcon & Reyes, 2021; Romadlon, 2016; Saidah et al., 2020; Su, 2021; Zhao & Intaraprasert, 2013), none of above studies focused to examine students' communication strategies based on speaking proficiency level in the speaking class. Hence, this present study intents to fill this gap. One variable regarding speaking proficiency level is examined to have an impact on the employment of communication strategy among English department students in their speaking class.

Reflecting on this information, speaking proficiency level can be considered in how CS is performed by the students. The investigation of communication used by the students might not directly affect their oral communication but support the significance of communication strategy as an ability in communicative competence. Thus, it is important to conduct research

under the title Students' Communication Strategy based on Speaking Proficiency Level in Universitas Negeri Padang.

B. Identification of the Problems

Communication strategies can be viewed from many different perspectives. First, the researcher may investigate how communication strategies are performed. It can explain how both the teachers and the students in the classroom produce communication strategies as language users. Second, the researcher can examine the importance of communication strategies implemented by the language user. Third, it can be seen from the type of communication strategies employed by the speakers and how it is produced by them. It might be focused on their gender and age differences. Communication strategies can be analyzed based on the gender or age of the language user. Forth, communication strategies may be combined with different variables to see the significance of their relationship and how it gives impacts the communication strategies performed by language users. The researcher might concentrate on the oral proficiency level and others. Last, speaking proficiency level in speaking class also can be considered by the researcher to analyze the communication strategies of English department students as language users.

C. Limitations of the Research

Based on the above identification of the problem, the researcher concentrates on how communication strategies are employed by students based on speaking proficiency level in speaking class.

D. Formulation of the Problems

The problem is formulated as follows: "How do English Department students perform communication strategies (CS) based on speaking proficiency level in Universitas Negeri Padang?"

E. Research Question

1. What are the levels of speaking proficiency of English Department students in Universitas Negeri Padang?

2. What are the types of communication strategies performed by English Department students based on speaking proficiency level in Universitas Negeri Padang?

3. What are the similarities and differences of the communication strategies used by English Department students based on speaking proficiency level in Universitas Negeri Padang?

F. Purpose of the Research

This research explores:

1. To find out the levels of speaking proficiency of English Department students in Universitas Negeri Padang.

2. To find out the types of communication strategies performed by English Department students based on speaking proficiency level in Universitas Negeri Padang.

3. To find out the differences of the communication strategies used by English Department students based on speaking proficiency level in Universitas Negeri Padang.

G. Significance of the Research

Theoretically, the findings of this study could assist to explain how the English department's students are divided into groups based on their speaking abilities. Additionally, this result of research can be a theory development in its field and support a more recent study that investigates how English students use communication techniques according to their speaking proficiency levels in their speaking class. Besides, from a practical point of view, this study will assist English learners in using the most effective communication strategies when learning English as a second language so that they can use it as much and as effectively as possible.

H. Definition of the Key-term

1. Speaking is a kind of skill in English that allows language users to communicate orally.

2. Communication strategies are methods the speaker employs to overcome obstacles to effectively conveying their intended meaning.

3. The proficiency level is the characterization of someone's ability in language concerning four skills listening, reading, speaking, and writing in a real-world context.