

Communication Strategies of English Club at PT Semen Padang Indonesia

Wennyta (Corresponding author)

English Education, Faculty of Teachers Training and Education, Universitas Batanghari,
Jambi, Jalan Slamet Riyadi Broni, Jambi, Indonesia

Tel: 628-136-774-8707 E-mail: wennytaadjis@gmail.com

Received: October 3, 2014 Accepted: November 9, 2014 Published: December 7, 2014

doi:10.5296/ijl.v6i6.6740 URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5296/ijl.v6i6.6740>

Abstract

This present research investigates how the motivators in English Club in PT. Semen Padang use types of communications strategies in conversing with the participants of English Club. This research is also aimed at finding what kind of cause of errors which occur in their conversation. The data are taken by recording the conversation between motivators and participants in PT. Semen Padang Indonesia. This research is qualitative. The results of the analysis show that there are eight types of communication strategies used by participants in English club in PT. Semen Padang. They are as follows: avoidance, appeal to authority, personality style, language switch, repetition, paraphrase, self correcting and asking confirmation. The results also show that the motivators mostly use language switch and repetition as their communication strategy toward the participants of English club. Moreover, the uses of errors are caused mostly by interference.

Keywords: Communication strategies, errors, English club, PT. Semen Padang

1. Introduction

English as an international language plays an important role in communication of the world. It is used as means of communication in all fields of our live. First, English is important to share information, ideas, or opinions to other people who come from different countries, cultures and languages. Second, English is needed to look for the job because sometime in receiving new employees national or international companies use English as one of the requirement. Third, English is also important in educational field. English is one of compulsory subjects. In Indonesia in which English is a foreign language, the government tries to make people master it by teaching English since Junior High School until University level.

It is important to point out that English can not only be taught at formal and non formal school. Also it can be taught at some big companies. One of them is PT Semen Padang. As well as other big companies such as PLN, TELKOM, state or non state banks, English training program in PT Semen Padang is run seriously to improve the proficiency of their employees. As a big company that deals with import and export activities that are mostly run in English, PT Semen Padang management pays a serious attention to the improvement and maintenance of the employee's English. The employees are provided English club where they are given maximum opportunities to improve and maintain their English.

Actually, the basic goal of teaching English is to enable learners to communicate by using this international language. However, using English in communication perfectly and correctly is not easy to do. Speaking requires people's knowledge and linguistics skills to express the message well. Sometimes some people have good knowledge and ideas but they cannot express these due to lack of vocabulary and grammatical mastery and vice versa. Therefore, learners who have difficulties in using English in communication may try to find strategies. Generally, the learners may tend to conduct their particular strategies that maybe easy to use. They also tend to apply certain strategies wherever and whenever they communicate. Here, they need what is called as communication strategy.

Stern (1983: 411) defined communication strategies as "techniques of coping with difficulties in communicating in an imperfectly known second language" (cited from Johnson & Johnson, 2001). From the definition above it can be said that communication strategies are actions done by language learners to handle problems faced in communication. The problems are caused by limited knowledge and vocabulary of target language. The language learners probably repeat their utterance, switch to their native language, avoid the topic of communication, etc. In applying communication strategy, language learners also make ungrammatical utterance. Brown (1980) stated that communication strategy is one of the major sources of error. The error may be caused by language transfer or interference, intraference and overgeneralization. Based on the facts above, the writer is interested in analyzing the English Communication Strategies of English Club at PT Semen Padang. The aspects analyzed are types of communication strategy and causes of error in communication strategy.

1.1 Research Method

The data in this research are collected by using non participant observation (Burns, 1994). Here, the researcher does not involve in creating the data. Firstly, the researcher attends and observes the class without having participation in the classroom itself. Then, the researcher applied recording technique (Burns, 1994) in which the conversations between motivator and participants were recorded by using Mp3 player. During recording, the researcher also applied note taking technique (Burns, 1994). The researcher took some notes that include information that can not be discerned from Mp3 player, such as context.

The data are taken from an English club of PT Semen Padang. The English club is held by Bureau of Public Service (Biro Pelayanan Umum). The club is handled by a motivator. The club consists of eight participants, six participants are male and two participants are female. The participants are around 26-28 years old. They come from different background of knowledge. Both the participant and motivator are Indonesian. The club is held twice a week, every Wednesday and Friday in which each meeting takes one and half hour. The researcher collects the data from 6 meetings within one month (January 7th – February 4th).

In analyzing the data, the researcher uses some steps. Firstly, the data that have been recorded were listened carefully. Secondly, the recorded data were transcribed into written form. In transcribing the data, the theory proposed by John W. Du Bois was used. The theory was used for it is easy to be understood. The symbols used in the theory is understandable, such as '[...]' represents speech overlaps, '<L1...L1>' represents code switching, '...(N)' represents long pause, etc. From the transcription the writer found 12 data that are going to be analyzed. The 12 collected data were chosen based on the collecting date. It is done for the informants applied more than one strategy in a single conversation. In addition, the selected data are analyzed as the representative data. Each datum was analyzed by using theory proposed by Brown (1980) and Schmidt (1983) in order to identify the types of communication strategy used by speaker. They are avoidance, prefabricated patterns, appeal to authority, personality style, language switch, repetition, paraphrase, self correcting and asking confirmation. After identifying the types of communication strategy, the theory proposed by Sárosdy et al. (2006) were applied in identifying the causes of error made by speaker. There are three causes of error. They are interference (mother tongue), intraference and overgeneralization.

2. Types of Communication Strategies and Cause of Errors

There are three key points of communication strategy which are closely related to each other. The first point is strategy. Strategy means a plan or conscious action in achieving a goal. Strategies can be thought as tools. They are used to solve problem or accomplish task (Smith, 2002). Strategies are attempts to remove obstacles present in communication. It consists of verbal and non verbal mechanism (such as gesture). The second point is problem in communication. The problem refers to limited ability that learners have in grammatical and vocabulary of language being learnt. According to Bialystok, (1990), strategies are used only when learners perceive that there is a problem which interrupts communication. It is clear that problem causes learners to apply strategies. The last point is communicative goal. It means that communication strategy aid learner with participating in and maintaining

conversation and improving the quality of communication. Besides that communication strategy helps learners in expressing message that they want transfer.

Related to foreign language learning, communication strategy enables learners to have increased exposure to and opportunities to use the language being learned. It leads more chances to test their assumptions about the language and to receive feedback. Without such strategies, learners tend to avoid risk taking of the language (Williams, 2004).

Theories proposed by Brown (1980) and Schmidt (1983) are applied in describing communication strategies used by motivator and participants in English club of PT Semen Padang. Brown (1980) proposed five types of communication strategy while Schmidt (1983) added four types of communication strategies. They are: 1) Avoidance; syntactic or lexical avoidance within a semantic category “I lost my way”, 2) Prefabricated patterns: speaker tries to memorize certain stock phrases or sentences without internalizing knowledge of the component of the phrase “How much does it cost?“, 3) Appeal to authority; the learners may if ‘stuck’ for a particular word or phrase, directly ask native speaker (the authority) for the form “how do you say.....”, 4) Personality style; non native speaker applies his own style to solve his problem in expressing his idea “I drove my bicycle”, 5) Language switch; When appeal, avoidance, transfer and other strategies are incapable of producing a meaningful utterance a learner may resort to language switch, 6) Repetition; non native speaker repeats what he had already said when he considers the hearer does not catch his idea yet, 7) Paraphrase; When non native speaker can not find a certain word in target Lang to represent what he wants to say, so he paraphrases that word, 8) Self-correcting; non native speaker corrects his own incorrect utterances by himself, 9) Asking confirmation.

3. Possible Causes of Error in Communication Strategies

Communication strategy is a strategy of language learning. Brown (1980) noted that communication strategy is one of major sources of learner error. Errors are systematic and may give valuable insight into language acquisition because they are goofs in the learner’s underlying competence. Non native speakers (foreign language learners) not only make mistakes, they also commit errors. As they have only an incomplete knowledge of the target language, they are not always able to correct the errors that they make. The learners’ errors reflect a lack of underlying competence in the target language that they are learning (Sárosdy et al., 2006). There are three causes of errors proposed by Sárosdy et al., (2006): 1) Language transfer-Interference; the influence of the mother tongue on the learning of the foreign language, 2) Intraference; occurs when language learners may experience confusion when they find conflicting patterns within the structure of the newly acquired language, 3) Overgeneralization; means that whenever learners meet a new pattern or a new rule they think that the pattern or rule applies to all cases without exception.

4. Analysis and Discussion

Datum 1

P1	: Ok club, I ... I will try to ... I represent my group to tell a story about this picture. Um... we think that it happen in a mansion.
----	---

M	:	<i>A mansion?</i>
P2	:	[yeah a mansion]
P3	:	[a mansion]
P1	:	<i>A mansion that mean a house... a aristocrat house that that the picture..</i> This is a (/maid/)
M	:	What do you mean by (/maid/)?
P1	:	<i>(/maid/)</i> ... <L1 pembantu L1>
P3	:	Servant
M	:	Oh.. ok

(Data: Eng. Club PT Semen Padang: 1/7/2014)

Analysis

This conversation takes place when participants are asked to give comment about a picture, which has been given by motivator to participants. Some participants (P1, P2, P3) and motivator came into discussion. This datum shows that motivator and participants use some types of communication strategy. The first is repetition. It can be seen through motivator's utterance "a mansion". The motivator uses repetition strategy by imitating P1 utterance without giving a changing. Here the motivator wants to know clearly what P1 means about his utterance because it doesn't give clear information to her. Implicitly the repetition strategy applied by motivator can be regarded as asking clarification to P1.

Dealing with repetition strategy applied by the motivator, P1 tries to describe the meaning of mansion by applying paraphrase strategy. It can be seen in P1's utterance "*A mansion that mean a house... a aristocrat house that that the picture...*" It means that a mansion is an aristocrat house. The repetition strategy is also applied by P1 as seen in his utterance "*(/maid/)*". Here P1 applies repetition strategy for motivator can not catch the meaning of 'maid' that is uttered by P1. In this datum P1 fails in transferring his message to the motivator. Finally he inserts his native language "*pembantu*". By using language switch strategy, P1 is successful in transferring his message and keeping the communication goes on.

Considering from grammatical side, it can be seen that the error found in P1's utterance 'maid' is caused by language transfer or interference (mother tongue). He didn't pronounce the word 'maid' correctly. P1 seems difficult to pronounce /ei/ as it doesn't exists in his native language, Indonesian language. Based on the explanation above, it can be summarized that the communication strategy applied in this datum are repetition, paraphrase and language switch. These strategies help the speakers in transferring their message and keeping the communication goes on.

Datum 4

M	:	What about you Mr. Adi? Who the person what part of our citizen who get advantages by decreasing the price of refine fuel oil?
P4	:	I think almost all of our citizen get the advantages
M	:	Do you think so?
P4	:	Yes, but a ... (N) I think... <i>I think farmer do not get advantages because there is no impact for</i>

	<i>they</i>
M	: <i>For them</i>
P4	: <i>Yes for them because the price of <L1 pupuk LI>, what we call it?</i>
P2	: [fertilizer]
M	: [yeah fertilizer] so the price of fertilizer still high and there is no impact for farmer. Is that right?
	: Yeah.. um and the farmer get the reason like that
P1	:

(Data: Eng. Club PT Semen Padang: 1/14/2014)

Analysis

This conversation occurs when motivator and participants discuss about the decision of government to decrease the price of refine fuel oil. P4 is asked by motivator about his comment.

Firstly P4 argues that the decrease of refine fuel oil gives advantages to almost all of Indonesian citizen except farmer. It is as seen in “*I think farmer do not get advantages because there is no impact for they*”. Motivator responds P4’s comment by applying repetition strategy. Here motivator repeats P4 utterance by giving changing. It can be seen from “for them”. Implicitly the repetition strategy applied by motivator has function to correct P4 error.

Seeing from grammatical aspect, error in P4’s utterance “*...because there is no impact for they*” is caused by language transfer or interference of mother tongue. The object pronoun that should be ‘them’ is changed to ‘they’. P4 in this utterance has difficulty in differentiating between object pronoun and subject pronoun. The difficulty is caused by the native language of the speaker (P4), Indonesian language. In Indonesian language there is no significant differentiation about the use of subject and object pronoun.

The other communication strategy that can be found in this datum is language switch. It is found in P4’s utterance “*Yes for them because the price of <L1 pupuk LI>, what we call it?*”. P4 has difficulty to transfer message due to lack of vocabulary in target language. P4 switches to his native language to conduct a conversation and transfer his message. Still in the same utterance, P4 also uses another type of communication strategy namely appeal to authority. It can be seen through the use of sentence “*what we call it?*”. Here P4 gets stuck for a word ‘*fertilizer*’. In handling problem in transferring message faced in communication, firstly P4 switches to his native language and then asks the authority (motivator) for the correct one. This strategy is successfully done as P2 and motivator give help by saying “fertilizer”.

From the explanation above it is clear that P4 and motivator apply repetition strategy, language switch and appeal to authority. These strategies are used to handle problem in communication in transferring message to listener.

Datum 6

M	: Um... how about you miss Rika? Have you ever complain about the decrease of refine fuel oil? I
---	--

	mean transportation price?
P2	: Um... <i>I'm not care</i>
M	: What? <i>You don't care</i> , so you still use the previous price?
P2	: Yeah, because... just sometime I'm use public transportation.
M	: Ok... so what do you know about our government decision to decrease the refine fuel oil price? Um... (N) I don't know
P2	: <@> ok
M	: (Data: Eng. Club PT Semen Padang: 1/14/2014)

Analysis

This conversation takes place when motivator and participant (P2) discuss about the decrease refine fuel oil. Motivator asks participants of the club about their comment. Firstly motivator asks P2 about her comment.

P2 answers motivator's question by saying "*I'm not care*". In responding P2's answer, motivator applies repetition strategy. She repeats P2's utterance by giving changing. It can be seen through "*you don't care*". Implicitly the motivator's respond is purposed to correct P2's error. Here P2 produces error. It is as seen in "*I'm not care*". Seeing from grammatical aspect, P2's error is caused by overgeneralization. P2 uses verb be in verbal sentence. The utterance should be "*I don't care*" but P2 says "*I'm not care*". The use of verb be 'am' does not match with the sentence. Here P2 misplaces the use of verb be 'am'. The explanation above shows that repetition strategy can also means as a correction.

Datum 12

M	: What about the personally or the psychologically growth of the children, um.. I mean the impact of living in the city
P1	: Yeah I think depend on for the.. the parent yeah... <i>if the parent um... um... um... yeah if the parent can um... um... <L1 mengawasi L1></i>
M	: Supervise
P1	: Yeah supervise the children I think no problem
M	: So you prefer living in the suburb
P1	: Yeah
M	: Mr. Adel do you have any comment? Yes please
P2	: I think a.. few disadvantages if um... the people living in the city because <i>I think most of the disadvantages can they get... can they got</i> <i>[Am I right?]</i>
M	: [they get]
P2	: I think one of the disadvantages yeah maybe every people I .. <i>I think a few can.. can.. can saw.. what we call <L1 pemandangan L1></i>
M	: View
P2	: View um.. Beautiful view yeah because in the city maybe minimize can we find tree... ((CONTINUE TO EXPLAIN))
	(Data: Eng. Club PT Semen Padang: 2/ 4 / 2014)

Analysis

This conversation takes place when the club discusses about the negative effect or disadvantages of living in the city. Some participants and the motivator get involved in the conversation.

The motivator asks P1's comment about the influence of living in a city towards the psychological growth of the children. In answering the question, P1 firstly speaks clearly. But after that he seems get problem. He hesitates for a while. Then he continues his utterance in his first language. It is seen in "... *if the parent um... um... um... yeah if the parent can um... um... <L1 mengawasi L1>*." P1 inserts his first language in answering the question. Of course here P1 applies language switch strategy. Implicitly the strategy means as asking help. It is reflected through the response of the motivator towards the strategy applied by P1.

Still in this utterance, the participant of the English club applies another strategy of communication. P2 applies asking confirmation strategy. The strategy is reflected in "...*I think most of the disadvantages can they get... can they got*

[Am I right?]." The P2's utterance 'am I right' is indicated as asking confirmation. Here P2 does not sure whether his utterance is correct or not. Actually this strategy is successfully done for the motivator corrects his utterance. Seeing from grammatical aspect, P2 seems difficult in differentiating between the use of simple present and simple past. It is influenced by the first language of P2. It is called interference.

In this datum, P2 not only uses asking confirmation strategy but also applies language switch strategy. It can be seen through "...*I.. I think a few can.. can.. can saw.. what we call <L1 pandangan L1>*." In this single utterance P2 applies both appeal to authority and language switch strategy. In order to handle his problem in having limited vocabulary, P2 uses those strategies. P2 combines the two strategies.

In conclusion, the datum above shows that the participants (P1 & P2) of the English club use strategy of language switch, asking confirmation and appeal to authority strategy. In addition, the error produced by the participant (P2) is caused by interference.

5. Conclusions

The aim of this research is to identify types of communication strategies used by the motivators and the participants in English Club in PT. Semen Padang. Besides, this research is also aimed at identifying the cause of errors which occur in the conversation between motivators and participants in that English Club. The results show that there eight types of communication strategies used by the motivators, they are: *avoidance, appeal to authority, personality style, language switch, repetition, paraphrase, self correction* and *asking confirmation*. It appears that the motivator mostly uses *language switch* and *repetition* strategy in conversing with the participants of English club. It happens due to their lack of understanding toward English language. It is also happened because of there are many problems faced by the participants in understanding their conversation topic. Furthermore, there are only two kinds of cause of errors which occur in their conversation. Mostly the

participants use *interference* as cause of errors. It happened due to the lack of knowledge in foreign language, while *generalization* only occurs once in their conversations.

References

- Bialystok, E. (1990). Communication strategies: A Psycholinguistics analysis of second-language use. In Johnson, K & Johnson, H, *Encyclopedic dictionary of applied linguistics: A handbook for language teaching*. Blackwell publishers. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/applin/10.3.253>
- Brown, H. D. (2000). *Principles of language learning and teaching* (4th ed). Addison Wesley: Longman.
- Brown, H. D. (1980). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.
- Burns, R. (1994). *Intro to research methods* (2nd ed). Melbourne: Longman.
- Canale, M & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. Applied linguistics. In Brown, H. D. (Ed.), *Principles of language learning and teaching* 4th ed (pp. 1-47). Addison Wesley: Longman. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/applin/1.1.1>
- Canale, M. (1983). From communicative competence to communicative language pedagogy. In Brown, H. D. (Ed.), *Principles of language learning and teaching*. 4th ed. Addison Wesley: Longman. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4304/jltr.2.4.859-866>
- Corder, S. P. (1981). *Error analysis and interlanguage*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Faerch, C., & Kasper, G. (1983). *Strategies in interlanguage communication*. In Savignon, S. J., & Berns, M. S. (Eds.), *Initiatives in communicative language teaching: A book of reading*. Reading Massachusetts: Addison Wesley Publishing Comp. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-1770.1990.tb01332.x>
- Faucette, P. (2001). A pedagogical perspective on communication strategy: Benefits of training and an analysis of English language training materials. [Online] Available: [www.hawaii.edu/sls/uhwpsel/19\(2\)Faucette.doc](http://www.hawaii.edu/sls/uhwpsel/19(2)Faucette.doc) (September 1, 2008). <http://dx.doi.org/10.4304/tpis.4.10.2033-2041>
- Idrus, R. (2005). *Communication and social strategies of some successful English learners at PT. Semen Padang*. Unpublished master's thesis, Padang State University (UNP), Padang.
- Johnson, K., & Johnson, H. (2001). *Encyclopedic dictionary of applied linguistics: A handbook for language teaching*. Blackwell publishers.
- Pringgawidagda, S. (2002). *Strategi penguasaan berbahasa*. Yogyakarta: Adicita Karya Nusa.
- Richards, J. (1974). *Error analysis: Perspective on second language acquisition*. Longman Group Ltd.

Richards, J. C., & Schmidt, R. W. (1983). *Language and communication*. London: Longman Group Ltd.

Sárosdy, J. et al. (2006). *Applied linguistics 1 for BA students in English*. Bölcsész Konzorcium, Minden Jog Fenntartva.

Savignon, S. J., & Berns, M. S. (1984). *Initiatives in communicative language teaching: A book of reading*. Reading Massachusetts: Addison Wesley Publishing Comp.

Savignon, S. J. (1983). *Communicative competence: Theory and classroom practice. Texts and contexts in second language learning*. Reading Massachusetts: Addison Wesley Publishing Comp.

Smith, G. P. (2002). *Canadian language benchmarks 2000: theoretical framework*. Centre for Canadian Benchmarks.

Tarone, E. (1981). Some thoughts on the notion of communication strategy. *TESOL Quarterly*. In Savignon, S. J., & Berns, M. S. (Eds.), *Initiatives in communicative language teaching: A book of reading* (pp. 285-295). Reading Massachusetts: Addison Wesley Publishing Comp. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3586754>

Williams, J. (2006). Combining communication strategy and vocabulary development. [Online] Available: http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Williams-Communication_Strategies.html (March 5, 2008)

Zheng, Z. (2004). Communicative Competence and Strategic Competence. [Online] Available: www.linguists.org.cn/doc/su200410/su20041013.doc (October 11, 2008).

Appendixes

Datum	Types of Communication strategy									Causes of Error		
	AV	PP	AA	PS	LS	R	P	SC	AC	Inter	Intra	Over
1					√	√√	√			√		
2					√	√	√					
3			√		√	√		√				
4			√		√	√				√		
5				√	√	√		√		√		
6						√						√
7	√				√	√						
8			√	√			√			√		
9					√√							
10			√	√	√√	√				√		
11			√		√√							
12			√		√√				√	√		
	1	0	6	3	14	9	3	2	1	6	0	1

AV : Avoidance

LS : Language Switch

AC : Asking Confirmation

PP : Prefabricated Pattern

R : Repetition

Inter : Interference

AA : Appeal to Authority

P : Paraphrase

Intra: Intraference

PS : Personality Style

SC : Self Correction

Over: Overgeneralization

Abbreviation

P1 : Participant 1

P2 : Participant 2

P3 : Participant 3

P4 : Participant 4

M : Motivator

Copyright Disclaimer

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>).