

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES USED BY EFL STUDENTS IN THEIR PRESENTATION

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Abstract: In the process of communication using the target language, EFL students usually have some problems to communicate their ideas. To cope with the problems they encounter, the students will try to use certain communication strategies so that their ideas can be clearly explained. This paper reports the results of the research on the communication strategies used by EFL students in their presentation. This study is designed as a qualitative research. The subjects of the study were the seventh semester students representing more and less proficient students in their classes. The data are the communication strategies employed by the students when they had oral presentation for Cross Cultural Understanding course. The results of the research reveal that the more proficient students used eleven types of communication strategies and the less proficient students used thirteen types of communication strategies. Some interlingual strategies, code switching, appeal for help, and some non linguistic strategies were used by the students. It is also found that the more proficient students used more L2 based strategies, and L1 terms occurred in the language of all levels of proficiency. Despite the differences, the students need to be encouraged to use more compensatory strategies to achieve their communication goal.

Keywords – Communication strategies, oral communication, EFL students

INTRODUCTION

It cannot be denied that having ability in oral communication is similar to knowing the language since speech is the most basic skill means of communication. Related to that

speaking in a second or foreign language has often been viewed as the most demanding of the four language skills. So the students who learn English as a foreign language are demanded to be able to use English orally when they interact with other people or when they deliver their ideas to their listeners. It is widely accepted that the main purpose of language learning is to communicate and acquire communicative competence. In an EFL classroom, an English teacher should create activities where the students can practice using the language they are learning. In the case of university contexts, the students whose major is English should be given opportunities to use the target language in any subjects they take. One of the ways is by assigning them to present a paper in English.

With the advent of the theory of communicative competence and the practice of communicative language teaching, the teaching of oral communication skills as a contextualized sociocultural activity has become the focal point in many ESL classrooms as well as in foreign language classrooms. To achieve communicative competence, EFL students should be given opportunities to acquire the four dimension of communicative competence. Savignon (1983) states the need of learners to have experience of communication. Through practice and experience, students gradually expand their communicative competence, consisting of grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociocultural competence, and strategic competence.

Furthermore, Savignon (1983) asserts that the effective use of coping strategies is important for communicative competence in all contexts and distinguishes highly competent communicators from those who are less so. Furthermore, Scarcela & Oxford (1992) defines strategic competence refers to language learners ability to use communication strategies either to solve communication problems to enhance the effectiveness of communication, which allows speakers to appear more adept than they actually are. Strategic competence is manifested in the use of communication strategies by EFL students in their oral communication. Bachman (1990: 124) asserts that communication strategies serve function to negotiate meaning in an appropriate situation. It is regarded as an integrated part in achieving communicative competence.

In the process of communication using the target language, EFL students usually have some problems to communicate their ideas. The problems the EFL students face may come from lack of vocabulary, lack of grammatical structure, lack of knowledge of the content, affective factors, etc. It is said by Lazaraton (2002) that the most difficult aspect of spoken English is that it is almost always accomplished via interaction with at least one other speaker. We take an example that in presenting their ideas orally an EFL student should monitor his own utterance, monitor and understand the other speaker when he asks

a question, think about his answer, monitor its effect, and so on. To cope with the problems of communicating their ideas and opinions, the students will try to use certain communication strategies to be able to communicate well and explain their ideas and opinions clearly. Communication strategies help students to keep in communication and so provide them more input and chances to develop their interlanguage systems. Besides, communication strategies lead students to more successful performance and the success will bring positive impact.

According to Corder (in Faerch and Kasper, 1984) all language users adopt strategies to convey their meaning. In the case of EFL learners, the attempts to communicate their meaning may be caused by inadequate grasp of the target language system. In their attempts to convey their ideas, EFL students apply certain strategies. These strategies are called Communication strategies. Corder (in Dornyei, 1995; Faerch and Kasper, 1984) defines Communication strategy as “a systematic technique employed by a speaker to express his or her meaning when faced with some difficulties”. Using appropriate communication strategies, EFL students will be able to overcome their problems in expressing their ideas.

Some early Studies on communication strategies have contributed significantly to later research since the theories from the early studies have been adopted by other researchers. Some of the researchers whose theories have been considerably influence the research of recent researchers are for example, Bialystok (1990), who comprehensively analyzes communication strategies linked to L2 acquisition. According to Bialystok in Yani (2007) the familiar ease and fluency with which we sail from one idea to the next in our first language is constantly shattered by some gap in our knowledge of a second language. The forms of gaps can be a word, structure, a phrase, a tense marker or an idiom. The attempts to overcome these gaps are described as communication strategies. Another contribution is from Dornyei (1995), who outlines an explicit classification of communication strategies. Other descriptions and taxonomies of CS also appeared in Tarone’s (1980).

The aim of the study is to describe the types of communication strategies employed by the students in their presentation. This paper reports the results of the research on communication strategies used by EFL students in their presentation for Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) course at Universitas PGRI Ronggolawe Tuban. It is expected that this study will give benefits for both EFL teachers and learners. For EFL teachers, understanding the communication strategies will enable them to help and improve their learners’ communication skills by introducing the strategies to their learners. For the

learners, the findings of this study will provide them with some strategies to solve their communication problems so that their communication goal can be achieved.

Communication Strategies

According to Ellis (2008) communication strategies is one aspect of procedural skill that is the performance aspect of actually doing something in real time. Communication strategies as one aspect of procedural skill relates to discussion of how second language learners overcome the problems that result from insufficient L2 knowledge or inability to access L2 knowledge. He also says that communication strategies focus on a subset of production phenomena that is those that are conscious and arise as a result of a communication problem the learner is experiencing.

Selinker (1972) mentions communication strategy as one of the five processes he identified in interlanguage development. He defines the concept of communication strategies as a by-product of a learner's attempt to express meaning in spontaneous speech through a limited target language system. Ellis further asserts that the definition of CSs and their identification and classification have been ongoing issues and can become a starting point for an examination of the CS research. She classifies the definition of CS into two kinds of definitions: Interactional definitions and psychological definitions.

A definition of communication strategies can be viewed as discourse strategies related to social interaction involving learners. For this interactional definition, Tarone (1980) defines CS as involving a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on meaning in situations where prerequisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared. Meanwhile, Corder in Faerch and Kasper (1984) defines CS, as systematic technique employed by a speaker to express his meaning when faced with some difficulty, related to the speaker's inadequate command of the language used in the interaction.

The psycholinguistic approach is adopted by Faerch and Casper (1984), who define CS as the conscious plan for solving the problem in reaching particular communicative goal. They categorize communication strategy into two types: reduction strategy strategies and achievement strategy. Reduction strategy is employed by a learner to avoid solving the problems by changing the communicative goal. The other strategy is achievement strategy which is employed when a learner try to maintain the problem by developing an alternative goal.

The definitions mentioned above reveal the same purpose of communication strategies that is to solve the speaker's problems in communication by applying some kinds of techniques.

Taxonomies of Communication Strategies

To clarify the application of communication strategies, Taxonomies of communication strategies from Dornyei cited by Brown (2007) and from Tarone in Bialystok (1990) will be discussed here.

According to Brown (2007) Dornyei's taxonomy of communication strategies is considered appropriate for practical basis on the discussion of communication strategies. It is divided into two opposite main parts. One is avoidance strategies and the other is compensatory strategies. Avoiding strategies can be broken down into several subcategories, for example message abandonment and topic avoidance. Message abandonment is leaving a message unfinished because of language difficulties, and topic avoidance means avoiding topic areas or concepts that pose language difficulties. Topic avoidance is frequently employed by students. It is common to see students who prefer not to answer questions because they do not know the words or forget the words.

Compensatory strategies refer to compensation for missing knowledge. Dornyei (1995:58) classifies compensatory strategies into eleven strategy types:

1. Circumlocution: the strategy is used to describe or paraphrase the target object or action, for example a learner does not know the word, so he replaces by saying the thing you open the bottle with.
2. Approximation: the strategy in which a learner uses an alternative term to express the meaning of the target lexical item as closely as possible, for example ship for sailboat
3. Use of all purpose words: the strategy which is used when a learner extend a general, empty lexical item to contexts where certain words are lacking, for example the use the words thing, stuff, what do you call it.
4. Word-coinage: the strategy when a learner creates a nonexisting L2 word based on his knowledge of the supposed rule, for example vegetarianist for vegetarian.
5. Prefabricated patterns: the strategy in which a learner uses memorized stock phrases, usually used for 'survival' purposes, for example what is the...? where the morphological components are not known to the learner.
6. Nonlinguistic signals: the strategy in which a learner uses mime, gesture, facial expression, or sound imitation.
7. Literal translation; the strategy in which a learner translates literally a lexical item, idiom, compound word, or structure from L1 to L2.

8. Foreignizing; a strategy when a learner uses a L1 word by adjusting it to L2 phonology, for example with an L2 pronunciation and/or morphology for example adding to it a L2 suffix.
9. Code switching: a strategy when a learner uses L1 word by adjusting it to L1 pronunciation or a L3 word with L3 pronunciation while speaking in L2.
10. Appeal for help: a strategy when a learner asks for help from the interlocutor either directly, for example what do you call...? or indirectly, for example rising intonation, pause, eye contact, puzzled expression.
11. Stalling or time gaining strategy: a strategy when a learner uses filling words or hesitation devices to fill pauses and to gain time to think, for example well, now, let's see, uh, as a matter of fact.

Meanwhile Tarone's Taxonomy is simpler and has more categories compared to

Dornyei's. Tarone (1980:429) divides the taxonomy into five categories and some are elaborated into subtypes:

1. Avoidance
 - a. Topic avoidance
 - b. Message abandonment
2. Paraphrase
 - a. Approximation
 - b. Word coinage
 - c. Circumlocution
3. Conscious transfer
 - a. Literal translation
 - b. Language switch
4. Appeal for assistance
5. Mime

From Dornyei' and Tarone's Taxonomies of communication strategies, we can identify the similarities and differences. They use the same terms for seven types of communication strategies: message abandonment, topic avoidance, circumlocution, approximation, word coinage, literal translation and appealing for help. The differences can be seen on the categorization as follows: 1) while Dornyei divides communication strategies into two main categories – avoidance and compensatory according to the result of communication, Tarone divides communication strategies into five major categories –

avoidance, paraphrase, conscious transfer, appeal for assistance and mime; 2) Unlike Dornyei, Tarone does not include use of all purpose words, prefabricated patterns, and stalling or time-gaining strategies ; 3) to represent non verbal signal Tarone only uses the term mime, but Dornyei includes mime in together with gesture, facial expression and sound imitation into nonlinguistic signals. From the explanation above, Dornyei's classification seems to be more systematic and integrative than Tarone's.

METHOD

This study applies qualitative research design. This research is designed to identify and describe the observed phenomena in the form of words rather than numbers in detail. This research describes the types of communication strategies used by EFL students in their presentation for CCU course. The phenomena occur naturally without any treatment managed by the researcher. In this research, the researcher has an interactive role as she is the key instrument (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982:27). As the key instrument, she has a significant role to directly observe the Cross Cultural Understanding (CCU) class to collect the data needed and then analyze and interpret the data. She employs her eyes, ears, thoughts, capability as well as understanding for the whole process of the research.

The data were in qualitative forms collected directly from the participants when they had an oral presentation in CCU course. The data were the students' utterances (verbal behavior) and non-verbal behavior such as hand movement and other types of gestures showing the communication strategies used by the students. Some fieldnotes and documentation were also collected.

The subjects of the study were from three classes of the seventh semester, each of which consisted of 24 students. The subjects taking CCU course were assumed to be used to having a presentation, for they also got presentation assignments for other courses in the previous semesters and in the semester they were taking. In CCU course the students working in a group of two were assigned to find a topic of their own choices related to the culture of English speaking countries. They had to make a three page summary of the topic, prepare PowerPoint slides, and present it for about half an hour presentation divided into presentation and question and answer session. The subjects chosen to be observed were six groups from each class representing students who were more proficient and less proficient students. The decision on proficiency was made by the evaluation of their performance on the first presentation in which the topics were determined by the lecturer. In the second presentation the students could choose their own topic.

The subjects were video recorded while they were doing the task. The process of recording each group presentation lasted about 20-25 minutes. The recorded data were transcribed for analysis. The types of communication strategies used by the students were identified, coded, classified, described and interpreted.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings

The findings of the study are divided into two parts: the types of communication strategies used by more proficient students and the type of communication strategies used by less proficient students.

The types of Communication Strategies Used by More Proficient Students

There are eleven types of strategies used by more proficient students: message abandonment, circumlocution, approximation, all purpose words, nonlinguistic signals, literal translation, code-switching, appeal for help, stalling or time gaining strategies, repetition, and self correction.

From the study the writer finds that stalling or time gaining strategies got the highest number with the percentage of 20.94 % or as many as 31. The students used fillers to gain time to think such as *I mean that, ah, uh, I think, ok, well*. They used this strategy because the students wanted to start or to explain his/her idea, or to answer his/her classmates' question and they needed time to think for a while to communicate his/her ideas smoothly. The examples of using fillers are "*It means that eh... for the first slide we say like that because...*"; "*ok... ah... the next is about Valentine's day traditions and customs*"; "*well, ah.. it depends on the people if they don't celebrate it. It's ok.*"

The second highest strategy used by the students is repetition, which got 16.89 % or 25 in number. The following examples showed the use of the strategy: presenting the topic of table manner, a student explains how to hold a glass of red wine, she said, "*when you... when you hold a glass... a glass of red wine, you must hold the red wine, you must hold on the bowl.*" Another example, when a student answer a question from her classmate, she said, "*so if I... if I...I become a guest, a guest, I will know what I wear, not more colorful than the host's.*" In using this strategy, the students repeated the same word or words to gain time to think of certain word, phrases or structures because they forgot words or structure they actually knew. Repetition here is used to avoid silence while thinking of the appropriate terms to make the communication can run smoothly.

The third highest number is code switching getting 12.16%. The students used this strategy when they had difficulty to get the English word, or when she knew the meaning but she thought that it would be easier for his/her classmates to understand what he/she meant. For examples: A student said, “*In western life if they live together in an apartment it is **sudah biasa**”;* “*in Indonesia we know that we celebrate a party for social moment like wedding or **sunatan**.”;* “*They usually eat fried chips. Actually there is no taste. So it’s **hambar**.*”

Circumlocution got 11.49 %. In this strategy the students paraphrased the target object or action, for example a student wanted to clarify the word **to respect**, she said, “*They drink alcohol not to get drunk. They drink it **to respect** their guests, **to welcome the guests, not to get drunk**.* Another student, instead of using the word **avoid being recognized by the ghost**, said **to make the ghost go**.

Self-correction is included as the communication strategy used by the students, which got 8.11 %. In this strategy the students corrected directly the utterance when they realized that they made mistakes so that his or her classmates could understand what he or she actually meant. A student when asked by his classmate whether he celebrated Valentine or not, he said, “*We never did it. **We look for**... eh... **we look at** our religion. It is not our custom and it’s not our tradition.*” Other examples of self correction are “**People use**... **people wear** a mask if they leave their home”; “**When you**... **when your** turn to take care the children...”

The next strategy used is approximation, with the percentage of 7.43 %. This strategy is used as an alternative to express meaning of the target lexical items as closely as possible, for example a student used the word **goal** instead of **purpose** in his sentence: “*Someone who wants to make a party, **the goal** is not to make the host happy but the first **goal** is to make the guests happy.*” Another example is a student used the word **eating rules** instead of **eating etiquettes**.

Use of all purpose words has the same number as the use of approximation, which got 7.43 %. This strategy is used by the students to extend a general empty lexical item to contexts where specific words are lacking. Using the expression ‘**what is it?**’, the student might get the audiences’ attention, or if he or she could get the right words, he or she would use it., for example “*when we watch... **what is it?** When we watch old films”;* “*Maybe in Indonesia if changing name... **kind**,, **what is it?** Just call name without register or get a certificate.”; “*When we have some blessing from God, we... **what is it?** We,, (one of the classmate gave an answer: **sedekah bumi**) like that... like that...”**

The students also applied literal translation, with the percentage of 6.75 %. In this strategy the students tried to use English as far as they could by translating the L1 words into English, for example instead of saying *the host* for *tuan rumah* a student said *master of the home*. A student also translated directly the word *nasi pecel* into *rice pecel.*, and another example, to translate *mencari nafkah* she said *to survive their life* instead of saying *to earn for a living*.

Non linguistic signals got 6.08 %, in which the students used mime, gesture, and pictures (from slides). This strategy was used when the students wanted to express meaning more clearly, for example when asked by her classmate of how to hold a glass of red wine and white wine, a student used mime and showed a slide.

The low number of strategy used were appeal for help, with the percentage of 2.03 % and message abandonment, with the percentage of 0.68 %, which was the least strategy used by the students. The low number of percentage showed that the students tried to keep trying to explain his/her ideas and tried to overcome the difficult words or concepts instead of asking his/her partner or the listeners. They seemed that they were not afraid to make mistakes and to take risk. Appeal for help was used by a student by saying '*what is mewariskan?*' or he or she looked at her partner or looked at the lecturer. Message abandonment was used when a student explained women's clothing of 18th century. When explaining how a woman wore a pocket, she forgot the word '*pettycoat*' and left her sentence unfinished and continued using other sentences by saying "*we wear it after ... after ... This is pocket. It usually menempel in our clothes....*"

The types of Communication Strategies Used by Less Proficient Students

There are thirteen (13) types of communication strategies used by less proficient students: Message abandonment, topic avoidance, circumlocution, approximation, use of all purpose words, word coinage, non linguistic signals, literal translation, code switching, appeal for help, stalling or time-gaining strategy, repetition, and self correction.

Similar to the communication strategies used by more proficient students, the less proficient students also used stalling or time-gaining which got the highest number with the percentage 38.46 % or the same as 70. The fillers used by the students *ah, uh, I think, ok*. Some of the students who tried to present his/her ideas used fillers a lot showing that he/she had difficulty to express his/her ideas because he/she forgot the words and had difficulty to construct her sentences. For example, a student when asked the history why there was father's day, she answered with a lot of fillers: "*father's day... father's day is eh.. is eh...that one day eh...Sonora eh.. eh... that her mother died...*" or another

example, when a student was asked what kind of nanny would be chosen to take the children when both parents worked, she said, “*Ok eh...in this case... in this case... eh.. in my paper what kind of nanny ah...is someone they know...*”

Besides stalling and time gaining strategy, repetition was also used, with the percentage of 18.68 %. The examples of repetition were: “*There are many games...eh... for apple bobbing it means that ah... an apple ...an apple... it means that ...*”; “*there is someone like ah... there is someone like Saint Claus...*” here the students tried to get the right words to answer her classmates questions, but she had difficulty to get the right words. The third highest number of strategy was code switching, which got 12.09 %, for example “*In Indonesia we have free health care like ASKES for pegawai negeri, PNS. Then Jamkesmas for poor people.*” In the sentence above the student used the word ASKES, which refers to health insurance, pegawai negeri, which refers to civil officer, and Jamkesmas, which refers to health insurance for poor people. In this strategy the student used code switching because it could be that he/she did not know the English words for the idea he/she wanted to express or she thought it would be easier for her classmates to understand her explanation.

The fourth strategy with the percentage of 7.14 % is message abandonment. The percentage was higher compared to the more proficient students, which is only 0.68% and the least frequently used. The students used this strategy because of language difficulty like in the following example: “*In Britain ah... people in Britain celebrate Oak Apple day eh... because that is to celebrate King Charles II who save and ... (a long pause)*” The student could not continue her sentence because of language difficulty. When this situation occurred, the students usually paused for quite long and tried to find the answer from the paper or asked her/his partner.

The strategy of appeal for help was higher compared to the more proficient students, that is 6.59 percent. It seemed that the students who used this strategy tended to rely on their partner to help them to solve their difficulty and even to answer the questions.

The next strategy was literal translation with the percentage of 4.39 %. The examples of literal translation used by the students: a student used the term *call name* to refer to *surname*; another student used the term *contain* to refers to *consist of*, and another one used the term *employ* to refers to *work*.

Self correction strategy got 3.85 %. The students used this strategy when they realized that they made a mistake and they corrected it to make their explanation clearer, for examples, “*the child eh... the children’s home...*” (the student corrected it when she saw at the slide it was written children); “*you can formalize aspects of your status with a*

partner by drawing up a legal agreement called a cohabita eh... cohabitation contract ...; April fools day have celebrate... have been celebrated..”

Use All purpose words got 2.20 %. In this strategy the students used the words **what is it?** She expanded an empty lexical item to context where certain words were lacking like in the following example: *if there is... there is ...no parents...eh... what is it? the local authority will make eh...*

The next following five strategies got quite low number. The first was topic avoidance which got the percentage of 1.65%. When using this strategy the students avoided answering the question because she felt that she could not answer it and she asked her partner to answer. The second was approximation which got the same percentage as topic avoidance. In this strategy the student tried to express the meaning of a word, for example using the word **belief** to refer to **superstitions**. The three following strategies were the lowest number of communication strategies: circumlocution, word coinage, and use of non linguistic means, each of which got the same percentage of 1.10 %.. Circumlocution was used when a student explained the word **siblings**. She used the word **sister, cousin, and nephew**. Word coinage was used when a student used a word **nominality of one dollar** to refer to the **nominal value of one dollar**. The last was non linguistic signal, for example a student, who wanted to explain the word **touch the wood**, said “*to avoid bad luck they can touch the wood*” (use gesture by touching the chair). Some students who had difficulty to explain words or concepts from their topics actually could use the pictures on the slides they had made to help them explain some terms, but unfortunately they did not use them.

Discussion

Based on the findings of the research, it is clear that both more proficient students and less proficient students employed compensatory strategies much more frequently compared to the use of avoidance strategies. The employment of the strategies were mostly due to their lack of appropriate vocabulary of the target language. However, the achievement of communication goal is influenced by the students use of communication strategies. The students had attempted to communicate their ideas as far as they could by employing communication strategies.

The study shows that compensatory strategies were applied more frequently reaching more than 90% for both groups of students: 99.32% by more proficient students and 91.21% by less proficient students. The dominant usage of compensatory strategy over avoidance strategy is similar to the result of a previous study conducted by Malasit and Sarobol (2009), who concluded that learners tended to use compensatory strategy (94,85%)

than avoidance strategy (5.55%). The fact that the students used more compensatory strategies than avoidance strategies shows their effort to communicate their ideas instead of their L2 deficiencies. As Bialystok (1990:1) assured that communication strategies are the consequence of the existence of gaps either between the speaker and hearer or the speaker himself with his knowledge of language. In other words, communication strategies are the attempts to overcome communication gap. In this study, the students employed communication strategies as their efforts to cope with the problems they encounter when communicating their ideas. Furthermore, the students tried to communicate their ideas by employing more compensatory strategies than avoidance strategies. These attempts enabled the students to cope with their language problems when they communicated their ideas.

The efforts made by the students can be clearly seen by their usage of some types of communication strategies showing that they tried to go on despite their problems in communicating their ideas. The result of the study shows that the students, when facing with problems, they tried to make use of the words they are familiar with rather than avoided the communication. The finding proved Bialystok' statement (1990) that foreign language learners are inclined to utilize familiar words rather than risking unfamiliar ones.

From the data analysis, the more proficient students employed eleven types of communication strategies: time gaining, repetition, code switching, circumlocation, self correction, approximation, use of all purpose words, literal translation, non linguistic signal, appeal for help, and message abandonment. Meanwhile, the less proficient students used thirteen types of communication strategies: time gaining, repetition, code switching, message abandonment, appeal for help, literal translation, self correction, use of all purpose words, topic avoidance, approximation, circumlocation, word coinage, and use of non linguistic means. Those findings showed that the less proficient students used more communication strategies although the different number from the more proficient students was not quite high.

The first three types strategies were employed the most frequently by both groups. Time gaining (20.94% by more proficient students and 38.46% by less proficient students) was used because this strategy allowed the students to have time to think to find the right word and it is also to help them to speak naturally. Similar to time gaining, repetition (16.89% by more proficient students and 18.68% by less proficient students) was used to give time for the students to think. In addition, the use of those strategies could also be caused by the students' affective factors such as nervousness and being afraid of making mistakes. Mesnwhile, code switching strategy (12.16% by more proficient students and

12.09% by less proficient students) was used due to the students' similar L1 background, so they thought it would be easier and clearer if Bahasa Indonesia was used.

Although both more proficient students and less proficient students employed more compensation strategies than avoidance strategies, the more proficient students applied more L2 based strategies such as circumlocation (11.49%) and approximation (7.45%), while the less proficient students used circumlocation only 1.65% and approximation only 1.10% from the total number communication strategies they employed. The more proficient students also used less time gaining and repetition strategies than the less proficient students. This indicates that the more proficient students communicate more effectively and efficiently than the less proficient students.

The results of the study also supported some previous studies related to the influence of the students' language proficiency to the communication strategies applied by them. The previous studies (Parabakhi, 1985; Chen, 1990; Liskin-Gasparro, 1996 and Nakatani, 2006) were quoted in Huang (2010), who reported that a learner' language proficiency is a potentially influential factor in the choice of communication strategies. He concluded that high language proficiency students were more likely to resort to linguistic knowledge to convey meaning and they were able to select appropriate and effective strategies for interaction. He added low language proficiency students tended to rely on knowledge-based or conceptual-based strategies and used more abandonment strategies. Meanwhile, Tiono (2004) concluded from her research findings that students with high communication apprehension level used more communication strategies due to their affective factors such as being nervous, being afraid of making mistakes, and too much hesitation.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION

The total number of communication strategies used by the students from more proficient students was 148, which equals 44.85%, while the total number of communication strategies used by less proficient students was 182, which equals 55.15%. The more proficient students used eleven (11) types of communication strategies and the less proficient students used thirteen (13) types of communication strategies. There were three types of communication strategies which were the most frequently used by the students from the two levels of proficiency. They were use of fillers or time-gaining strategy, repetition, and code switching. Compared to the more proficient students, the less proficient students used higher number of avoidance and appeal for help strategies. In contrast the more proficient students used more L2 based strategies like circumlocation,

and approximation. Instead of the similarity and the little difference between the two groups, the more proficient students seemed to be more efficient in using communication strategies, so they could explain their ideas more clearly, and they seemed to be more confident in using English. Furthermore, from the observation, the more proficient students spoke more fluently without depending too much on their written paper and could make use the slides more efficiently than the lower level students. Some of them also used interactional negotiation strategies such as comprehension and confirmation strategies although these strategies were not included to be studied in this research.

The study shows that the employment of communication strategies had enabled the students to achieve their communication goal despite their insufficient linguistic resources. This study also reveals that some students still struggled to communicate their ideas. Based on the findings, some suggestion are offered for teachers, students, and further researchers. The teachers are suggested to introduce communication strategies to their EFL learners. The teachers may teach communication strategies and encourage their students to use them appropriately. Beside that, with some knowledge of communication strategies they can encourage their students to use more compensatory strategies instead of avoidance strategies to lead their language learners to be more proficient in using English for oral communication.

For the students, it is expected that they use more effective communication strategies that lead them to become more fluent language learners. For next researchers, Further study on communication strategies on more complex or difficult subjects based on classroom research need to be explored by further researchers so that more fruitful findings will give more contribution to English language teachers.

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