TYPES AND FREQUENCY OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN A BILINGUAL CLASS BY A NON-ENGLISH LANGUAGE LECTURER

Zubaidi State Polytechnic of Malang Email: mas.zubaidi@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The objective of this research was to study the communication strategies (CS) used by a non-English lecturer teaching her subject in English. The study was to investigate the types and frequency of CS used by the lecturer and the students' perception of the use of communication strategies by their lecturer. Data was collected from classroom observations and a questionnaire. Tarone's (1980) taxonomy of CS was used in this descriptive-qualitative analysis. The results showed that the lecturer used language switch, literal translation, appeal-for-assistance, circumlocution, approximation and message abandonment strategies. Fillers and pauses were also used during her teaching. The students perceived that the use of CS by the lecturer helped them understand the subject better. The strategies that help them to comprehend the lecturer's explanation better were language switch, literal translation and circumlocution strategy. The students perceived that the use of Indonesian could make understanding easier because their English was still not good.

Keywords: communication strategies, bilingual class, non-English lecturer

Bilingual education is an educational program which involves the use of two languages of instruction at some point in the schooling process (Brisk, 2006; González, 2008). This program involves the first language (L1) and one second or foreign language (L2) which is the target language of acquisition as the medium of instruction (Baker, 2001). In terms of the use of the two languages in the classroom, a bilingual program is determined by the aims of the program. The bilingual instruction in the Indonesian education environment is commonly intended to improve the quality of the human resources, especially their English proficiency.

In this circumstance, bilingual classes need proficient teachers who can teach the subject matter in English well even though they can use their native language to explain a certain concept when it is difficult to do so in English. Nevertheless, the bigger proportion of use of English language is preferable. However, in a bilingual (or even multilingual) situation like in Indonesia, the mastery of both English and Indonesian can be imbalanced. This imbalance may be caused by the teacher's less proficiency of one language and may result in problems in explaining a concept. To solve the problems the teachers will apply several different CS in order they can elucidate their linguistic difficulty (Auer, 1999; Bolander, 2008).

The study is intended to know what different CSs are used by a non-English lecturer in a bilingual class in the Business Administration Department of State Polytechnic of Malang. It includes the types and frequency of CS and the students' perception of the use of

CS by the lecturer.

The concept of CS was first introduced by Selinker (1972) in his paper called "Interlanguage" where these strategies are one of the five central processes involved in second language learning. These strategies were then studied by some researchers, such as Tarone (1980), Faerch & Kasper (1983), Corder (1981), and others. Tarone (1980:419) defines a communication strategy "as a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situation where requisite meaning structures are not shared." In this definition CSs are used when there is an interaction between the interlocutors who are negotiating the meaning.

Faerch & Kasper (1983:81) define CS as 'potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal'. Faerch and Kasper look CS as a result of conscious planning which may occur to solve potential communicative problems and to produce communication smoothness and fluency.

Corder (1981:103) defines the communicative strategies of second language learners "as a systematic technique employed by a speaker to express his meaning when faced with some difficulty." In his definition Corder focuses the use of CS to solve the problems in the communication.

Tarone (1980) suggests taxonomy of CS from the social interactional perspective. This perspective is based on the notion that communication happens in an interaction between the language learners and their interlocutors and that both parties negotiate the meaning. She lists nine strategies which she groups into five categories, as follows:

(1) Paraphrase:

- a. Approximation
- b. Word Coinage
- c. Circumlocution
- (2) Borrowing:
 - a. Literal Translation
 - b. Language Switch
- (3) Appeal for Assistance
- (4) Mime
- (5) Avoidance:
 - a. Topic Avoidance
 - b. Message Abandonment

The second important communication

strategy taxonomy is suggested by Faerch and Kasper (1983). Their classification of the CS is based on the notion that CSs are actually a cognitive process of the speaker with a focus on comprehension and production. Therefore, they suggest different taxonomy of CS. Some of their strategies are the same as suggested by Tarone, yet they propose more strategies and different categories. The following are Faerch & Kasper's (1983) taxonomy of CS.

Another set of taxonomy is suggested by Bialystok (1990) who groups two principal classes of CS in the process-oriented approach: analysis-based and control-based strategies. This classification is based on a framework of The analysis-based language processing. strategies include circumlocution, paraphrase, transliteration, word coinage, and mime, while the control-based strategies include language switch, ostensive definition, appeal for help, and mime. She states that the analysis-based strategies involve "an attempt to convey the structure of the intended concept by making explicit the relational defining features." The control-based strategies involve "choosing a representational system that is possible to convey and that makes explicit information relevant to the identity of the intended concept" (Bialystok, 1990:134).

This study uses Tarone's taxonomy of CS because it is developed on the basis of interactional perspective and consists of clear classifications. Tarone's taxonomy involves the context where communication happens. It pays attention to the understanding of the interlocutor towards the meaning which is trying to get across. In this sense, the choice of the strategy depends more or less on the listener's understanding. When the listener seems still confused or does not understand the meaning, the speaker will probably use another strategy. In addition, it is often used as the bases for the investigation in many pieces of research studying CS in different situations, such as in Hung (2012), Yang & Gai (2010), Kongsom (2009), Zhang (2007).

METHODS

This is a descriptive qualitative study of the CS which are used by a non-English lecturer in a bilingual class at the Business Administration Department of State Polytechnic of Malang.

One lecturer of the department was picked purposively as the subject of the study and was observed of her use of CS in three classroom meetings in a bilingual class. The study is to discover the types and frequency of CS used by the lecturer, and the students' perception towards the use of CS by the lecturer in the classroom

Several types of data were collected in the study. The first data was video-recorded verbal classroom communication between the non-English lecturer and the students taken from three different meetings of the same bilingual class. The verbal classroom communication was then transcribed to identify the CS used by the lecturer and the frequency of their use. The transcription was done carefully to include any pauses and their duration, repetition of certain utterances, intonation and other aspects of conversation analysis and discourse analysis as described by Wooffitt (2005). The second type of data was the students' perception towards the use of CS by the lecturer in her or his teaching obtained from a questionnaire given to the students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Communication Strategies Used by the Lecturer

The communication strategies of Tarone's (1980) taxonomy used by the lecturer were language switch, literal translation, appeal for assistance, approximation, circumlocution and message abandonment. Fillers and pauses were also used by the lecturer.

The type and frequency of the use of CS are summarized in the following table.

Communication Strategy	Freq.	%
Language switch	274	52.49
Literal translation	139	26.63
Circumlocution	12	2.30
Approximation	36	6.90
Appeal for assistance	8	1.53
Message abandonment	14	2.68
Fillers	21	4.02
Pauses	18	3.45
Total	522	100

Table 1. Type and frequency of communicationstrategies used by the lecturer

Language Switch Strategy

It was found that the lecturer used the language switch strategy in two different ways. They were code mixing and code switching. She used these strategies alternatively for different reasons and purposes.

Language switch strategy was used the most often (52.49%) by the lecturer. The lecturer believed that it was the easiest way to solve the difficulty with the second language. She felt that when she did not know the proper expressions in English, using the mother tongue was the best way. Her statement proved that the definition of communication strategy mentioned by some scholars in part is true; for example, the definitions by Tarone (1980), Corder (1981), and Faerch & Kasper (1983) which relate the use of communication strategy to an attempt to solve the speaker's problem in communicating his message to his/her listener.

The language switch strategy is commonly used in a bilingual context where two languages are shared proportionally by the interlocutors. This strategy is often used by speakers with lower degree of L2 proficiency or by those who speak with lower speakers, as studied by Sinha (2009) in an Indian classroom situation and by Takehara (2000) in a Japanese classroom situation.

The language switch in this study, however, was used by the lecturer for two reasons: to make the subject understandable to the students, and to avoid misunderstanding due to misuse of English expressions.

The finding of this study is similar to that of another study by Suharyadi (2010). His findings showed many uses of language switch by the teacher of mathematics, chemistry and biology. These three teachers stated that the use of language switch was for emergency situations where the teachers did not know the English expressions and for students' comprehension on the topic being discussed in the classroom.

The findings of a piece of research by Ghout-Khenoune (2006), however, do not support the finding of this study. In her dissertation for the degree of Magister in Linguistics at University of Algiers, she investigates a group of EFL learners who are given different tasks with different level of difficulty: description tasks and discussion tasks. She finds that the learners do not use different CS in solving their problem in completing the tasks. They use the same CS in the two sets of tasks: repetition, restructuring, message abandonment and appeal for assistance. It is inferred from the research that the different levels of difficulty of the tasks do not affect the types of CS the learners use in solving their communication problems.

The different findings of Ghout-Khenoune's (2006) study and this study do not mean that they contradict each other. Different subjects and objects of communication, classroom interactions, and topics cause different use of CS. Blom and Gumperz (1972 in Nilep, 2006:7) call these three factors as participants, setting and topic. These factors, as they mention, "restrict the selection of linguistic variables in a manner that is somewhat analogous to syntactic or semantic restriction."

They further explain that in certain social situations, some linguistic forms or utterances may be more appropriate than others. Take for an example, the types of utterances or communication used by a group of mechanics in a workshop are different from the variety of language used by teachers presenting text material in the public school. It can be inferred, therefore, that different social events may result in different language forms even with the same participants in the same setting when the topic shifts.

In the current study the lecturer used language switch strategy together with literal translation strategy to make sure that her students understood the topic she was explaining. It was the students' understanding to the topic which became the lecturer's concern. Both strategies were used alternatively along the course of the teaching. Under the observation the lecturer did not seem to show any linguistic problems in explaining the topic. This fact was confirmed by the lecturer's statement in the interview.

Literal Translation Strategy

Literal translation strategy was used by the lecturer as many as 139 times (26.63%) to make sure that the concepts and her explanation could be understood by the students. The lecturer felt that the students' understanding was more important than the use of English. This was because the concepts of accounting were rather difficult to the students, let alone that the students might not have much background knowledge about accounting.

The use of language switch strategy and literal translation strategy was intended in one part to make the message comprehensible by the students. It was the students' understanding which counted more than just the use of the second language or English. The lecturer in this situation did not always have the lexical problem as mentioned in some definitions by language experts, such as Tarone (1980), Faerch & Kasper (1983) and others. They state that CSs are used when the speaker has difficulties in the language. The lecturer in the study deliberately used the first language to make her message understood by her students.

The use of the first language in the language switch strategy and literal translation strategy in that situation was similar to the summary made by Begovic (2011). Her study is conducted with four Swedish L2 learners of upper secondary school who share the same first language. She summarizes that code switching is used to bring an effect to an utterance, and not because of lacking knowledge in their L2. From these findings it can be inferred that the use of certain CS is not always caused by the lack of lexical knowledge of the second language.

In the students' point of view in this study, the use of CS which involved the first language was also preferred. When asked to rank the effectiveness of the nine communication categories, the students put literal translation strategy and language switch in the first and second ranks respectively. It showed that the use of Indonesian was still important for the communication to be able to convey the message. This fact might indicate that because the students were not proficient in English, the use of Indonesian was for understanding.

This finding is similar to what is found by Ting & Phan (2008) who mention that the lessproficient speakers of English in their study tend to choose the strategies which involve the first language, while more-proficient speakers tend to prefer the strategies which are more L2 oriented. The L1-oriented strategies in their study are literal translation and language switch strategies. The less-proficient speakers use the literal translation strategy 5 times out of 142 strategies used or 4%, while the language switch strategy is employed 25 times or 18%.

Another piece of research by Yang & Gai (2010) also supports the present study, where they find that most students under study use strategies which involve the use of first language. In their study, the students use the language switch more often than the other strategies. Reduction strategies, which can be topic avoidance or message abandonment, are also preferred by the students when they have problems in expressing their message. They use these to be able to overcome nervousness and stress, reducing errors to reach the goal of communication.

For the present study, the lecturer used the language switch and literal translation because either that the lecturer wanted to make sure that her message was comprehensible to the students or that she was not sure how to express her message in English correctly due to her lack of vocabulary. When she was asked why she did not use other strategies, she said that using Indonesian was more effective and easy to do. In addition, she was concerned more to make the students understand the important concepts of her subject than to use English which was difficult to understand.

Circumlocution Strategy

The circumlacution strategy was used by the lecturer as many as 12 times. This strategy is one used to exemplify, illustrate or describe a concept or object (Dornyei & Scott, 1995: 188). The lecturer used this strategy when she came across a new concept that she thought the students deserve an explanation.

Several studies on CS, such as by Malasit & Sarobol (2013), Hung (2012) and Suharyadi (2010), mention that circumlocution strategy is used to paraphrase a certain concept which may be difficult to understand or one which the speaker does not know the word or phrase in the target language.

Approximation Strategy

The approximation strategy is one to refer to the use of a single target language (L2) word or structure which shares the semantic features of the target word or structure (Dorneyi & Scott, 1997). The lecturer under study used this strategy 36 times accounting for 6.90 percent of all strategies identified during the classroom commnication.

In several ocassions the lecturer in the study used the strategy when she did not know the term in English. For instance, when she talked about the concept of 'transporting,' due to her being not sure with the target word she used 'transporter' or 'transformer.'

Appeal for Assistance Strategy

The appeal for assistance strategy is used when the speaker seeks help, either directly or indirectly, from his/her interlocutor for solving his/her linguistic problems. The use of this strategy is reported in many recent studies concerning communication in the context of second language learning, for example Hung, (2012), Binhayeearong (2009), Chen (2009), and Ghout-Khenoune (2006). In these studies the appeal for assistance strategy is used because the speakers do not know the intended word or words, either asked implicitly or explicitly.

The use of appeal for assistance strategy by the lecturer in this study was found eight times during the teaching-learning process in the classroom, which indicated that the lecturer had difficulty in using English in the classroom by asking the students for certain target words or phrases. For example, when she asked about a special term which was related to the topic being discussed, 'barang jadi,' she asked the students.

In a study by Suharyadi (2010) three teachers who are observed to investigate the use of CS in the classroom does not find any use of appeal for assistance. Three teachers of mathematics, chemistry, and biology use the strategies of code switching and code mixing, repetition, paraphrasing–approximation, direct translation and circumlocution. Even though his study has similar classroom situation to this study, the types of strategies used by the teachers are different. There seems to be factors that influence the use of CS; and there have been several studies which investigate these factors.

Guhlemann (2011:20), for example, finds that there is a significant correlation between personality & motivation and the use of CS. He investigates students with low anxiety and high anxiety also those students who are low motivated and high motivated. The results show that the students who have low anxiety and high motivation tend to use circumlocution (score: 4.29), approximation (score: 4.21), and use of all-purpose words (score: 3.93). Meanwhile, the students with high anxiety and low motivation tend to use avoidance (score: 1.93), code switching (score: 2.5), and foreignerization, as well as topic avoidance (score: 2.86).

In another study of factors affecting the use of CS, Huang (2010) finds that the students' oral proficiency, the frequency of speaking in English and the motivation in speaking English are significant factors influencing the use of oral CS. He also finds that gender has a little affect on the use of CS.

Message Abandonment Strategy

Message abandonment strategy is а communication strategy which "occurs when the learner begins to talk about a concept but is unable to continue due to lack of meaning structure, and stops in mid-utterance" (Tarone, 1980: 429). This strategy was used by the lecturer when she did not continue her explanation of the topic due to a couple of reasons. In the interview, the lecturer mentioned that she did not actually want to avoid the topic; rather, her mind was distracted by the slide presentation. The slide showed something else when she had not finished explaining the current topic, so that she then explained what was shown on the screen/computer. Thus, it can be said that the use of the message abandonment strategy was not due to her lack of lexical and grammatical inadequacy; rather, to technical effect of the usage of the teaching aid and psychological distraction of focus.

Malasit & Sarobol (2013) investigate 30 students of an English program in Thai classroom situation for the use of CS with different tasks. Their findings show the frequent use of message abandonment strategy and put it in fifth rank of frequency. They mention that for difficult tasks the students tend to use the avoidance strategies which include topic avoidance and message abandonment.

The Use of Fillers and Pauses

The lecturer used fillers, such as *er* or *um* many times during the teaching learning process. Even

though Tarone (1980) does not include fillers as a communication strategy in her taxonomy, several researchers (Malasit & Sarobol, 2013; Hua, et al. 2012; Begovic, 2011; Jorda, 1997; Dornyei & Scott, 1995) who discuss on CS mention that fillers are part of CS which are categorized under *stalling or time gaining strategy* which are used to have time to think for the proper language units to make the conversation keep going. Kongsom (2009:30) states in his research that the use of fillers is not intended to compensate vocabulary lack but rather to give time to think and to keep on the conversation.

Begovic (2011) mentions that pauses and fillers are good tools for a speaker to think and plan what they want to say next, and how to do so. In more details Faerch and Kasper (1983) distinguish four different types of pausing: articulatory pauses, pauses for breathing, conventional pauses, and hesitation pauses. These pauses are categorized into unfilled (silent) pauses and filled pauses which are indicated by non-lexical activity such as *er, em, erm, oh* or turn-based starters such as *well, I mean, you know, I don't know* (Faerch and Kasper, 1983).

The interview with the lecturer in this study showed the reason for the use of many fillers and pauses that was slight different from the results of Kongsom's research. The lecturer said that she used the fillers and pauses because she waited to see the students' reaction of what she had just said.

This finding of using many pauses and fillers in this current study is similar to the finding of the study conducted by Malasit & Sarobol (2013) who investigate the use of CS by Thai learners. They find that these learners use fillers/hesitation most frequently (43.33%). They use them because the strategy allows the learners to process their cognitive demands required from the task and help the speech to flow naturally.

The Students' Perception of Communication Strategy Use

The students of the bilingual class perceived the use of CS employed by the lecturer as a helpful tool for better comprehension of the subject matter. As found in the findings, the students

perceived positively towards the use of strategies which involve the first language, which are language switch and literal translation, and circumlocution. They, in contrast, perceived negatively towards the use of topic avoidance and message abandonment.

These findings are not similar to those of a study by Moattarian (2012). She investigates 100 students to give their perceptions about the use of CS in oral and written mediums. Even though their perceptions are not aimed at the use of CS by their teacher, their opinions about the use of CS are relevant to the current study. In Moattarian's study, the students perceive that the use of strategies which involve the use of first language get negative attitudes, while the strategies which go to the group of achievement or compensatory strategies get positive attitude.

Most of the students (88%) in this study perceived that the use of CS by the lecturer helped them in understanding what the lecturer tried to explain. However, the strategies which involved the second language were preferred by the students. When the students were asked to rank which CS help them best, they determined that literal translation communication strategy was the best, followed by language switch strategy and circumlocution strategy. Their choice was based on the reason that these strategies could help them in understanding the message better.

The students (77%) also mentioned that they liked the lecturer's use of English in the classroom though she often experienced difficulties in expressing herself in English (67%) and she used several CS to overcome her difficulties. The CS that the lecturer used most often, as perceived by the students, were respectively: literal translation (90%), language switch (82%), circumlocution (46%), approximation (46%), appeal for assistance (44%), and message abandonment (35%). In responding to the use of these fillers and pauses the students perceived that they did not help much for their comprehension but it did not matter much because the students can comprehend it from the actions of the lecturer in the classroom.

CONCLUSIONS

In terms of the use of CS in the classroom, it can be concluded that the lecturer used several different CS to help them convey the subjects she was teaching. The strategies that she used most often were those which were related to the first language (L1), namely language switch and literal translation. The language switch strategy that was used by the lecturer includes code-switching and code-mixing. In line with the fact that language switch strategy can be codemixing and code-switching, the use of codemixing strategy in this study was more frequent than code-switching. From the interview with the lecturer the use of more code-mixing was caused partly by automatic slip of tongue and mostly by her intention to make her message understood by the students.

In summary, the conclusion drawn from this study stated that the use of the CS by the lecturer was intended to make the concepts of the subject matters understood by the students, and because the lecturer had difficulties in the linguistic system. The use of language switch was intended to make the language understood by the listeners. Language switch strategy was unavoidable and important in the process of teaching-learning since it functioned to increase attention among students, to qualify messages and to facilitate further understanding on the topic discussed. It is clear that in this study understanding or making the message across is more important in the communication and interaction between the lecturer and the students than the efforts to use English in the bilingual class.

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