



## A Study of Communication Strategies used by English Teachers and its Implication in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

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**ABSTRACT:** The objective of this research was to analyze the English teachers' communication strategies and their perception during the teaching learning process. The writer analyzed the data gained through the questionnaire by describing the English teachers' perception about the communication strategies usually used during the teaching learning process. She also analyzed the teachers' communication strategies into the fourteen strategies based on to some experts, there are several types of communication strategies that can be used to solve problems in communication (Dornyei 1995, Littlewood 1984, Tarone 1980). (Tarone (1980) presents five types of communication strategies, including: paraphrase, transfer, appeal for assistance, mime, avoidance. Littlewood (1984) describes eight types of communication strategies: they are avoidable communication, adjust the message, use paraphrase, use approximation, create new words, switch to the native language, use non-linguistic resources, seek for help. Meanwhile, Dornyei (1995) stated that the three main types of communication strategies, namely: topic avoidance strategies (topic avoidance and message abandonment), compensatory strategies (approximation, word coinage, circumlocution, literal translation, code-switching, appeal for help, used all-purpose words, non-linguistic signal, foreignizing), and stalling or time gaining strategies (use of fillers/hesitation devices). The design of this research is qualitative research. The writer described the data in order to have a clear and complete description of the research result. The researcher used the result of the English teachers' questionnaire as the data. The sample of this research was the English teacher who lives and teach in Bandar Lampung in the academic year 2022/2023.

**KEYWORDS:** Communication Strategies, English Teacher, Linguistics, Perception, TEFL.

### INTRODUCTION

As a social creature, human needs to interact to one another. Language is one of the tools of communication to use in society. To communicate each other, shares and transfers thoughts or feelings we need to use communication strategies to make our communication runs effectively. Others will easily understand or grasp our idea, thought, or feeling if we use the appropriate ways of communication. As (Rahayu, 2010) clarifies that communication as symbolic activity, process, and meaning transferring. Symbolic activity means the communication happens meaningfully through symbols in form of verbal or non-verbal language (Rahayu, 2010). Verbal symbols relate to spoken or written words which are commonly used in communication. Meanwhile non-verbal symbols are an alternative way to communicate. For example; gestures, facial expression, body movement and hands signal. Some people also use meaning transfer in many ways both verbal and non-verbal.

English is used by most people from many different countries with each different culture. They tend to use their ways of communication which may arise misunderstanding. Due to the speakers' lack of linguistics knowledge of the language will lead them meet some problems during the communication. Then, each speaker will have varieties way to overcome the problem that they have during the interaction. They will use different communication strategies which suit to their character, culture and knowledge they have. According to Carmen, Cervantes, Rodríguez and Roux, Ruth (2012 : 113) states that Communication strategies are attempts to bridge the gap between the linguistic knowledge of the second-language learner and the linguistic knowledge of his or her interlocutor in real communication situations. So, The strategies will help them stay in the communication well. While the learners' success in using the language they learn both spoken and written. As Soerjowardhana and Nuswantoro (2015:1) states that a verbal spoken communication (conversation) is considered successful when the speaker and listener can understand each other. Unlike children who easily master their native language, adult foreign language learners, although they have learned and practiced the foreign language for years, are in general not able to use the language even for basic communication purposes.



According to Calisa (2019: 94) states that Communication strategies are when the language learners try to use in communication to overcome difficulties in language in order to convey the intended meaning. This problem occasionally arises both for teachers and learners. Then, not only foreign language learners but the teachers also sometimes may encounter various communication problems when their interlanguage is limited or they find problem in finding the easiest way to explain the material to students. Furthermore, as Sukirlan (2017: 47) discloses that one of the goals of language teaching program is to make students possess substantial skill and strategies so that they are able to communicate in varieties of real communication situation. It is an urge for teachers to have the accurate language while teaching, since their utterances need to be comprehended by students so students will be able to perform the knowledge, they get from teacher well. As Tomlinson (2003) in (Flora, 2022: 8) states that awareness in language learning provide learners a better understanding and curiosity about language they are learning (Flora, 2021). So, the accurate and exact language used during communication both in formal and informal, moreover in the form of teaching learning process is badly needed to have a complete and understandable communication.

In order to convey their messages and remain in a conversation until their communication goal is achieved, ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers need to employ communication strategies, which have been defined generally as devices used by second language speakers to overcome perceived barriers to achieving specific communication goals (Færch & Kasper, 1983).

Further more, Pertiwi, Wello, and Muliati, (2017: 2) clarifies that To enable positive interaction or to create conducive learning atmosphere while teaching high school students, teachers should consider interpersonal communication strategy which appropriate with the students (Pertiwi et al., n.d.). Interpersonal communication strategy is overall decision that is conditional about what ways of communication to be executed in order achieving the goal in teaching. Interpersonal communication strategy is important because teachers while communicating needs to consider the purpose and the communication, e.g. Communicating with kindergarten students in teaching and learning process will be different while communicating with high school students.

Communication strategies are usually associated with spoken language and research has shown that students tend to use various communication strategies when they are unable to express what they want to say because of their lack of resources in their second language (L2) (Hedge, 2000). Some learners will find difficulties to acquire the second language when they learn the language as additional language knowledge. According to Ortega (2009: 48) says that many of them, indeed, will begin to acquiring their L2 after many years of being able users of another language. Because they need to acquire the language in order to be able to use the language in communication ways well. While not every learner will successfully learn the second or foreign language. As Selinker (1972: 215) states that second language learners will successfully master the target language when they pass through these some process, they are; first, language transfer; second, transfer-of-training; third, strategies of second -language learning; fourth, strategies of second-language communication; and fifth, overgeneralization of TL linguistics material. Some researcher believes those processes above, may arise the Interlanguage. "The process of learning a second language (L2) is characteristically non-linear and fragmentary, marked by a mixed landscape of rapid progression in certain areas but slow movement, incubation, or even permanent stagnation in others. Such a process results in a linguistic system known as 'interlanguage' (Selinker, 1972). In line with the ideas, Nordquist (2019) claims that Interlanguage is the type of language or linguistic system used by second- and foreign-language learners who are in the process of learning a target language. Interlanguage pragmatics is the study of the ways non-native speakers acquire, comprehend, and use linguistic patterns or speech acts in a second language. Of course, the second or foreign language learners have their own ways to deal with the learning process, one of them is when language learners do not know how to say a word in English, they can communicate effectively by using their hands, imitating sounds, inventing new terms, or describing what they mean (Pangaribuan et al., 2020). (Darman, Agustina, Pratiwi, Elfian dan Yenita, 2020: 275)

When learners experience that fluency in their first language (hereafter L1) does not follow the same pattern as their L2, a gap is created in the knowledge of their L2. These gaps can take many forms: a word, a phrase, a structure, a tense marker or an idiom (Bialystok, 1990). In order to overcome that gap, learners have two options: they can either leave the original communicative goal or they can try to reach other alternative plans and use other linguistic means that they have at their disposal. More over, Young (1992: 2) An analysis-based communication strategies is thus an attempt to convey meaning by analyzing that meaning-that is, by invoking relations between the intended meaning and other meanings. Communication strategies from the more traditional taxonomies which exemplify this enhanced analysis are circumlocution, paraphrase, transliteration, and word coinage. In line with the explanation above, the writer may say that communication strategies are the strategies of communication that someone of non-native speaker of one language should know in order to avoid some problems that may occur during the conversation with the



interlocutors. It is also important to know that culture and language cannot be separated, therefore in the context of language teaching, the knowledge of language and its culture need to be taught as well to second language learners. By letting the learners know about it, they may solve their problems during communication and may choose properly which strategies of communication they are going to use. The role of teachers in introducing communication strategies to the learners could determine their learners' successfulness in facing problems of communication occur in real life situations.

By knowing strategies to avoid misinterpretation between different backgrounds of speakers, the problems mentioned before shall be avoided easily. Language teaching at school has traditionally been aimed at developing linguistic competence. Teachers tend to teach grammar and linguistic features without letting their learners practice and improve their communication in English. Probably this is one reason that cause some learners are good in English but they cannot use English orally. This problem may be solved by the teacher to introduce communication strategies to their learners in order to avoid them from some communication problems and equip them with strategies to overcome the problems of speaking that they are dealing with. That is why, this paper will focus on how students deal with the problem during the communication.

Communication strategies are plans for communicating information related to a specific issue, event, situation, or audience. The term of communication strategies is firstly postulated by Selinker (1972) in his paper entitled "Interlanguage". In the teaching leaning process, the communication strategies used by both teacher and students. For teachers, during the teaching learning process, they struggle to stay in English in order to trains students' English in general and in some other specific areas of language, they are; grammar, pronunciation and many other thinks.

The communication problems may come from the inadequate linguistic repertoire of target language, own performance problems, and interlocutor performance problems (Dornyei & Scott, 1997). Thus, EFL teachers use alternative strategy to overcome those communication problems known as communication strategy. Teachers' communicative skill is very crucial for EFL teachers since they are supposed to use English during giving instructions (Rofiatun, 2018).

Communication strategies are strategies that learners use to overcome these problems in order to convey their intended meaning. Strategies used may include (1) paraphrasing, (2) substitution, (3) coining new words, (4) switching to the first language, and (5) asking for clarification and there are some more strategies mostly and usually used by language learners. These strategies, with the exception of switching languages, are also used by native speakers.

As the writer has discussed and described in her previous paper that the strategies mostly used by second language foreign speakers, are:

1. Syntactic or Lexical Avoidance within a Semantic Category

2. Topic Avoidance

3. Phonological Avoidance

4. Circumlocution

5. Approximation

6. Use of all-purpose words

7. Word coinage

8. Prefabricated Pattern

- Prefabricated routines mean a sentence / phrase which sounded shortly and usually static word / sentence. It is difficult to develop because it is general expression.
- Prefabricated routines in this position look like we speak a number of words/sentences which have been heard, tried, mastered, or ever use the sentence previously
- Prefabricated routines usage in same time we will think. It can be developed into pattern. Speaker will be aware the construction of sentences.
- Routines can be developed by speaker into other variation of sentence, however the sentences/ phrases usually static and only general expression. For instance: "good morning" can be "good afternoon", "good night", "good evening" and so on.

9. Nonverbal Signals

Nonverbal communication is the transfer of information through body language, facial expressions, gestures, mime, and sound imitation.



## 10. Literal Translation

Translating literally a lexical item, idiom, compound word, or structure from L1 to L2. According to (Newmark, 1988) states that “in literal translation, the SL grammatical constructions are converted to their nearest TL equivalents but the lexical words are again translated singly, out of context. It means that when the translator translates, the words are translated literally from SL into TL.

## 11. Foreignizing

Using a native word by adjusting it to the second-language phonology (i.e., with the second-language pronunciation) and/or morphology (e.g., Adding to it a second-language suffix)

## 12. Code-Switching or Language Switching

Using the native language term, without bothering to translate, in a second language sentence. When speaker alternate two or more language in the same conversation is a code switching. In it the speaker starts with a language and ends with a different language.

## 13. Appeal for Assistance

Asking for the right word from someone either directly or indirectly

## 14. Stalling or time-gaining strategies

Using filters or hesitation devices to fill pauses and to gain time to think. The speaker Gives herself time asking for help or recalling her/his memory.

As the writer has mention before, that several authors draw attention to the danger of L2 learners using taught fillers gambits inappropriately if the presentation has been superficial and not adequately contextualized. This using fillers or hesitation devices to fill pauses and to gain to think. This is words that serve regulate the smooth flow of a conversational talk. Although they do not have meaning in traditional sense of the word, they are very important conversational behaviour. This strategy includes: 1. Fillers, hesitation devices and gambits For example: “well, actually..., where was I...?” 2. Self-other Repetition For example: “I want to go...to go to Bali”. Another example; Uh, Well, Actually & hmmm.

In the course of teaching a second language, teachers will frequently encounter

communication problems caused by a lack of linguistic resources. Communication strategies are strategies that learners use to overcome these problems in order to convey their intended meaning. Referring to the background presented, the writer would like to focus her research on observing teachers’ communication strategies that they usually used during the teaching-learning process. So, she formulated her research question as (1) What are the communication strategies used by the teachers and (2) what is the implication to TEFL.

## METHOD

During teaching and learning process. The subject of this research was an English teacher. A qualitative study is chosen because it describes a situation or a phenomenon. The phenomenon was the use of communication strategies by English teachers in Bandar Lampung. There were twenty-five teachers filled up the online questionnaire. Meanwhile, the objects of the study were communication strategies which were used by the English teachers. In this case, the researcher attempted to figure out the types of communication strategy and a certain strategy which was most used by the teachers. Besides that, it was also considered to find out reasons for using a certain communication strategy which was most frequently used by them.

In this study, the data were collected through several techniques, namely, observation and distributing questionnaire. The observation was conducted to collect the teachers’ utterances when they give instruction or explanation to students. Then, the questionnaire was conducted by the researcher to know the types and numbers of communication strategies which were used by the surf guides. The interviews were given to the surf guides by asking some questions that had been arranged. The aim is to find out the reasons of using the communication strategy which was most frequently used by the surf guide.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### Teachers’ Communication Strategies

The respondents of this research are twenty-four the English teacher who taught in bandar lampung. Observing from the data gain through the questionnaires showed that the communication strategies mostly used by the English teachers, are: (1) Circumlocation,



(2) Code Mixing, (3) stalling, (4) Literal Translation, (5) gesture, (6) Semantic and appeal assistance, and the least (7) Nonverbal Communication. Those communication strategies mostly used the English teachers who taught around Bandar Lampung.

Circumlocution is (also called circumduction, circumvolution, periphrasis, kenning, or ambage) is the use of an unnecessarily large number of words to express. This communication strategies used by most teachers. They try to explain in longer words or explanation just want to describe a word that they forget the English equivalent. The second communication strategies mostly chosen by the English teacher is the code mixing or code switching, Code mixing is when someone uses one word or phrase from one language to another language. While the Code switching is the ways in which a member of an underrepresented group (consciously or unconsciously) adjusts their language, syntax, grammatical structure, behavior, and appearance to fit into the dominant culture. Meanwhile, Phonological, words in all purpose, word coinage, fabricated, and foreignizing didn't used by the English teacher who taught in Bandar Lampung. In conclusion, both teachers and also the students have their own communication strategies. The choice of using the strategies affected by the language knowledge that the speakers have, in this case the English teachers'.

### The Implication of Communication Strategies in TEFL

Some teachers use communication strategies as a technique of teaching to help the students learn to communicate in English. Communication strategies applied by the teachers to help students learn to communicate in English, they are literal translation, repetition, language switching, appeal for assistance, topic avoidance, paralanguage, comprehension check and clarification request. Some previous studies found out that there were five main reasons that caused the teacher applied those communication strategies such as (1) to help students to understand the meaning of English utterances, (2) help students to memorized the word in English, (3) to help the students in mastering a topic, (4) to improve students' motivation in speaking and (5) to help students comprehend the lesson.

When language learners do not know how to say a word in English, they can communicate effectively by using their hands, imitating sounds, inventing new words, or describing what they mean. These ways of communicating are communication strategies. EFL teachers are not always aware of the importance of teaching communication strategies to their students or, if they are aware, they do not explicitly train their students to use them. They do not use these strategies themselves to serve as a model to their students. Very often, what we have observed is that teachers abandon the message or switch to the first language to avoid communication problems in the classroom. The potential factors that influence the communication strategies they use in class. When the teacher who seemed more involved with students used clarification request, comprehension check and asking for confirmation. The teacher who appeared more distant from students used comprehension check and repetition. Class size, seating arrangements and learning activity types were also some of the factors that influenced the communication strategies used.

### CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of current study was to describe communication strategies employed by English teacher during teaching and learning process. There were fourteen types of communication strategies employed by English teacher during teaching and learning process, they are: Code-switching, Self-rephrasing, use fillers, asking for confirmation, asking for clarification, and Asking for repetition.

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