Article

Communication Strategies Used by Students in English Learning-teaching: A Discourse-ethnographic Study

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Abstract
This study aims to examine the communication strategies used by students in the activity of English learning-teaching as a second language. This qualitative research was conducted using an ethnographic approach with spoken discourse of students as the object. Data was collected from 27 students in the 9th grade at Ifako International Secondary School as the informants. The research data were collected through observation and informal interview. The data were then analyzed using performance analysis technique, namely an analysis based on the speech that occurs naturally and the linguistic competence. This present study found that students used two communication strategies, namely verbal communication strategy and nonverbal communication strategy, in English teaching-learning activity. The results of this study indicate that students use communication strategies with four objectives, namely to maintain the communication, to express a certain intention, to master language competence, and to master certain forms of strategic competence.

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INTRODUCTION

In language learning activities, to overcome obstacles in communicating, and to master language competence and communicative competence, language learners use certain strategies. According to Bygate, Skehan, and Swain (2013) in the context of a second language learning, the use of communication strategies serves to bridge the gap between the learner's knowledge of the language and the speech partner's knowledge of the language. In line with that statement, Kasper and Kellerman (2014) argued that a communication strategy is a systematic technique that language learners use to express their ideas when experiencing difficulties due to their imperfect mastery of the language.

The language spoken by students in an interaction of foreign language or second language learning is a medium for training and developing their language knowledge and maximizing their competency (Chireac, Francis, & McClure, 2017; Kuen, Rafik-Galea, & Heng, 2017). In communicating, someone tries to use various forms of language that he has mastered to express his intentions and thoughts to others. In an effort to be able to communicate, the important thing that needs to be trained by students is how to communicate using the language being studied (Low, Lee, & Ahmad, 2018; Su, 2021; Sung, 2020). Delivery of messages in communication by students who master the target language perfectly, can take place in various ways. It depends on the situation and condition when the communication takes place and various other influencing factors (Corder, 1983; Vázquez & Ordóñez, 2019).

Corder (1983) stated that communication strategies are systematic techniques employed by speakers to exam bias meaning while facing with some difficulties. According to Faerch and Kasper (2003) communication strategy is a conscious plan proposed by an individual to himself to solve problems in order to achieve certain communicative goals. In relation to second language learning, Griffiths (2018) defined communication strategy in two versions. First, the communication strategy is a student's systematic effort to express their intentions in the target language when they cannot form or choose the rules of the target language correctly. Second, the communication strategy is the students' conscious effort to communicate their thoughts when the inter-language grammar is inadequate to convey their thoughts.

Furthermore, a communication strategy is a way that speakers use to express their intentions when facing communication difficulties due to their limited knowledge of the target language (Daly, 1991; Nassaji, 2011). Regarding with that theory, Barakos (2019) found three markers of the use of communication strategies in language learning activities. First, the speaker wants to communicate a certain intention to the speech partner. Second, the speaker feels unable to develop the communication because he/she experiences linguistic limitations in expressing a purpose. Third, the speaker chooses to avoid communication, tries to use a certain way to convey a certain purpose, and this effort stops when the speech partner has understood the meaning he/she is putting forward.

Based on the background, this present study aims to examine the communication strategies used by the 9th grade students of Ifako International Secondary School, Nigeria, in English teaching-learning activities. The first languages for students of that school are *Hausa* and *Yoruba*, which belongs to some of the main native languages of the Nigerian population. English is a second language for students and is the official language in Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In speech activities, speech participants apply communication strategies so that their communication runs effectively. The success or failure of communication activities is largely determined by the communication strategy used by the speech participants (Bialysok, 1990; Kim & Krishna, 2018; Walker, Cardon, & Aritz, 2018). Through a research, Montero (2019) found that an effective communication raises five things, namely:

1. Understanding
   Each speech participant receives carefully the contents of the stimuli according to what the communicator intended.
2. Pleasure
   The communication creates a pleasant atmosphere that is felt by each speech participant.
3. Influence on behavior
   The speech partner behaves according to the expectations of the speaker.
4. Good relationship
   Through the communication, a good relationship is created.
5. Action
   The emergence of an action is an indicator of the effectiveness of a communication because the action is the accumulated result of the entire communication process.

A communication is considered effective if the recipient interprets the message received as intended by the sender (Dornyei & Scott, 1995; McCroskey, 1984). In fact, communication participants often fail to understand each other. The main cause of misunderstanding in communication is an inappropriate strategy in receiving messages or in conveying messages (Liang & Chen, 2021; Nashruddin, Alam, & Harun, 2020).

Singhal and Rogers (2012) define a communication strategy as a method used by a speaker to maintain the continuity of a conversation with a speech partner because the speaker encounters problems in conveying the intended meaning. Based on that theory, Akamoglu and Meadan (2019) conducted a research and found that the problem in conveying the intended meaning arose because of inadequate linguistic knowledge. Therefore, according to Bloomfield (2019) and developed by McIntosh and Eguchi (2020) through their research, the main feature of the communication strategy is the cooperation between two speech participants to reach an understanding of meaning in a situation where the necessary meaning structure may not appear.

Sato, Yujobo, Okada, and Ogane (2019) states that the best way to understand the meaning of a communication strategy is to study the characteristics of the strategy based on the taxonomy of the communication strategy adapted from the theory of Tarone (1980). The communication strategy taxonomy can be seen in the following figure 1.
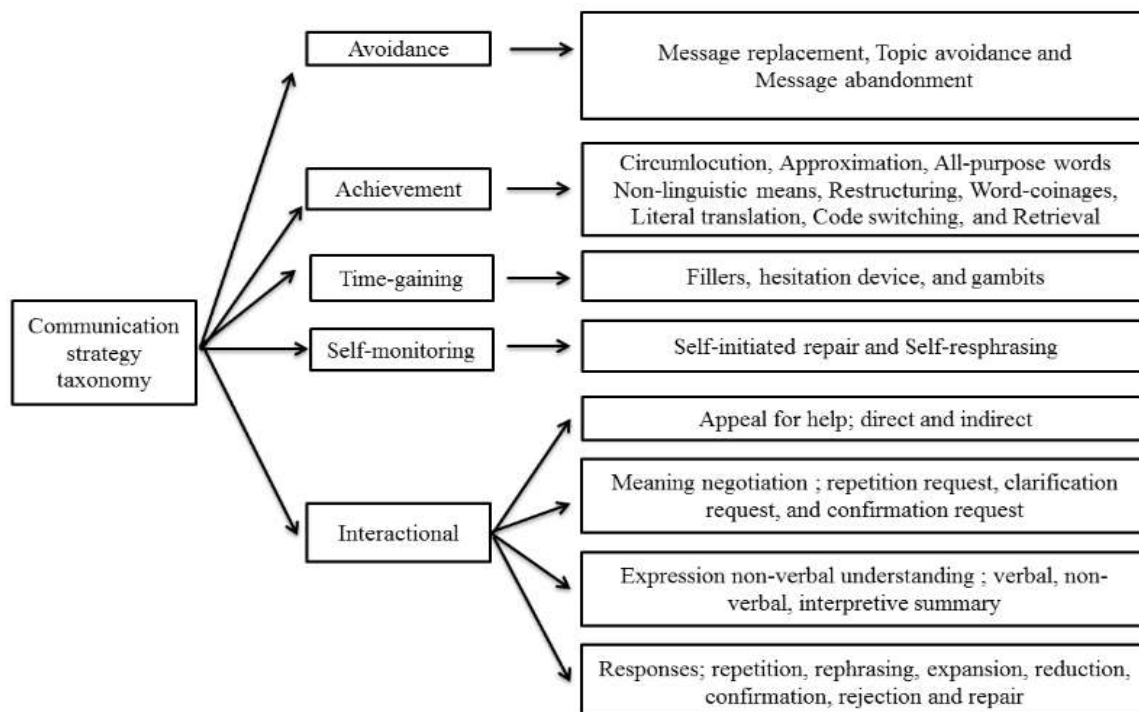

Figure 1. The communication strategy taxonomy adopted from the theory of Tarone (1980)

The use of the communication strategy is caused by problems that arise in conveying messages. This problem encourages the speaker to find a solution so that communication goals can be achieved, namely messages can be understood by speech partners. The communication strategy based on Tarone's theory is oriented towards the cooperative relationship between the speaker and the interlocutor in conveying messages. The communication strategy is a method that will only be used when problems arise in communication. When a speaker faces a problem in conveying ideas, the speaker will use this strategy so that the idea can be conveyed properly. With an effort like this, communicative problems, such as misunderstanding, can be overcome.

In learning activity of English as a second language, students and teachers use communication strategies to facilitate the learning process. According to Nassaji (2011), a communication strategy is a way that students and teachers use to express their intentions when facing communication difficulties. Several previous researchers have conducted research on the use of communication strategies in the language teaching and learning process. Kuen et al. (2017) identified and classified communication strategies, and related those communication strategies to the effectiveness degree of their use. The results of that study indicate that communication strategies are more effective when used by students who have greater formal control over the first language.

Faerch and Kasper (2003) classified communication strategies into three types, namely formal reduction strategy (avoidance), functional reduction strategy (paraphrase), and achievement strategy (transfer). The formal reduction strategy is a strategy when students communicate by using a reduced second language system or simplified form of a second language, to avoid the production of speech that is not fluent or wrong. The communication strategy taxonomy can be seen in the following figure 2.
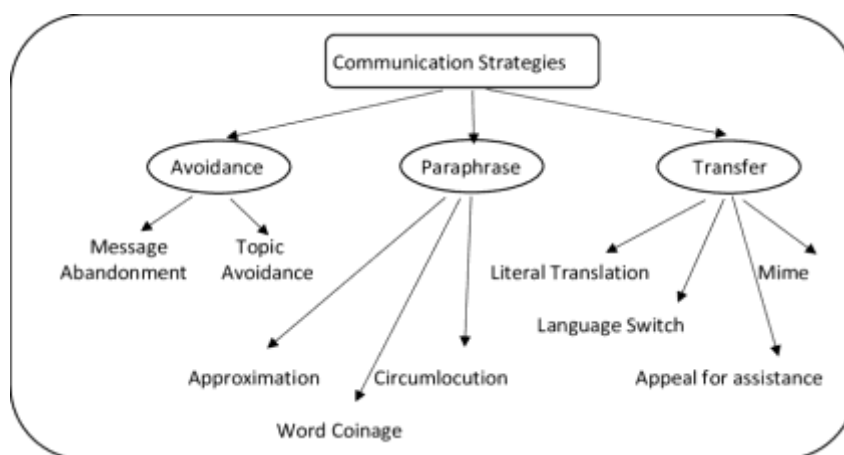

Figure 2. The communication strategy taxonomy by Faerch and Kasper (2003)

Palfreyman and Al-Bataineh (2018) conducted a research on communication strategies in language learning by university students who grow up in a multilingual society and learn in both Arabic (their first language) and English (the main language of instruction). The use of those strategies includes verbal and nonverbal communication strategies by students. They concluded that university students tend to use nonverbal communication strategies in the form of gestures, expressions, and body movements because of their limited repertoire in conveying messages to their speech partners.

Another research on the use of communication strategies by foreign language learners was conducted by Matthews and Gokool (2018). By using a sociolinguistic approach, the researchers found that students who learn a foreign language used several types of verbal strategies, namely code switching, repetition, and self-disclosure. That research revealed that foreign language learners used verbal communication strategies to maintain communication and master speech forms.

Another research that is also relevant to the present research is that conducted by Manan (2019) who examines the strategies for acquiring students' pragmatic competence. That researcher focuses on communication strategies and language learning strategies. In that study, it was found that communication strategies were divided into two types, namely verbal communication strategy and nonverbal communication strategy. Furthermore, the conclusion of the research reveals that the use of communication strategies maintain the course of communication, express specific intentions, and master speech forms that can maximize the language acquisition process.

RESEARCH METHOD

The present research is a qualitative research with an ethnographic approach to examine discourse from students' speech. According to Cresswell (2012) qualitative research is used to find a complete, natural, and in-depth picture related to speech act by speakers of a language. Hammersley (2016) stated that ethnographic research is based on the philosophy of phenomenology which seeks to describe cultural phenomena or the views of the subjects studied in terms of how they interact, think, and communicate. According to Spradley (2016) a qualitative research with an ethnographic approach consist of six steps; namely: 1) selection of an ethnographic project, 2) asking ethnographic questions, 3) ethnographic data collection, 4) creation of an ethnographic record, 5) analysis of ethnographic data, and 6) ethnographic report writing.

For data collection, the key instrument is the researchers. The supporting instruments are observation sheets, electronic recording device, field notes, and non-formal interview guideline. The research data was collected through observation and interview. Informants in this study were 27 students in the 9th grade of Ifako International Secondary School. This school is one of junior secondary schools located in Lagos city, Nigeria. The selection of informants in this study was based on the consideration of their skills to answer the interview questions, and the number of informants was sufficient to answer this research problem. This study follows the steps of data analysis according to Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2018), namely: 1) data selection, 2) data reduction, 3) data display, and 4) conclution drawing and verification. To test the validity of the research data, the researchers conducted a credibility test through extended observation, triangulation, and peer discussions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Use of Nonverbal Communication Strategies by Students in English learning-teaching Activities

Nonverbal communication strategies used by students in learning English have characteristics that can be seen in the types, variations, and functions. Characteristics of the overall use of nonverbal communication strategies by the 9th grade students of Ifako International Secondary School can be seen in table 1 below.

Table 1. The use of nonverbal communication strategies in learning English by students

Variations of Communication Strategy	Aspects of Language Competence	Information
In the form of gestures	- Stating requests - Asking questions - Declaring supports	Students use nonverbal communication strategies which are realized into three variations to express aspects of strategic competence and to express aspects of language competence
In the form of movement	- Stating facts - Clarifying messages conveyed - Stating justification	
In the form of imitation of objects	- Stating the intention so that the message can be understood	

Based on the nonverbal communication strategy data shown in table 1, it is obtained that the characteristics of the use of nonverbal communication strategies by students are realized into three variations of the type of communication strategy expressed for:

1. mastering aspects of strategic competence, namely: communication strategies in the form of gestures, communication strategies in the form of body movements, and communication strategies in the form of imitation of objects

2. stating aspects of language competence, namely: requests, questions, support, facts, clarification, intentio, and justification.

From this study, an overview was obtained regarding the characteristics of the communication strategy used by students of Ifako International Secondary School in English classroom. The use of nonverbal communication strategies by students in learning English is caused by various factors, namely:

1. the level of mastery of the language obtained from stimuli outside of formal learning and formal learning,

2. the source of the communication problem is the content of the speech being communicated

3. student personality

4. the purpose of communication

5. learning situation

The results of this study also illustrate that nonverbal communication strategies are an effective form of strategy for students to use in language learning to maximize the process of mastering their language competence at an early stage. This method is carried out by students who are not yet proficient or even proficient in English in the form of using different forms of strategies.

Based on the research findings, it is known that the use of nonverbal communication strategies has a very strong relationship in increasing the learning motivation of learning citizens through interactions that occur in a directed and continuous manner. Students can receive and understand the meaning that the speech partner wants to convey and convey what is on his mind through nonverbal communication in the form of gestures and movements, expressions, and imitating movements of objects in language learning interactions.

The Use of Verbal Communication Strategies by Students in English learning-teaching Activities

The use of verbal communication strategies in English learning-teaching carried out by the 9th grade students of Ifako International Secondary School consists of two variations of the type namely; utterance form disclosure strategy and utterance content disclosure strategy. Characteristics of the overall use of verbal communication strategies by the 9th grade students of Ifako International Secondary School can be seen in table 2 below.

Table 2. The use of verbal communication strategies in learning English

Category of Communication Strategy	Variations of Communication Strategy	Functions of Communication Strategy	Information
utterance form disclosure	Code switching in speech	- Declaring rejection - Stating facts - Stating explanation meaning	Students use verbal communication strategies that are realized in 2 types of strategies, which are then realized in 5 specific variations, and are used to master aspects of strategic competence and to express aspects of language competence
	Speech presentation	- Stating explanation - Stating utterance meaning - Stating suggestion	
	Creative word creation	- Stating facts	
utterance content disclosure	Sharpening of speech intent	- Stating utterance meaning	
	Diversion of the topic of speech	- Stating explanation of reasons	

Table 2 presents a description of students' use of verbal communication strategies which is realized into two types of communication strategy, namely: (1) utterance form disclosure, and (2) utterance content disclosure; and five variations, namely: (1) code switching in speech, (2) speech presentation, (3) creative word creation, (4) sharpening of speech intent, and (5) diversion of the topic of speech. These communication strategies are used for:

1. declaring rejection
2. stating facts
3. stating explanation meaning
4. stating explanation
5. stating utterance meaning
6. stating suggestion
7. stating facts
8. stating utterance meaning
9. stating explanation of reasons

This study obtained an overview of the characteristics of communication strategies used by students in English learning-teaching activities. The characteristics of the use of verbal communication strategies by students in learning English there are two characteristics, namely occurring in the practice of communicating naturally and functioning to overcome problems in communicating due to limitations in students' language mastery. The use of verbal communication strategies by students in learning English is also caused by various factors, namely:

1. the level of mastery of the language obtained from stimuli both outside formal learning and in formal learning.

2. The source of communication problems is the content of the speech being communicated.

   The influence of the source of communication problems on the use of students' communication strategies is evident in the use of strategies based on the influence of the first language mastered by students and strategies based on the target language or second language.

3. Students' personality

   The student's personality influences the use of communication strategies in the narrative of asking for help strategies that are carried out directly to the interlocutor.

4. Purpose of communication

   The purpose of communication has an influence on the use of communication strategies which are manifested by all forms of communication strategies used. All types and variations of the types of communication strategies used by students are oriented towards achieving communication goals

5. Learning situation

   Learning situations in a natural language environment have an influence on students' flexibility in using communication strategies. This is indicated by the absence of obstacles for students to utilize various communication strategies according to their needs.

This research findings about the factors that cause the use of students' nonverbal and verbal communication strategies in acquiring language forms involve internal factors and environmental factors of the language. Thus, these findings develop the previous theory put forward by the process of language acquisition. The use of communication strategies by students shows that there is an interactive process in acquiring second language competence, namely the involvement of the maturity factor of students' innate language devices and the language input exposed to students.

The maturity factor of students' innate language devices is a tool that plays an important role as an internal processor in their mental structure, namely as an editor and filter of language input originating from their language environment and as an organizer who plays a role in internalizing language input contained in the surrounding environment become a rule system that is mastered by students. The language input factors exposed to children affect the mastery of strategic competencies and the acquisition of children's language competencies related to the use of speech forms exposed to students to express certain intentions to their speech partners in communicating. From this research, it is obtained an illustration of the development of students' language competence which is designated by the use of forms of speech that are in line with the development of students' strategic competence.

Based on this explanation, the use of non-verbal and verbal communication strategies by students serves to express forms of speech and to overcome communication problems they face when communicating with their speech partners. These forms of speech are for:

1. stating an explanation
2. stating the facts
3. asking a question
4. expressing a request
5. expressing refusal
6. expressing opinions
7. stating reasons
8. expressing advice
9. declaring an order
10. expressing a complaint
11. expressing g intent
12. expressing affirmation
13. expressing ideas
14. stating the conclusion

The function of using the communication strategy shows the development of students' strategic and language competencies. The development of the function of using communication strategies according to students' language competence proves the influence of psychological and sociocultural differences on the use of communication strategies and the acquisition of language competence. Students' language processes are influenced by socio-cultural factors of the community speaking the first language and second language.

This finding has implications for the need to inculcate cultural norms from an early age in children so that children have sensitivity in using forms of language that are appropriate to the context. This develops research findings conducted by Palfreyman and Al-Bataineh (2018), Manan (2019), and McIntosh and Eguchi (2020), that cultural integration and adaptation need to be done to assist students in using language according to the norms of its use.

As bilingual speakers, the use of communication strategies by students of Ifako International Secondary School in English learning-teaching activities is influenced by socio-cultural factors of the community speaking the first language and second language. The acquisition of language competence is influenced by the process of absorbing the culture of the first language and the second language. In other words, students' success in mastering strategic and language competencies is determined by their success in acculturating themselves to the target language they are learning.

CONCLUSION

The communication strategy is a method used by students to express intentions when facing obstacles in communicating. This is due to the limited ability of students to communicate. By using various forms of communication strategies, students can practice and develop their strategic competences and language competencies according to their level of language acquisition.

The use of nonverbal communication strategies by students is realized in three forms of strategies, namely: gestures, body movements, and imitation of objects. This was done by the students because of the limited mastery of the students on the appropriate forms of speech to express their intentions to their speech partners. The main function of the nonverbal communication strategy is to maintain the continuity of communication due to the fear of making mistakes in using English.

The use of verbal communication strategies by students reflects students' efforts to utilize the forms of speech they have mastered to communicate. This verbal communication strategy is used by students in two types, namely: the use of speech forms, and the use of speech content. The use of this strategy is due to the students' bilingualism and limited vocabulary mastery to convey meaning during a conversation. The verbal strategy serves to maintain the continuity of communication and streamline communication goals. By maintaining the continuity of communication, students can get the opportunity to practice using language to improve their pragmatic competence.

From this research, an overview is obtained about the use of communication strategies in actual speech communities that contain socio-cultural norms and rules. To obtain a more in-depth picture of the influence of socio-cultural factors in the use of the communication strategy, further research is needed. Therefore, it is recommended for the next researchers to focus on studying the influence of socio-cultural factors on the mastery of strategic competencies and the acquisition of students' language competence.

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