

Teacher's Communication Strategies in the 3A Teenager Class of a Language Center in Surabaya

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to find out the types of communication strategies and the reasons why the teacher uses communication strategies in the 3A teenager class of a language center in Surabaya. This study used a qualitative approach with a direct observation and an interview as data collection techniques. This study uses the theory of communication strategies by Mariani (2010) which divides communication strategies into five types: meaning-expression, meaning-negotiation, conversation-management, para- and extra-linguistic, and interaction-monitoring. The last one is not used by the teacher. The result of the interview with the teacher show that the communication strategies used in the class observation is in line with the interview, namely: to help students better understand the material, ensure students' understanding of the material, keep the flow of learning interactions structured and efficient, and as a tool for teachers to communicate non-verbally.

Keywords: communication strategies, teacher, reasons

INTRODUCTION

Classroom interaction affects the implementation of teaching activities between teachers and students. In the learning process, communication between the teacher and students is one way to make the classroom active and effective. Choosing an unsuitable strategy by the teacher makes students experience problems or misunderstandings in communication. Mariani (2010) states that communication strategy is a good tool for dealing with misunderstandings and problems that occur in conveying intentions to students. Communication strategies can help improve learning effectiveness and also create an inclusive learning environment. Therefore, teachers in a classroom setting must use communication strategies clearly and correctly because each student is different in background, communication, and learning style so that learning goes maximally.

The writer chooses an English course instead of schools or universities because a course offers a flexible and dynamic learning environment. The writer conducts his research by directly observing a language center in Surabaya. There are many levels for children at the Language Center in Surabaya. The levels start from children 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, 5A, 5B, 6A, 6B, 7A, 7B, 8A, 8B, 9A, 9B, 10A, and 10B. The teenager level starts from 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, 3A, 3B, 4A, 4B, 5A, and the last level is 5B. In this semester, there are only two classes available, namely teenager 3A and children 3A. The writer chose teenager 3A class in his because teenagers have a more complex thinking ability than children, which allows for a variety of communication interactions between the teacher and students (Santrock, 2019). Not only that, teenagers are also at the stage of cognitive development where most of them like to respond, ask questions, and think abstractly (Ecless & Roeser, 2011). In other words, teenagers are more active than children in terms of communicating in classroom learning.

As a result, the writer is curious to know the types of communication strategies used by the teacher to students in class. To analyze communication strategies, the writer uses Mariani's

(2010) communication strategy theory. Not only that, the writer wants to reveal the reasons teachers use certain communication strategies.

METHODS

The writer used a qualitative method for this study. The source of the data would be the teacher's all utterances during in the teenager class 3A of a language center in Surabaya. However, the data analyzed in this study were the utterances from the teacher that contained or did not contain communication strategies. To collect the data, the first step was to find information about the teacher, the class, and the course outline at a language center in Surabaya. Then, the writer asked the head of Language Center for permission to audio record the class for one meeting in February 2025. Next, the writer also asked for the English teacher's consent to do research in her class. After getting permission, the writer asked for the English Department's approval letter and sent it to the Language Center administrator.

Next, the writer observed and recorded the class meeting. After recording the class meeting, the writer made a transcript of the meeting. Furthermore, the writer analyzed the teacher's utterances that contained communication strategies and then the writer categorized the teacher's utterances. Lastly, the writer interviewed the teacher to explore the reasons why the teacher used certain communication strategies in the 3A teenager class of a language center in Surabaya. The questions used for the interview were the teacher's utterances that were on the raw data script of the classroom observation. In other words, the questions were validation whether it is true that the teacher uses certain communication strategies based on the observation data that has been analyzed previously. Therefore, the interview aimed to confirm the writer's findings from the observation and ensure that the teacher's use of communication strategies was done consciously or had a specific purpose.

FINDINGS

This chapter provides the results and analysis of study used to identify teacher's communication strategies in the 3A teenager class of a language center in Surabaya. The result is that the teacher only uses 4 out of 5 types of communication strategies. Not only that, the writer includes the reasons behind the teacher's use of certain types of communication strategies. Detailed explanations can be seen below. Based on audio transcripts obtained by the writer with direct observation in the 3A teenager class of a language center in Surabaya, the writer found four types of communication strategies used by teacher: Meaning-Expression, Meaning-Negotiation, Conversation-Management, and Para- and Extra-Linguistic. In addition, the writer also revealed the teacher's answers regarding the reasons behind the use of communication strategies.

Meaning-Expression

Meaning-expression focuses on conveying meaning when the intended expression is unclear, such as the use of synonyms, definitions, paraphrasing, and examples. Through this strategy, the teacher can help students to understand a difficult concept by using an easier way. After writing the script and analyzing, the writer found the teacher's utterance containing meaning-expression as the example below.

T: So and such, iya, jadi so itu artinya kayak sangat gitu, nah ada tiga macam penggunaannya, semuanya artinya sama, tapi cara penggunaannya aja yang beda. So itu di ikuti adjective. She is so beautiful, dia sangat cantik kek gitu, setelahnya so

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*langsung beautiful, langsung adjektivenya. Such juga, setelah such di ikuti adjective kek gitu, jadi **It's such nice food kek gitu**. Nah, such ini kalau such hati hati, ada such yang diikuti adjective, ada such diikuti dengan a. Nah kalau misalnya kamu mau pakai a, itu **such a** kemudian adjective dulu baru noun, **such a beautiful girl**. Jadi, such ini pasangan such a, engga bisa di ganti, such a beautiful girl.*

(T: So and such, yes, so means like very, and there are three kinds of usage, they all mean the same thing, but the way they are used is different. So is followed by an adjective. She is so beautiful, she is very beautiful like that, after so is directly beautiful, directly the adjective. Such also, after such is followed by an adjective like that, so It's such nice food. Now, if such is careful, there is such followed by an adjective, there is such followed by a. Now if for example you want to use a, it's such a then adjective first then noun, such a beautiful girl. So, such is a pair of such a, it can't be replaced, such a beautiful girl.)

In this example, the context is that the teacher is going into the next material which is about “so”, “such”, and “such a”. In this material, the teacher explains one by one each concept and how to use them. First, the teacher explains “so” with the meaning of the word which is *sangat* in Indonesian, after that the teacher explains how to use it with “so” followed by an adjective. Finally, the teacher gives an example in a sentence that becomes she is so beautiful. Second, the teacher explains “such”. The teacher explains that the word “such” has different usage patterns. In the explanation, the teacher explains that “such” is followed by an adjective, for example it is such nice food and such a, so adjective first then noun. Not only that, the teacher gives examples in sentences regarding the use of such a, for example such a beautiful girl.

This utterance example is considered meaning-expression. The words that are written in bold show the teacher's focus on explaining a concept with examples in the sentence (using definitions or descriptions). By giving an explanation first, the teacher wants to show the difference between each concept and then go to the usage in the example sentence. In addition, from a total of eight teacher utterances that contain meaning expression, the writer concludes that the teacher tried to explain the meaning of a concept before giving examples of its application. This shows that the teacher wants to not only focus on explaining a concept, but wants the students to understand it better with an example rather than just an explanation.

When the teacher was interviewed, she confirmed that she uses examples to make it easier for students to understand the concept of the material. She explained that when students are only explained in theory, they find it difficult to understand. Therefore, she always gives examples after explaining a material concept so that students could absorb and understand it better. She said, “*Disertai contoh karena biasanya cuma teori aja mereka ga mengerti dan lebih gampang menyerap dengan contoh*”. (Examples were given because usually they do not understand the theory and it is easier to make them with examples.)

Meaning-Negotiation

Meaning-negotiation involves both parties in the interaction clarifying meaning through actions, such as asking for clarification, repeating, and confirming understanding. In short, this strategy is used to ensure that students correctly understand what has been conveyed by the teacher especially if there is confusion or miscommunication. After writing the script and analyzing, the writer found that the teacher's utterances contained meaning-negotiation as the example below.

T: We use too before or after the adjective?

S: Before

In this example, the context was a grammar session in the 3A teenager class of a language center in Surabaya. At that time, the teacher was discussing the use of “too” in sentences, especially in connection with adjectives. To check the students' understanding, the teacher asked the students directly, “We use too before or after the adjective?” and the students answered “before”.

This is considered meaning-negotiation because the words that are written in bold shows that it involves teacher and student interaction to ensure correct understanding of the material (confirm that one has been understood). The teacher does not directly explain the rules, but uses questions to assess whether students have understood the concepts. This strategy clearly shows the teacher's effort to help and confirm that students really understand the material that has been conveyed. The student's answer “before” indicates as a confirmation of the teacher's previous question that the student understands the material.

When the teacher was interviewed, she confirmed that she uses the negotiate-meaning strategy to ensure that students really understand the material. She stated that giving an explanation once is often not enough, so she double-checks after explaining the material. The purpose of double-checking is to make sure the students understand what she explained and then move on to the problem. In this way, the teacher can ascertain whether the students have understood the concept correctly. She said, *"Penjelasan sekali itu menurut saya ga... gaa...eee masi kurang jadi kayak harus di cek ulang, jadi pertama saya jelasin, yang kedua saya memastikan kamu tuh beneran nangkep ga yang saya maksudkan baru nanti kita masuk ke soal, kebiasaan aja sih kayak tak minta mengulang, atau tak tanyain sebelum akhire di kasih soal"*

(The explanation once, in my opinion, is not... not... eee still lacking so it's like it has to be double-checked, so first I explain, secondly I make sure you really understand what I mean and then we go to the question, it's just a habit like asking to repeat, or asking before finally being given a question).

Conversation-Management

Conversation-management is a strategy used by speakers and learners to help navigate the conversation smoothly, such as by managing turn-taking, opening and closing conversations, and avoiding or changing topics. In short, these strategies are used to maintain the flow of communication and also support the teacher in helping students engage in interaction or conversation during class. After writing the script and analyzing, the writer found that the teacher utterances contained conversation-management as the example below.

T: Open unit 3 Abilities, we have done with focus 3, so let's continue with focus 4

In this example, the context was to start the opening class. At that time, the teacher was transitioning from the previous lesson on focus 3 and moving on to focus 4 in unit 3 “abilities”. To start the class, the teacher gave clear instructions by saying “Open unit 3 Abilities, we have done with focus 3, so let's continue with focus 4”. This utterance occurred at the beginning of class which served as an opening interaction between teacher and students to enter the material.

This utterance is indicated in conversation-management because the words that are written in bold shows that the teacher uses it to give a smooth transition from one part of the lesson to the next (opening and closing a conversation). By stating that they have finished focus section 3 and will move on to focus section 4 in unit 3 “abilities”, the teacher organizes the class discourse and helps students follow the order of the material without getting confused. In this

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case, the teacher acts to organize the classroom conversation by closing the previous topic and opening the next topic that will be discussed.

When the teacher was interviewed, she explained her reasons for starting the class by going straight into the material. She stated that she does not make small talk with her students first, because many students often arrive late and if she does, it will waste time. For her, it is more efficient to start directly by giving instructions to get into the material so that she can manage the limited time in class. She said, "*Jadi tuh kenapa ga nanyain kabar anak anak, oalah cris cris, mereka juga, mereka aja juga datangnya suka terlambat pake nanyain kabar lagi, kapan mulaine pelajaranane* " (So why not ask how the children are doing, oalah cris cris, they too, they too come in late and ask how they are doing again, when is the lesson starting).

Para- and Extra-Linguistic

Para- and Extra-Linguistic is a strategy used to complement and enhance verbal communication by including non-verbal elements, such as gestures, facial expressions, body language, and intonation patterns in order to improve understanding. In short, the teacher uses this strategy to further clarify and emphasize the message conveyed by means of nonverbal communication, especially when students have difficulty in understanding concepts through verbal explanations. After writing the script and analyzing, the writer found the teacher utterances containing para- and extra-linguistic as the example below.

*(Guru menerangkan di papan tulis dengan **gestur tangan**)*

T: Heem focus 4, too, enough, as bla... bla... as.

(Teacher explains on the blackboard with hand gestures)

T: Yes, focus 4, too, enough, as bla... bla... as.)

In this example, the context was during the first lesson. At that time, the teacher began to explain the first material about grammar, especially the concepts of "too", "enough", and "as...as". While explaining the material on the blackboard, the teacher stood at the front of the class and used her hand gestures to attract and direct students' attention to the blackboard where the material was written. The teacher said, "*Heem focus 4, too, enough, as blah... blah... as*" followed by hand gestures that visually emphasize the material being discussed.

The teacher's utterance is indicated as para- and extra-linguistic because the words that are written in bold shows that the teacher does not only use verbal explanations, but is followed by the use of non-verbals (using non-verbal language: mime, gestures, body movements, facial expressions, eye contact, smiling, laughing). The teacher uses hand gestures, such as pointing or forming patterns with her hands to emphasize the message that she wants to convey. With non-verbal support when explaining, this helps to attract students' attention and make the explanation easier to understand, especially for students who may have difficulty with verbal explanations only.

When the teacher was interviewed, she explained her reasons for teaching using non-verbal elements. She stated that students are often easily distracted, especially to their cell phones and communicating verbally is not enough to get their attention. By using non-verbal elements, one of which is hand gestures such as pointing to the board and emphasizing important points, she helps direct and manage students' focus on her. She said, "*Ohh kan anak anak jaman sekarang itu ya kamu cuman ngomong dilihat itu mereka kayak bingung matanya harus liat yang mana jadi mereka itu sibuk mainan handphone gitu loh dan kamu ga bisa menghentikan mereka dari handphonenya, jadi kalo misalnya kamu mau nyuruh mereka*

perhatikan sekalian di tuding kek gitu loh yang harus matanya mereka lihat itu yang mana kek gitu." (Ohh, kids nowadays, you just say that they are confused about which one to look at so they are busy playing with their cellphones and you cannot stop them from their cellphones, so if for example you want to tell them to pay attention and at the same time accuse them, which one should their eyes look at).

CONCLUSION

The writer found that the teacher in the 3A teenager class of a language center in Surabaya used four types of communication strategies, namely: meaning-expression, meaning-negotiation, conversation management, and para- and extra-linguistics. Not only that, based on the results of the writer's interview with the teacher stated that there was a teacher's reason behind the use of these communication strategies. So, based on what the writer analyzed from classroom observations and obtained from teacher interviews, it can be concluded that the result analysis of the use of communication strategies by the teacher is the same as the reasons given by the teacher herself.

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