



Original Research Article

Interactional Strategies in Public Speaking Class Used by Low Learners

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ABSTRACT

This research article described the interactional strategies used by low learners in public speaking class. A qualitative study on whether or not low learners used the aspects of interactional strategies was the main focus. This paper also aimed to know what aspects mostly used and the factors that cause this problem. Observing and interviewing to six subjects regarding on the use of interactional strategies; exemplification, confirmation checks, comprehension checks, repetition, clarification requests, repetition requests, exemplification requests, and assistance appeal were carried out. Finding indicated that from six low learners, only two who did not apply interactional strategies in all situations. Four students have applied 3 – 4 interactional strategies in the case they were as the speaker. In another side, when they were the listeners, they did not apply the interactional strategies. The result showed that repetition was the interactional strategy mostly used by low learners. Nevertheless, the reason of using it was not proper reason. The further finding indicated some factors cause low learners did not use four interactional strategies such as fluency, grammar, lack of vocabulary and pronunciation in addition to the English practice merely in the formal situation.

Keywords: interactional strategies; low level learner; speaking

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1. Introduction

Learning strategy in second language acquisition is the strategy used by learners to help them boost their learning to obtain English language. As O'Malley & Chamot (1990) state that learning strategies used to help learners comprehend, learn, or retain new information. Each learner will apply different learning strategies depend on their passion and motivation. However, if they can apply learning strategies optimally, they can boost their acquisition in English successfully. In the top of that, learners can apply not only one learning strategy but they can use various learning strategies as it is believed that learning strategies can help them to learn language.

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Commonly, learners do not realize that applying learning strategies in speaking is able to overcome their difficulties in speaking, such as pronunciation problem, lexis problem, grammar problem, awareness, attitude and more feeling problems. Several studies proved that students can speak English well if they can apply learning strategies supremely. In other side, they will be low English user if they cannot use learning strategies maximally. As the simple example of the use learning strategies is in the case of learners do not know in saying a word in their utterances, they can ask others to help find appropriate words. It can be said that they have applied one of social or affective strategies (O'malley and Chamot, 1990; Mufanti, 2014). Other researchers try to determine kind of language learning strategies used by EFL learners in Indonesia like cognitive strategies, meta-cognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies. As a research conducted by Astutik (2016) concerning on language learning strategies used by foreign learners as in Indonesia indicated that students who are categorized into low level learners in speaking class did not use all aspects of communication strategies. In the meaning that the students did not apply the aspects in communication strategies of asking for question, cooperating with others and empathizing with others. Bunga (2017) in her research also proved that low level students at second graders of junior high school almost do not use the aspects of cognitive strategies in learning English speaking

Thus, this research area is crucially discussed among second language teachers to help their students learning English effectively and optimally. Commonly, learning strategies can be identified by the learnerself both consciouness or unconsciouness to facilitate them acquire the language. As stated by Dansereau (1985) that learning strategies as a set of process or steps used by the learners that can enable the acquisition storage, utilization of information. Then, he states that learning strategies have several dimensions, such as; a strategy that has direct impact, strategy as the sequences of process, strategies that provide task, and strategies differ in the degree to which they focussed for certain assignment. Learning strategies can be done outside the classroom or in the classroom. Relating to the use of learning strategies in the classroom, interactional strategies can be one of the learning strategies that can be applied by students in the classroom context and it is kind of strategy as the sequences of process.

Learning strategies is due to the meaning of interaction as two ways communication between learners and the teacher or the communication between the learners itself. However, not many teachers do understand that interactional strategies can facilitate their students to

negotiate using the language in which it can create good attitude among students in practicing speaking. Interactional strategies are social behaviours for negotiating meaning during interaction (Goh and Burns; 2012). Basically, interactional communication strategies are used when language learners do not understand how to boost their speaking in speaking class. Moreover, Goh & Burns (2012) divided interactional strategies into eight aspects, they are: 1) Exemplification; Offering an example to make one's point clear, 2) Confirmation Checks; Asking listeners whether they have understood the message, 3) Comprehension Checks; Paraphrasing what is heard to confirm one's understanding, 4) Repetition; Repeating all or part of what is said to check one's own understanding, 5) Clarification requests; Asking the speaker to explain a point further, 6) Repetition requests; Asking the speaker to say something again, 7) Exemplification requests; Asking the speaker to give an example, 8) Assistance appeal; Asking the listener for help with difficult words. Many cases come during the teaching learning process both from the teacher's side and the students' side. From the teacher's side is most of the teachers do not know about interactional strategies so they cannot boost their learners to speak. In other side, some students have used interactional strategies but they cannot explore their interactional strategies due to the condition or students do not know that those kinds of strategies can be used to boost their speaking ability so they never explore their language through interactional strategies.

Concerning to this issue, the writer tried to gain the data from the students who have problems on speaking area such as; difficulties in pronouncing words, lack of vocabulary, problem on grammar and less confidence to know how they use interactional strategies in speaking class. Based on the achievement record in the previous semester, it is noted that the students who have such complex problems get score "D" on speaking. There are six students who get score 'D' and in this research these students are categorized as the low users or very limited user. So, this paper has three aims, they are; 1) to know whether low learners use interactional strategies or not in public speaking class, 2) to know what interactional strategies mostly used by low learners, 3) to know the factors that cause this problem.

2. Methods

To analyse the interactional strategies used by low learners, descriptive qualitative was used as the research design. Creswel (2002) as quoted by Mufanti (2014) states that qualitative research is the type of educational research in which the researcher relies on the views of participants, asks broad, general questions, collects the data consisting mostly of

words (or text) from participants, describes and analyzes these words for themes, and conducts the inquiry in a subjective, based manner. Six students categorized as the low learners on speaking were taken as the research subjects. The subjects were from fourth semester of one university in East Java who joined public speaking class. As stated by (Corbin & Strauss, 2015) observation and interviews are the most common sources in qualitative research. Therefore to gain the data, observation during the class and interview were used in this research. Observation was conducted three times during public speaking class. Then the result of observation was verified to the subject through in depth-interview to get the obvious data. In observation part, the researcher described whether or not the students applied interactional strategies, if they applied what mostly aspects used by them and if they were not, what were the reasons. Observation was conducted in three meetings of *public speaking* class; on 16 March 2017, 23 March 2017 and 2 April 2017. The student activities were delivering a speech based on the topic given a week before by the lecturer. Three meetings of observation were enough for the researcher to collect the data since the six subjects have performed as the speaker twice. Moreover, the observation was not only done when the low learners were becoming the speaker but also when the low learners were becoming the listener. Then, the interviews were conducted after the class. The questions in the interview part depended on the result of observation or it was called as the unstructured-interview.

This research took six steps to analyze the data. First, transcribing verbal data included words, sentences and phrases uttered by the subjects. Second, reviewing the transcribing data. Third, classifying the data into interactional strategies. Fourth, verifying the observation data through face to face interviews. Fifth, combining and describing the data from observation and interview. Sixth, concluding the data described. Then, Goh and Burns' framework of interactional strategies was used to classify, analyse, describe and conclude the data.

3. Findings and Discussion

This part describes; whether low learners used interactional strategies or not in public speaking class and the interactional strategies mostly used by low learners. Then, this section also presents the factors cause the low learners did this problem. This part was supported by the data in the form of table to show the brief summary of the learner's situation in applying interactional strategies in public speaking class. The detail finding and discussion are presented after table 1.

Table 1. The interactional strategies used by six subjects in public speaking class

Interactional Strategies	Competent Learners in English Speaking					
	Proficiency					
	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6
	M1	M2	M1	M2	M2	M1
Exemplification	-	-			√	√
Confirmation Checks	-	-	√	√	√	√
Comprehension Check	-	-	√	√	√	√
Repetition	√	√	√	√	√	√
Clarification Request	-	-	-	-	-	-
Repetition Request	-	-	-	-	-	-
Exemplification request	-	-	-	-	-	-
Assistance Appeal	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note:

- S1: Student 1
- S2: Student 2
- S3: Student 3
- S4: Student 4
- S5: Student 5
- S6: Student 6

Exemplification: Offering an example to make one’s point clear

As explained before exemplification is one of interactional strategies used by learner in speaking activity by giving example to make the points uttered becoming clear. In this phase, the observation result revealed that four subjects did not apply exemplification and two subjects applied it. On every occasion, the four subjects who did not apply it, felt hard in saying an idea, they just kept silent without trying to give examples to explain the hard words they want to say. It is noted that almost 100% they just kept silent in this situation. When it was crosschecked in the interview phase to know the reason of their silence they told that they did not know what should be done in such situation. It was different with two other subjects who applied exemplification, whenever they got hard in saying their idea, they tried to say by giving example. In this case they were noted success in using exemplification in speaking though the grammar used was not correct.

Confirmation checks: Asking listeners whether they have understood the message

Confirmation check is the type on interactional strategies in which in this type the speaker is asking the listeners relate with the material of the speech, whether the language used is accepted or not, or whether the message is understood or not. In this interactional

strategy, the finding indicated that two subjects did not apply confirmation check to the other friends and four subjects did it. When it was crosschecked in interview phase, the two subjects who did not apply this type of interactional strategies said that they spoke just because it is a must speak in the class not because of a desiring to deliver an important message to others so they do not care whether or not the listeners understand with the messages.

Comprehension checks: paraphrasing what is heard to confirm one's understanding

Comprehension check is the speaker does paraphrasing to confirm or to know whether the listener understands to the speech or not. The finding of the research revealed that two subjects who did not apply confirmation checks also did not do comprehension checks. The reason stated was also same in the previous reason that they do not care with the listeners' understanding. The four subjects did it in their speech and interview revealed that they did not know the reason why they did it. They said that they just want to do it. It seems that they did not know they have applied one strategy of interactional strategies.

Repetition: Repeating all or part of what is said to check one's own understanding

Repetition is the speaker repeat all or part of sentences to check the listener's understanding. The finding in applying repetition revealed surprising result because all subjects applied this kind of interactional strategy. However, surprising reason found from the result of interview, i.e. they did repetition not because want to check one's understanding but they forget the next sentences or they were trapped in their own speech, so the way to fill the time is repeating the words many times. This reason indicated that low learners do not understand with the purpose of speaking is to deliver a message or information to others, so checking listeners' understanding is important part in public speaking. It may that one key success in speaking is understanding the purpose of speaking. This finding is crucially emphasized for teachers so that speaking teachers realize that explaining the purpose of speaking is needed to be given before asking students to design a speech.

Clarification requests: Asking the speaker to explain a point further

Clarification of request is one of strategies to make the listener becoming the active listener. It is hoped that by becoming active listener, the students can practice their speaking in making sentences in question form. The finding of the observation showed that no one used this strategy. It has a sense that all six subjects did not apply this kind of strategy. This finding was verified with interview part in which in this session, the researcher got the

answer that they were shy to give questions. They also said that they never think that they must try to be involved in this activity. As far as their task in giving a speech has done, they think that their responsibility was over. They never think that this activity can practice them to fluent their speaking.

Repetition requests: Asking the speaker to say something again

Repetition request is also a type of interactional strategy to make the students becoming an active listener by asking the speaker to repeat the points they do not understand. It is one of strategies to get interaction among others so that they can practice their speaking. In public speaking class, this strategy can be applied by listener to ask the speaker to say something again. This interaction is believed able to improve the students' speaking ability since they will be more often using English. In fact, all subjects did not apply this strategy. The reason identified from the interview is they do not think that they have to speak. For them, time to speak is when the teacher asks them to speak in front of class. As a result, they tend to be silent in this situation.

Exemplification requests: Asking the speaker to give an example

Exemplification request is one kind of interactional strategy by asking the speaker to give examples relate to the topic given. The observation in this phase displayed that all subjects are passive or in other words, they did not apply this strategy. The finding was crosschecked with the interview phase in which the researcher tried to gain the data more by giving more questions relating to this point. It was found that they cannot use the language in informal situation. They can speak if the text is written before and the model of their learning is memorizing the text. Two of them totally cannot develop their speaking if it is out of the context. four of them were able to develop the speaking out of the context but only for one or two words or one sentence, not more, such as in saying; "do you understand?", "any questions?", "do you get my point?" , "can you help me?", "do you get difficulties?", "what do you think?", "can you tell me?". This finding emphasized that they have limited chance to develop their informal language and having more chance to use the language in the formal context. As a result, they cannot make any interaction since the interaction is informal situation. It can also be said that the students could not speak for spontaneous. Ss the findings reveal by Yalçın & Incecay (2013), practicing speaking spontaneously supports students in the process of overcoming their fear

More factors influence their passive were complex problem relates with the speaking aspects such as; pronunciation, lack of vocabulary, poor grammar, fluency, confidence, shyness and more. As a research conducted by Mufanti (2015) concerning on the students' barriers on speaking in which the data got from interview also found that the students' barriers are less of confidence, worry, scare, shyness, and uncomfortableness. As supported by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986, p.125) in Yalçın & Incecay (2013) foreign language learners arouse the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with the autonomic nervous system.

Assistance appeal: Asking the listener for help with difficult words.

Assistance appeal is asking the listener for help to find difficult words. As same in the previous finding, this observation and interview indicated the same problems and the same reason. All subjects did not apply this strategy and the factors influence them have been told in the previous phase. However, they added that they are nothing in the class because there are some active learners who are better than them who have right to speak more.

4. Conclusions

The finding and discussion make known that in this case low learners are categorized into two; low learners who use actively interactional strategies when they are placed as the speaker in public speaking class and low learners who do not use interactional strategies when they are placed as the listener. In the first categorized, only two learners said as passive or only use one interactional strategy, repetition, in public speaking class with not appropriate reason. So, it can be said 100% those two learners did not apply all interactional strategies. In another hand, four students are concluded that they use interactional strategies in public speaking class. In the second categorized, all learners were passive or it can be said totally they did not use all interactional strategies. However, between the low learners who totally did not use interactional strategies and who applied three until four interactional strategies, basically they have the same ability, the same score of public speaking and the same problems. The difference comes to their confidence; the low learners who use more interactional strategies are more confidence in performing their speaking than those who did not.

This research brings to the three conclusions as presented in the listas follows:

1. From six low learners, only two who do not apply interactional strategies in all situations. Four students apply 3 – 4 interactional strategies in the case they are placed as

the speaker. In another side, when they are placed as the listener, they also do not apply the interactional strategies.

2. It is also found that the interactional strategy mostly used is repetition. The finding also concludes that all low learners use this kind of interactional strategies, however, the reason of using it is not appropriate reason i.e. just because they forget their speech so that they repeat their words or sentences.
3. Some factors influence low learners do not use four interactional strategies of clarification requests, repetition requests, exemplification requests and assistance appeal are speaking aspects such as; fluency, grammar, lack of vocabulary and pronunciation,. Another factor causes this problem is that they used to practice English in the formal situation only. Whenever they are faced with the situation of informal such as having interaction with their teacher or friends, they get difficulties in building sentences. It has a meaning that they used to speak English by design or by remembering the text.
4. The additional conclusion from this research is to those who apply 3-4 interactional strategies and to those who do not apply all interactional strategies have the same ability in speaking. The difference only comes to their confidence degree. However, an experimental research correlates with this matter is need to be conducted to find the correct answer.

These conclusions convey us as teachers that interactional strategies are kind of learning strategies that can be used to develop or drill the student's language in class in the context of informal situation. Correlating with the students' obstacle in applying these strategies, teacher's assistance, control, management and stimulation are needed to apply too. Still, this research has limitation, i.e. we do not know in the case of the students apply all interactional strategies, it will give a good significance in their speaking ability or it just help them to overcome their feeling problems such as, confidence and worry. Thus, next research can conduct this matter.

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