Communication Strategies Used by Papuan EFL Students

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Abstract

To fill the absence of research in the context of communication strategies used by Papuan EFL students, this research would present and fill this knowledge gap. This research aimed to determine the types and their reasons of communication strategies used by Papuan EFL students. It applied qualitative study. The researcher used observation and interview as the research instruments. It was found that Papuan EFL employed fillers, code-switching, self-repetition, self-repair, asking for clarification, asking for confirmation, and direct appeal for help. The reasons why Papuan EFL students do those communication strategies because of thinking time, anxiety, nervousness, doubt, worriedness, hesitation, lack of knowledge, lack of vocabulary, grammatical errors, and self-confidence.

Keywords: Communication strategies, types, function (reasons), EFL students/learners

Introduction

Teaching English as a foreign language is a multi-dimensional process that involves many aspects, such as communication strategies. Two prominent experts in communication strategies (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997) believe that second language and foreign-language students/learners may face difficulties in delivering messages to the interlocutors within conversations. Thus, the need for strategies to convey messages is essential. As of its essentiality, some groups of researchers are curious to investigate how communication strategies work in psycholinguistics, second language, and foreign language acquisition. Eventually, they conclude that communication strategy has significant positive impacts on the language learning process. This is because they make crucial interaction meaningless to meaningful communication between speakers and listeners (Syahri, 2009).

Moreover, communication strategy is one of the best solutions to avoid communication breakdown in conversation settings (Yaghoubi-Notash & Karafkan, 2015). Additionally, to be successful in communication, English as a foreign language learners (EFL) are better to employ communication strategy to

avoid confusing meaning (Saidah et al., 2020). What is more, communication strategy can bridge the breakdown of communication between high and low English proficiency students (Hua et al., 2012). Significantly, communication strategies can help learners to obtain English language practice (Dörnyei, 1995). Of course, with a communication strategy, learners can maximize their English-speaking practice opportunities.

By considering the advantages of the communication strategy above, there is no doubt that more and more researchers are keen on duly investigating communication strategy in different aspects. It can be seen at the beginning of research growth around the 1970s, communication strategy mainly focused on language function, psycholinguistics' perspective, communication goals and means, native language and L2 learners, and successful language learners' performance (Yaghoubi-Notash & Karafkan, 2015). Recently, several studies have been carried out that focus on communication strategies by EFL teachers (Al-Gharaibeh, 2016; Oktaviani & Misgiyati, 2018; Smith, 2003). Moreover, research on communication strategy discussing EFL classroom interaction has been conducted by (Teng, 2012). Also, several studies have discussed a fundamental role of communication strategy where English is used as an international Lingua Franca (Cogo & Pitzl, 2013; Vettorel, 2018). Not only that but also some researchers have investigated either qualitatively or quantitatively communication strategies based on gender and age level (Lai, 2010; Montero et al., 2017). In a nutshell, the recent studies regarding communication strategy are more likely about using communication strategy to solve the problem within a conversation.

A wide range of research on communication strategy focusing on problem-solving in the Indonesian education context has been conducted in the last decade, particularly in the western part of Indonesia. Research carried out (Syahri, 2009) investigated verbal and nonverbal communication strategies used by EFL learners in the speaking class. He found that eleven verbal communication strategies and six nonverbal communication strategies were employed. Language switch and hand moving are the most frequently used of eleven verbal and six nonverbal communication strategies employed. However, (Syahri, 2009) missed the participants' reasons for using verbal and nonverbal communication strategies.

Moreover, a study (Dewi et al., 2018) researched the types and reasons of communication strategies used by young learners in EFL classrooms. (Dewi et al., 2018) found that young EFL learners, especially in Bali, only commit ten types of communication strategies, namely: fillers, self-repetition, code-switching, appeal for help, self-repair, asking for confirmation, massage abandonment, omission, approximation, and literal translation. Also, (Dewi et al., 2018) summed up three reasons in general, namely: thinking time, anxiety, and proficiency. Even though (Dewi et al., 2018) conveyed young learners' reasons to employ communication strategies, they admitted that they need to employ more comprehensive research instruments is a must, such as interviews.

Furthermore, (Aziz et al., 2018) researched communication strategies used by two EFL students in two boarding senior high schools in Aceh. The focus of the study is to investigate the applied communication strategies by using Tarone taxonomy (1979). The study found that the literal translation, approximation, and

language switch are the most frequently used strategies in communication by the less successful learners, while the successful learners mainly employed approximation, literal translation, and appeal for assistance strategies. However, there are no fourth general reasons why less successful and successful learners used the strategies to avoid a breakdown in communication. Moreover, (Nizar et al., 2018) investigated communication strategies employed by adult EFL learners in Bali. They found at least two critical points: adult EFL/L2 learners tend to use similar communication strategies to overcome their conversation using EFL. Also, using some strategies in communication showed the maturity of the cognitive and linguistic ability of adult EFL/L2 learners. Unfortunately, the study did not cover the reasons adult EFL/L2 learners employing communication strategies. Hence, the absence of research covering types and functions (reasons) of communication strategies paves the way for new research focusing on both types and functions (reasons) of using communication strategies in EFL.

When it comes to the geographical area, all the mentioned research above was carried out in the western part of Indonesia. None of the research on communication strategies has been conducted in the eastern part of Indonesia, particularly in Papua. Therefore, research on communication strategies in Papuan EFL learners should be conducted to fill the gap and answer the types and reasons for using communication strategies in Papuan EFL learners. The following research questions will be answered throughout this research:

1. What types of communication strategies are used by Papuan EFL learners/students?
2. Why are those strategies used by Papuan EFL learners/students?

Concerning the theory used in this research, it employs (Dörnyei & Scott, 1995) communication strategies (CSS) theory. (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997) defines at least two defining categories, namely, problem-orientedness and consciousness. Problem-orientedness refers to the use of language devices to cope with communication difficulties in conjunction with interlanguage deficiency. Meanwhile, consciousness refers to language users' awareness of the problem and strategic language use in achieving their goal. Since this research theoretically focuses on problem-solving communication strategies, (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997) are categorized into three primary groups, direct, indirect, and interactional strategies, and the most significant contribution among three categories in problem-solving communication breakdown is direct strategies. This is because:

"Direct strategies provide an alternative, manageable, and self-contained means of getting the (sometimes modified) meaning across, like circumlocution compensating for the lack of a word. Most traditionally identified CSS fall under this category." (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997).

Apart from that, this research also considers the research findings conducted by (Dewi et al., 2018) related to the reasons to use EFL students/learners in Bali.

Method

This research employed a qualitative method focusing on analyzing the types and reasons' Papuan EFL learners/students using communication strategies (CSS).

Also, this research used the CSS taxonomy proposed (Dörnyei & Scott, 1995a, 1995b). However, the taxonomy used was restricted indirect strategies category encompassing message abandonment; message reduction; message replacement; circumlocution; approximation; use of all-purpose words; word coinage; restructuring; literal translation; foreignizing; code-switching; use of similar-sounding words; mumbling; omission; retrieval; self-rephrasing; self-repair; and another repair. Those mentioned strategies were used to analyze the communication strategies of EFL students/learners in Papua, particularly at a tertiary level of education.

When it comes to the population and sampling, the population of this research was the third year of English education program students in one of state universities in Papua, consisting of 23 female and 7 male students. Additionally, since this research merely needed 5 female and male students, the researchers used the purposive sampling technique to determine the participants. All participants were the Papuan indigenous EFL students/learners and participated actively in the pair work activity. In terms of the research instrument, this research employed observation and semi-structured interviews. The observation was used to obtain the data that related to research question number 1. Meanwhile, the interview was employed to explain why Papuan EFL students/learners apply CSS in communication, and of course, it helped answer research question number 2.

Regarding the process and the technique of collecting data, the data was collected through observation and interview. In collecting the data, the researchers observed the learning process in the classroom utilizing a camera recorder. However, the camera video only focused on the participants of this research who were paired. Each pair had a single file conversation with roughly 7 minutes duration. Therefore, there were five files resulted from the video recorder that later would be observed regarding CSS. Besides, the result of observation would not be presented in quantitative instead of in qualitative. Talking about interviews, the researchers employed a semi-structured interview instead of an in-depth interview with the participants as they merely needed the surface information regarding the reasons Papuan EFL students/learners applied some strategies in communication. The duration of the semi-structured interview process lasted roughly 10 minutes for each participant. Before conducting the interview, the researchers provide a consent form to the participants to ask whether they agree to be interviewed or not.

In line with the data analysis technique, the researchers applied (Dörnyei & Scott, 1995a, 1995b) communication strategies taxonomy to analyze the data from observation. It is underlined that the researchers did not analyze using quantitative technique instead of qualitative technique. Therefore, the researchers applied thematic analysis. Moreover, to analyze the data from the semi-structured interview, the researcher employed thematic analysis. The purpose of thematic analysis is to find the answers related to using communication strategies among Papuan EFL students/learners.

Findings and discussion
This section encompasses findings and discussion focusing on answering the research questions about types of communication strategies are used by Papuan EFL learners/students and the reason why they use the strategies.

To present the findings and discussion, the researcher would present based on the research instruments used, namely observation and semi-structured interview.

Observational Findings and Discussion

Since this study applied qualitative research, the researchers described the observational findings using the qualitative instead of the quantitative method. The researchers also employ the communication strategies (CSS) taxonomy developed by (Dörnyei & Scott, 1995a, 1995b). Moreover, the thematic analysis would be much more suitable than other data analysis techniques, as this research, especially research question number 1, focused on seeking the types of CSS used by Papuan EFL students/learners. The following observational findings in this research:

Table 1: Observational findings regarding the types of CSS

Samples	CSS	Utterances
Student 1	Use of fillers	"JIS (Jakarta International School) is not **aaa**..**eh**..**eh**…. Give the student about moral education." (excerpt 10)
Student 2	Code-switching	"We do not know what type of **kejahatan seksual terjadi** and we do not know what time of **kejahatan seksual terjadi**." (excerpt 5)
Student 4	Self-repetition	"When we thinking about in governmental school example **like…eh….like …eh…fifteen** senior high schools that in here we are, Indonesian people, but on…"(excerpt 9)
Student 6	Self-repair	"The kind of subject that is also **touching eh…teaching** moral value to the students itself that is religion and the second is civic or we say Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan." (excerpt 12)
Student 8	Asking for clarification	"Today, I would like to tell you a story. A folktale from the south sea from central Java. **Do you know what is it?**" (excerpt10)
Student 9	Asking for confirmation	"**hah? Really?**"
Student 5	Direct appeal for help	"Student: ….the government must do is…first this..this is about..APA ITU tadi? Friend: sex violence Student: ….sex violence in a child in the

playgroup…..”

Table 1 presents the types of communication strategies produced by Papuan EFL students/learners. From the data shown above, it can be seen that only some strategies in CSS taxonomy by (Dörnyei & Scott, 1995a, 1995b) were employed, namely use of filler; code-switching; self-repetition; self-repair; asking for clarification; asking for confirmation; and direct appeal for help.

Semi-Structured Interview Findings and Discussion

The semi-structured interview purpose in this research was to find out research question number 2 that explains why Papuan EFL students/learners use CSS for communication. The researchers employed thematic analysis. The categorical themes derived from the previous research conducted by (Dewi et al., 2018) include thinking time, anxiety, and proficiency.

The following extracts produced by Papuan EFL students towards their reasons using fillers for communication, as follows:

1. **Use of fillers**

   The data below are the result of the interview about the use of filler.

   Extract 1 from S1:

   > *"Interviewer: Why do you use fillers for communication, particularly when you communicate using English?*
   > *Interviewee: To take time for thinking sir and to make sure the word I produced whether correct or wrong"*

   Extract 1 from S5:

   > *"Interviewer: Why do you use fillers for communication particularly when you communicate using English?*
   > *Interviewee: Because it can avoid my nervous sir and rise my confidence"*

   Extract 1 from S10:

   > *"Interviewer: Why do you use fillers for communication particularly when you communicate using English?*
   > *Interviewee: to avoid silence in communication sir"*

   From the extracts above, it is believed that Papuan EFL students employed filler in communication since they tend to handle their nervousness and try to avoid silence in the communication flow. Regardless reducing nervousness and pause, fillers can be used to gain time to think what supposed to be uttered the next.

2. **Code-Switching**

   Extract 5 from S3:

   > *"Interviewer: why do you switch your language from foreign to first language?*
   > *Interviewee: To ensure that my partner understands the topic of conversation"*

   Extract 4 from S6:

   > *"Interviewer: why do you switch your language from foreign to first language?*
   > *Interviewee: I think switching the language will help me to convey the exact meaning of my words"*

Extract 6 from S9:

"Interviewer: why do you switch your language from foreign to first language?
Interviewee: because I want to make sure that my friends understand my words"

The extracts, as mentioned above, shows that Papuan EFL students applied code-switching in communication as they wanted to emphasize their words to the listeners. Also, by switching the language, they feel good in delivering their meanings.

3. Self-repetition

Extract 4 from S7:

"Interviewer: why do you do self-repetition?
Interviewee: I think it helps me to think the next words or sentences"

Extract 4 from S6:

"Interviewer: why do you do self-repetition?
Interviewee: To avoid me from nervousness in communication."

The extracts displayed that Papuan EFL students used self-repetition to take their time to think the following conveyed words or sentences to the listeners, or it is so-called time-gaining. Moreover, self-repetition can help them to avoid nervousness.

4. Self-repair

Extract 2 from S4:

"Interviewer: why do you do self-repair?
Interviewee: Because self-repetition is useful for making correction especially in grammatical errors"

Extract 2 from S5:

"Interviewer: why do you do self-repair?
Interviewee: because it can help me to make a clear mispronounced word"

Extract 2 from S7:

"Interviewer: why do you do self-repair?
Interviewee: to sound like a native speaker sir as same as chit chat in the movie"

The extracts showed Papuan EFL students employed a self-repair strategy in communication for making corrections and assisting the speakers in repairing mispronounced words and grammatical errors.

5. Asking for clarification

Extract 3 from S1:

"Interviewer: why do you ask for clarification?
Interviewee: Because sometimes I don't understand what my friends mean"

Extract 3 from S3:

"Interviewer: why do you ask for clarification?
Interviewee: sometimes I worry about my words to be understood by my
friends or mispronounce the words.

The extract showed Papuan EFL students ask for clarification because they want to emphasize their meaning and feel doubt.

6. Asking for confirmation

Extract 2 from S4:

"Interviewer: why do you ask for confirmation?
Interviewee: Because it helps me to confirm whether the words that I use
correct or not"

Extract 2 from S10:

"Interviewer: why do you ask for confirmation?
Interviewee: because I sometimes doubt whether the listeners understand
what I mean or not"

The extracts above displayed Papuan EFL students ask for confirmation within the conversation because they want to emphasize their meaning and manipulate their worriedness. Also, the Papuan EFL students tend to use this strategy for asking the word accuracy used in communication, and they employ this strategy to confirm their pronunciation.

7. Direct appeal for help

Extract 9 from S1:

"Interviewer: why do you do direct appeal for help?
Interviewee: Because it is a viable way to generate English words that I
don't know"

Extract 9 from S3:

"Interviewer: why do you do direct appeal for help?
Interviewee: Because it helps me from communication breakdowns. So, I
can keep communication on running well"

Extract 9 from S5:

"Interviewer: why do you do direct appeal for help?
Interviewee: because I sometimes feel nervous to convey my thoughts to
my friends"

Regarding the discussion section, apart from the communication strategies used by Papuan EFL students, this study also asked why Papuan EFL students employed communication strategies. Generally, they employed communication strategies because of thinking time, avoiding nervousness, avoiding hesitation, overcoming the lexical deficiency of the target language, avoiding knowledge gap, justification, emphasizing the intended meaning, overcoming communication breakdowns. Several studies have justified those findings above (Al-Gharaibeh, 2016; Aziz et al., 2018; Dewi et al., 2018; Jumiati et al., 2017; Nizar et al., 2018; Nugroho, 2019; Saidah et al., 2020; Syahri, 2009a).

The research conducted by (Al-Gharaibeh, 2016) investigated the communication strategies used by EFL teachers and students in Jordan. They

found that EFL teachers and students employed message reduction, approximation; circumlocution; code-mixing; self-repetition; other repetition, appealing for help, asking for repetition, guessing, using fillers, and feigning understanding. These findings partly justified the result of this study in terms of the reasons Papuan EFL students used communication strategies. The research found that Jordan EFL students employed CSS as they cannot correctly perform grammar and lexicon. Additionally, they use CSS to overcome communication breakdowns. Not only that, but also, they want to attain the learning outcomes. The research findings in Jordan was relevant with the researchers' findings in the context of Papuan EFL students that can be seen in the extract 4.

Additionally, the study carried out by (Aziz et al., 2018) distinguished between successful and unsuccessful students, and they found that roughly three communication strategies were not employed for both successful and unsuccessful students, namely circumlocution, word coinage, and mime strategies. Regarding this study, it was found that the absence of some communication strategies occurred in this research as well, and among others are circumlocution, word coinage, and mime strategies. However, apart from that, the EFL reasons based on the research results pointed out that they employ CSS because of language problems and difficulties. These two reasons corroborated the result of this research that can be seen from the subsection self-repair.

Furthermore, research carried out by (Dewi et al., 2018) investigated Balinese young learners in EFL classrooms, they found at least three big reasons: thinking time, anxiety, and proficiency. In line with thinking time, it encompasses thinking about the answer and what to say next. Regarding anxiety, it covers nervousness, doubt, feeling uncertainty, and slip of the tongue. In terms of proficiency, it involves lack of idea and vocabularies, producing many grammatical errors, and the inability to perceive the meaning of the target language. Regardless the reasons of EFL young learners in Bali, the research also showed the most frequently use of communication strategies that is fillers. Based on this research, it can be seen how the research conducted by (Dewi et al., 2018) justifies the findings of this research. However, it cannot wholly justify in terms of the most frequently use of communication strategies as this the research does not ask about it.

A study researched by (Jumiati et al., 2017) investigated communication strategies used by EFL teachers in Banda Aceh. They found that the most frequent strategy used is time gaining associated with fillers. The reason is to take time or maintain the conversation. This finding was relevant with the researchers' findings. Papuan EFL students employ fillers as they need time to think what to say the next sentences. At the same time, (Jumiati et al., 2017) stated that not all communication strategies proposed by (Dörnyei & Scott, 1995a, 1995b) were employed. This statement was relevant with this research findings. Only some strategies were used by Papuan EFL students namely: fillers, code-switching, self-repetition, self-repair, asking for clarification, asking for confirmation, and direct appeal for help.

Based on the evidence shown above, (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997) defines at least two defining categories, namely, problem-orientedness and consciousness.

Problem-orientedness refers to the use of language devices to cope with communication difficulties in conjunction with interlanguage deficiency. Meanwhile, consciousness refers to language users' awareness of the problem and strategic language use in achieving their goal. Despite not all communication strategies were implemented in one study, the two categories namely problem-orientedness and consciousness were represented in each research evidence including this study. In the nutshell, the research evidence above explicitly confirms the types and reasons of Papuan EFL students used communication strategies within conversation.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that communication strategies used by Papuan EFL students are fillers, code-switching, self-repetition, self-repair, asking for clarification, asking for confirmation, and direct appeal for help. The reasons why Papuan EFL students do those communication strategies because of thinking time, anxiety, nervousness, doubt, worriedness, hesitation, lack of knowledge, lack of vocabulary, grammatical errors, and the lack of confidence.

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