Effective Communication Strategies Among Students in Arabic Language: Concept and Practical

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Abstract

Communication is the main function of language. In education, language learning objectives are achieved when the students able to communicate effectively. Students can communicate in a limited linguistic resource with the help of a communication strategy. However, language teaching that enables communication strategy used to meet the learning objectives must be highlighted. The question is, what is communication strategy that meets the learning objectives? How students are able to choose and use this strategy? To answer the question, this study set two objectives. First, to identify communication strategies that meet the learning objectives. Second, to provide language teaching techniques that support the use of the strategy. Thus, library studies were done on previous studies; conceptual and practical. Initial results found that effective teaching techniques can affect the use of effective communication strategies.

Keywords: Communication Strategies, Effective Communication, Language Teaching.

Introduction

Communication is a necessity in human life. Through communication one could express his needs and opinions well. In the context of modern pedagogy which focuses heavily on accuracy in communication as an important angle in language learning, the ability to communicate holds an important role in language learning process. Brown (2000) describes speaking skills as a benchmark of language proficiency. The main objective of communication is for the message to be understood to the listener. Overall, communication skills are crucial in education to use, regulate and update the knowledge that students already have (Kamarudin, 2003). Therefore, students' ability to communicate is a matter of emphasis whether in terms of sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics or paralinguistics.

The term Communication comes from the Latin word '*communcare*' which means 'to make common' which is to create similarities (Rahim, 1993). Effective communication is not just a function of transmission as defined by Theodorson (1969) that communication is the

transmission of information, attitudes, emotions or thoughts using symbols from one individual or group to another individual or group but rather a process consisting of creating and interpreting messages in turn stimulates response (Griffin, 2011). Effective feedback from the communication process is the result of the ability to give meaning and make accurate interpretations (Kamarudin, 2003). Although a person is not a good speaker, he is able to produce effective communication when he receives a response or feedback from his speech. In the aspect of the second language there is no denying that body language is a reinforcement to the meaning conveyed.

In verbal communication between individuals, the speaker will focus on delivery and refine his techniques to achieve effective communication. In this two-way communication process, the individuals involved will convey and receive information until both achieve their communication goals. According to Samsuddin (1993), oral communication between individuals has four characteristics namely (i) occurs face to face (ii) the distance between the two parties communicating is close (iii) both parties give and receive information.

Communication will also be effective when the information presented is supported by other information (Kamarudin, 2003) and sentence construction is neatly structured. Effective communication according to the '*yourDictionary*' is communication that is executed clearly and using simple sentences to ensure that the listener will actively listen and understand the information presented. In addition, according to Osman (2000), effective communication occurs when (1) the message conveyed is understood accurately and clearly by the recipient (2) the meaning of the message is understood and shared by the speaker and interlocutor (3) changes occur after the message is sent with the meaning desired by the speaker (4) the message conveyed has a cost-effective element. This is supported by the definition given by Mulyana and Rakhmat (1990) that the meaning accepted by the interlocutor is the same as the meaning conveyed by the speaker. Thus, effective communication can be measured by the end result in the interaction that takes place between the speaker and the interlocutor. If the interlocutor fails to get the correspondent meaning as desired by the speaker, the communication does not reach the level of effectiveness and fails to achieve the communication objective.

However, the results of a study at SMKA Kuala Lumpur found that lack of vocabulary is a major factor in Arabic speech cannot be mastered well (Ismail, Mat, & Pa, 2012). In addition, a study conducted among secondary school students also found that 84.5% of them agreed that lack of vocabulary is a major obstacle to easy communication. Meanwhile, 79.7% stated that they often forget their vocabulary when communicating in Arabic (Rahman, 2009). Aladdin (2012) in a study shows that students are able to convey a message when communicating with the help of communication strategies even if they do not have adequate vocabulary. Several other studies have also shown that most students are more likely to use communication strategies while speaking in a second or foreign language (Mariappan, 2015). Therefore, this study will examine what communication strategies that meet the learning objectives as well as teaching and learning approaches that affect effective communication based on communication strategies.

For starters, the author will briefly discuss the foreign language communication system. Then, the author will determine what is meant by communication strategy. Next, how communication strategies affect effective communication is stated. Finally, approaches that enable students to use communication strategies that achieve learning objectives are described.

Communication in Second Language

Teori Chomsky's mentalistic theory of the nature of language and its acquisition argues that all human beings are born with a cognitive element that is complete with universal knowledge and not dependent on experience alone. He also stated that language acquisition is controlled by the cognitive of the speaker through two components, namely competence and performance (Ibrahim, 2009). Competence refers to the ability from birth in mastering a number of language methods or rules that it possesses. Performance consists of processes of understanding and publication (Simanjuk, 1987). Comprehension processes involve the ability to observe sentences and the processes of publication that is the application of knowledge such as speech and writing. In the scope of foreign language learning, students have two different ways to develop the competency of a language that is through language acquisition as stated and language learning where (1) language learning occurs consciously and involves repeated training in formal situations. In addition, (2) second language learning (B2) requires time to focus on the material as well as understanding grammar (3) the ability to structure B2 grammar depends on the first language (B1) of its speakers (4) motivation and self-confidence influence B2 acquisition and mastery.

When viewed from the point of view of the system, the B2 system exists in transition as students learn it and this has been explained by Selinker (1972) through his writing in interlanguage. He found that the basic thing to note is the latent structure of psychology that is active while one is learning a second language. Therefore, he has defined the language between interlanguage which is a unique linguistic system by students in an effort to speak in the target language. The term also refers to the stage of language transition from the first language to the targeted language. The stages of language are constantly changing, temporary and can be developmental. Intermediate language is also a process of how students use a second language to communicate or is known as a communication strategy. He stated that communication strategies in a second language are among the five cognitive processes for linguistic details, methods, and subsystems to be fossilized in interlanguage performance. The communication strategies used when handling the targeted language also evolved when the student realized that he had a lack of competency in some aspects of the targeted language. This shows that B2 is closely related to the phenomenon of the use of communication strategies.

Canale and Swain through his theory of communicative competence have placed strategic competence as an element in communicative ability. Strategic competence emphasizes the importance of balancing deficits that occur in language (Caraker, 2012). Components in strategic competence consist of oral and non-verbal communication strategies. Such strategies are used to compensate for the 'damage' that occurs in communication due to lack of language proficiency or performance factors in speech (Canale & Swain, 1980). In addition, a model developed by Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, & Thurrell (1995) has shown that strategic competence plays an important role and is interrelated with the five components of communicative competence. The strategic competence referred to by Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, & Thurrell contain 5 main elements namely (1) avoidance or reduction strategies such as strategies to change messages, avoid messages and leave messages 2) achievement strategies and competence involve strategies in modifying the language to achieve communication objectives (3) strategies that involve time to think such as repetition strategies and pause (4) self-monitoring strategies such as making

corrections on one's own speech (5) interaction strategies such as asking for reassurance from the interlocutor. This strategic competence is also known as communication strategy.

Communication Strategy

The definition and taxonomy of Communication Strategy (CS) was initially developed by Tarone, Cohen, & Dumas (1976). At the outset, they create a framework based on the communication strategy terminology and classify the types of phenomena between languages that are currently discussed. The framework was created to provide an arrangement of interpersonal language phenomena in an orderly manner to change the focus of language teachers from just teaching to interpreting between languages among students. In addition, they have identified several types of communication strategies that speakers often use when speaking in the targeted language. Next is to place examples in terms of phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexical for each strategy in a more systematic order. However, Tarone (1977) found that he had difficulty in applying the taxonomy in his study and took steps to reorganize the taxonomy.

CS generally shows actions to overcome problems that arise by implementing several techniques in communication. CS is seen as the main tool in verbal or non-verbal form used when lacking linguistic mastery of a second language in communication. CS is also used consciously by individuals to overcome problems in achieving communication goals (Tarone, 1977, Faerch & Kasper, 1983b). Moreover, CS is a joint experiment used by two communicators to reach an agreement on understanding the same meaning in a situation where the meaning of the structure actually does not seem to be shared (Tarone, 1977). According to Bialystok (1990), CS is an undeniable performance in the use of B2 and plays an important role in communication. From these different definitions also produce taxonomic diversity according to certain concepts. Among them are the taxonomies of Tarone (1977); Faerch and Kasper (1983); Bialystok (1983); Pouslisse (1993); Dorney and Scott (19995) and Dorney and Kosmos (1997).

There is some confusion between CS and language errors. This is because people tend to evaluate a person's communication based on the accuracy of the language used. Meanwhile, foreign language students tend to use CS if they make mistakes due to lack of mastery of the targeted language system in conveying information spontaneously (Selinker, 1972). This shows that the strategy has to do with faults but the two are different components. Mistakes are inaccuracies in the use of language while strategy is the technique of how students overcome problems when communicating (Pusparani, 2015). This situation shows the phase shift from just looking at language errors to how they overcome them as stated by Corder in his writing '*the significance of learner error*' about a philosophy in life.

> *"that we live in an imperfect world and consequently errors will always occur in spite of our best efforts. Our ingenuity should be concentrated on techniques for dealing with errors after they have occurred"* (corder, 1982:6)

This indirectly shows that CS is used to achieve effective communication or "enhance the effectiveness of communication" (Canale, 2013: 11).

Communication Strategy in Parallel with Language Teaching Objectives

Although students can build their own CS when facing problems (Yule & Tarone, 2014), but the CS used does not necessarily lead to effective communication (Tarone, 1996) that can achieve communication objectives. Elements in achievement strategies such as elaboration, approximation, literal translation, internationalization, code conversion and collaboration appeal will result in effective communication compared to other strategies (Dörnyei, 1995). According to Faerch & Kasper (1983) strategies that are able to achieve language learning objectives are achievement strategies that involved approaches, descriptions, part of internationalization strategies and assistance appeals.

Therefore, the researcher will focus on achievement strategies from the aspects of description, approaches and appeal of assistance as a strategy that can achieve effective communication and linguistic objectives.

- **Descriptive Strategy**

Descriptive strategy is one component of strategic competence (Canale & Swain, 1980) and important strategies for second or foreign language learners to convey information in their limited vocabulary. This strategy is able to help students increase their self-confidence, produce fluency in speech and achieve communication goals (Chen, 2002). Descriptive strategy is also embedded in ACTFL as pragmatic competencies i.e. a guideline for speaking fluently (Buck, Byrnes, & Thompson, 1989). Descriptive strategy usually occurs when the speaker restructures the information presented in other words. Paraphrasing can also be associated with this strategy where students will explain the meaning of a word by giving a picture or definition. In other words, the speaker will focus on the characteristics, functions, features or situations that can bring about the meaning of the desired word (Bou-franch, 1994). Examples of elaboration strategies:

Students use the sentence "بين الرخيص والغالي" to show the meaning of 'not too expensive' while the actual way to say it is "لا مكلفة جد" (Mohammad, 2012).

- **Approach Strategy**

The approach strategy means that the speaker uses alternative vocabulary such as themes or superordinate that share sematic features. While using this strategy, the speaker will try to find the concept of the word he wants to pronounce and compare it with other concepts (Bou-franch, 1994). This strategy also includes the use of subordinate themes and synonyms. Speakers will tend to use synonyms to replace desired targeted language items or use other items in the language to compensate for the lack of resources in communication. This causes students to choose the word in B2 which is felt to be most appropriate to describe the meaning of the sentence (Rabab'ah, 2008). Examples of approximation strategies are:

Students use the word 'come' on "تخضر الطائرة" to indicate the plane is landing "تهبط الطائرة" (Mohammad, 2012) or students use the word 'nose' on the elephant يستخدم الفيل أنفه ليجذب to show 'trunk' which actually is "خرطومه....".. العشب إلى فمه"

- **Assistance Appeal Strategy**

While the assistance appeal strategy allows the speaker to give full participation in the conversation. This strategy also helps the speaker to continue communicating smoothly and get the correct answers from the questions asked (Maleki, 2010). The assistance appeal strategy is categorized as an interaction strategy in which both speakers and interlocutors work together to solve problems that occur in communication and successfully achieve an understanding of the same meaning. There are two types of aid appeal strategies namely direct and indirect (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997). Direct help appeals when the speaker asks relevant questions about unknown or uncertain words to the interlocutor directly (Ya-ni, 2007). While the strategy is indirect when the speaker asks for help to the interlocutor by giving an overview of the problem of second language item group encountered while speaking orally or not such as raising voice intonation, pause, eye sight and facial expressions (Caraker, 2012). However, this indirect strategy is not a discussion as it does not involve B2. But what are the action proposals that can support the strategies to achieve the objectives of effective communication and learning are selected and applied by students?

Teaching Arabic Language in Improving the Use of Communication Strategy
Among the principles that help students master B2 is also to determine words that have a high frequency of use and provide vocabulary instruction explicitly (Hunt & Beglar, 2002). It can be seen that numbers, shapes, colours and properties are features found in most concrete objects. Achievement strategy that is descriptive requires basic vocabulary and words in describing the characteristics of an object. Therefore, the optimal teaching of numbers, shapes, colours and properties should be an emphasis at the beginning of language learning. The following is an example of a simple model to support the description:

Table 1
Simple Model to Improve the Use Of Communication Strategy

الأرقام	الأشكال	الألوان	الأوصاف
أول	مخروط	بني	رقيق
سادس	مكعب	برتقالي	شاق
حادي العشر	اسطوانة	وردي	محرك
عاشرون	منحنى	أصفر ذهبي	عالي
ميئات	مربع	أزرق السماء	شفاف
تسعينات	مثلث	أخضر غامق	مضى
ملايين	دائرة	أحمر فاتح	ثابت

The same goes for approach strategy involving themes / superordinate and synonyms. B2 speakers can use approach as an alternative vocabulary when faced with lexical deficiencies to continue communication. Synonyms are divided into two, namely absolute synonyms and partial synonyms (Lynos, 1994). Absolute synonyms indicate a whole equation and a partial synonym is an incomplete equation. Superordinate or hyponyms are part of the meaning of a more general word (Mezah & Mohammad, 2011). Both types of vocabulary can be the "saviour" for students

to achieve continuous communication. Examples of simple models that support approach strategy are:

Table 2
Simple Model to Support Approach Strategy

مرادفات	الكلمات المندرجة/ المحتوى
أبان، بين، أظهر، أوضح، حصحصة	الجسم
إسرار، سكوت، صمت، كتمان	الأثاث
ألحق، أضاف، ضم	الحشرات
حديث، خطاب، قول	الحيوانات
رقد، نام، هجع	المأكولات
ذهب، مضى، انطلق	الإنسان
دار، مسكن، منزل، مأوى	الأشكال

As for the assistance appeal strategy, a brief model of questions is highlighted to encourage the use of direct assistance appeal strategy by asking questions:

Table 3
Simple Model to Support Assistance Appeal Strategy

أهذا صحيح..
أليس كذالك ..
ما هذا الشيء..
ما فرق بين هذا و هذا..
أرجوك أعد كلامك / من الممكن أن تعيد كلامك؟
أين جئت هذا الكلام؟
من هو /هم ..
من فضلك..
ما المقصود هذا الكلام؟
لو سمحت..
كيف نطق هذا الكلام باللغة العربية؟

These three strategies can be done simultaneously or in combination (Russell & Loschky, 1998). Various techniques can be used in practicing it such as conversation, quizzes, constructing and finding definitions (Faucette, 2001), substitute drills, crossword puzzles, guessing activities while giving illustrations and giving examples (Maleki, 2010; Dimitra, 2014).

Conclusion
Communication strategies are undeniably used by foreign speakers. However, as a language learner, strategies that achieve learning objectives should be an option. In addition, they should communicate in the language they learn as much as possible and not just sit on things that cannot be spoken. They should be trained not to speak fluently without mistakes but to prioritize the ability to communicate. Therefore, knowledge of the use of strategies is very helpful at the beginning of second language learning and also at the primary level.

Acknowledgement

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