
ACTIVATING STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION THROUGH COMMUNICATIVE STRATEGIES: GRAMMAR SUBJECT IN STKIP YAYASAN ABDI PENDIDIKAN PAYAKUMBUH

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Abstract

This study was an action research aiming at revealing the students' Participation in communicating ideas in Grammar course. Sometimes, Communicating idea become an uneasy work. The difficulties commonly found in relation to the lackness of vocabulary. Yet, the learners makes some efforts in overcoming their problem called communicative strategies. The Subject was 25 students of Grammar IV subject of English Study Program at STKIP Yayasan Abdi Pendidikan. The data were collected by using observation sheet, recording and lecturer's journal. This study ran for two cycles. In the second cycle, it was shown that there was gradual improvement of the participation shown the increase of the students' participation in communicating their ideas. It was significant because the aspects of the participation such as the students' enthusiasm in finding the answer arose untill 76 % (very active); discussing actively was 56%(active), asking question was 60%(active), answering question was 52%(active) and noting down was 92%(very active). It means that the students enjoyed and were not reluctant in transferring their ideas anymore. The most frequence strategies in communicating their ideas was fillers and literal translation respectively. So, these strategies was a motivation for them to communicate their thoughts eventhough they were up against some problems on vocabulary.

Keywords: *Students' Participation, Commuincative strategies, Grammar course*

1. INTRODUCTION

Students' participation in classroom activity is an important factor which determines the success of the teaching learning process. In the classroom activities, the students should be encouraged to be active participants mentally and physically, because by doing this, they can learn best. As stated by Piaget (2007) that the students are concentrated thinkers and learn best through active participation. To be able to communicate fluently the students have to do a lot of practices and participate actively during the lessons. It means that that the students' speaking ability depends on the frequency of the using of the target language. The students'

participation in class activity can be maximally achieved if it is supported by having good communication skill. Generally, when the students want to transfer her/his idea in the classroom activity like class discussion, she/he felt shy or sometimes confused when she/he faced with a vocabulary problem. He/she couldnot find the suitable words for the term that he/she wanted to express. to These kinds of problems will influence the students' motivation to participate in the teaching and learning activities.

These not only occurred in skill language course such as speaking subject but also in component language course such as grammar subject. Grammar subject is one of the language component course that is held in english department of STKIP Yayasan Abdi Pendidikan. There are 4 levels of Grammar subject ,namely, Grammar I, Grammar II, Grammar III and Grammar IV. The researcher conducted the research in Grammar IV course. This course introduces the students to the kinds of English Language Proficiency test such as TOEFL and TOEIC which related to the grammar topic. Therefore, in this course, the class discusion was done almost in all meetings. They discussed about the answer of the question, the strategies used in answering the question of the test, and the reason why that the answer was.

The researcher chose the Grammar course because this class willnot contribute the students' burden related to the mark while the speaking course will. In speaking course, the way they pronounce or use certain expression would influence directly to their mark while In Grammar course, those

aren't to be considered in giving their mark. Hopefully, it wouldn't be a burden for the students' willingness in participating the class discussion because it wouldn't directly affect to their mark.

In this Grammar course, the researcher did pre-observation and pre-interview. Most of the students of English Department in STKIP Yayasan Abdi Pendidikan Payakumbuh in Grammar course were passive during the class discussion. From the result of the pre-observation and the interview with the students, the researcher found that most of the students of Grammar course of English Department of STKIP Yayasan Abdi Pendidikan did not participate actively during the discussion. Their lack of participation in this activity was influenced by some difficulties such as the lack of their vocabulary. Besides that, The difficulties are due to some reasons such as fear of offense, (Siti Maziha, Nik Suryani, and Melor, 2010), fear of failing to show their intelligence, fear that their answer will be criticized.

This condition made the discussion didn't run well. Some students just sat and listened to their friends' explanation, felt bored and did other activities such as playing with the cellphone, daydreaming etc. In the pre-interview, the students didn't want to ask a question because they got difficult in finding vocabulary to communicating their ideas. So that, the students bored easily and they were also reluctant to participate themselves in the class discussion.

Based on these real situations above, it is important to solve these problems. The researcher proposes the use of communicative strategies in helping students' problem in communicating their ideas in the class discussion. Therefore, giving them the strategy for communication probably will improve their motivation in involving in the classroom activity especially in Grammar course.

Communicative strategy is parts of the strategic competence deals with the real communicative strategies applied in order to solve some problems faced in the communication process. Thus, one of the ways of the application of the strategic competence is by applying communicative strategies. It is "a systematic technique employed by a speaker to express his meaning when facing some difficulty" (Corder cited in Faerch and Kasper, 1983).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Participation has various definitions related to the different theorist. Richards and Schmidt (2002) stated that participation is the action of taking part in the exchange of speech or being merely a silent participant. It can be inferred that in the process of teaching learning, the students' participation is related to two kinds of conditions. The first is there is no interaction among the students such as in the presentation of the result of discussion. The other condition is there are interactions in the discussion activity.

The definition above connects the students' participation with the students' interaction. According to Spratt, Pulverness, and Williams (2005) interaction is two-way communication that involves using language and body language. Body language has function to keep the listeners involved to keep what the speaker is saying and to check that the listeners understand the meaning. From the explanation of the expert above, the students' participation is not only viewed verbally but also non-verbally.

The students' participation in the classroom activities takes a great role in the process of teaching learning. In the classroom activities, the students should be encouraged to be active participants because by doing this the objective of the learning can be achieved easily. As stated by Piaget (2007) that the students are concentrated thinkers and learn best through active participation. To be able to communicate their ideas, the students have to do a lot of practices and participate actively during the class.

The students' participation in expressing their idea is influenced by some factors. Those factors have contribution to improve or to obstruct the students' participation. According to Rocca (2010) there are some factors that contribute to the students' participation. They are logistics, classroom apprehension, personal traits and sex differences.

Logistics relates to the classroom size, seating arrangement, timing and course policy. For the classroom size, the students will hide themselves behind their friends' participation (Weaver & Qi, 2005) and will hinder the communication (Gleason, 1986). While in the smaller class, the students will not be able to hide themselves because they will be noticeable if they don't participate. Seating arrangement is another factor that affects the students' participation. McCroskey & McVetta (1978) noted that certain arrangements and specific seats within each arrangement were more conducive to

student participation. Common seat like in row or column gives less participation than a u-shaped, circular or semicircular arrangement (Berdine, 1986; Fassinger, 1995b; Ferguson, 1986; Fritschner, 2000). Timing also can play a factor, participation is less likely to occur in night classes. Lastly, the course policy such as allowing students to be a part of the participation grading process is helpful in increasing their quantity and quality of participation, attendance, and preparedness for class (Zaremba & Dunn, 2004)

Then, Classroom apprehension is the other factor that students may not participate in class is because of their own personal fears of feeling inadequate in front of others, nervousness and lack of confidence, personal traits and sex differences. Weaver and Qi (2005) stated that students may feel ashamed or lack of confidence in front of their classmates and the lecturer and as a result they decided not to participate actively.

However, Personal traits like self esteem and sex differences don't give much influence in students participation (Morrison and Thomas, 1975). For the most common reason in students' participation is feeling inadequate and personal fear. Commonly, it was caused by the inadequate vocabulary the students have. Therefore, communicative strategies were introduced to overcome this problem.

Communicative strategies can be defined "...As a systematic attempt by the speaker to express and decode meaning in the target language, in situations where the appropriate systematic target language rules have not been formed" (Tarone, Cohen and Dumas, 1976 cited in Faerch and Kasper, 1983:5). The communicative strategies proposed by some scholars such as Tarone, Cohen and Dumas (in Faerch and Kasper, 1983), Corder (1978), Faerch and Kasper (1983), Celce-Murcia, Dornyei & Thurrell (1995).

The first strategy is avoidance & Reduction. These strategies are classified into message abandonment--the speaker begins to talk about a concept but is unable to continue and leaves a message unfinished because of language difficulties, topic Avoidance-- The speaker avoids talking about the topic areas or concepts which pose language difficulties, message Replacement--takes the related concepts which may presuppose the desired content.

The second strategy is achievement or Compensatory. There are some subcategory as well. Such as Non Linguistics means or Paralinguistics Strategies- the speaker tries to use nonlinguistics like mime, gesture, facial expression or a sound imitation in place of a lexical item; literal translation-the speaker translates literally a lexical item, an idiom, a compound word, or structure from a native language to a target language; borrowing or code switching strategy- the speaker switches from a target language to the native language words because of running out of vocabulary; foreignizing- the speaker uses a native language words or phrase by adjusting it to a target language phonologically; approximation-the speaker uses a target language word which shares enough semantics features in common with the desired lexical item for example the use of the word *sailboat* for *ship*; word coinage-the speaker makes up a non existing target language word on the basis of a supposed rule for example *vegetarianist* for *vegetarian*; Circumlocution-the speaker describes or exemplifies the object or action instead of using the appropriate target language item or structure e.g *the thing to open bottles with* instead of *corckscrew*; the use of all purpose words or smurfing such as the speaker uses a general or empty lexical item to fill gaps in vocabulary e.g the overuse of *thing, stuff, gadget, what do you call it*; retrieval-the speaker repeat the words, e.g. *bro...bron.....bronze*

The third strategy is Stalling or Time Gaining Strategies. This strategies also developed into subcategory. They are filler /hesitation devices such as filling words or gambits to fill a pause and to gain time to think e.g *well, actually, alright*; self repair or restructuring-the speaker sets up a new speech when the original one fails

The next strategy is self Monitoring Strategies. This strategies consist of Self Initiated Repair techniques e.g *I mean...* By using self initiated repair techniques, the speaker correct her/his own word. The other strategy of self monitoring is Paraphrasing (over-elaboration). Paraphrasing restate the word into a simple form of vocabulary e.g. *This is for students ...pupils ...when you're at school.*

The last strategy is Interactional Strategies. In interactional strategies also consist of two techniques. They are appeals for assistance- The speaker turns to the interlocutor for help. It can be direct (e.g *what do you call...*) or indirect (e.g *i don't know the word in English.....* or Puzzled expression), and meaning Negotiation Strategies, the speaker shows an indicators of

non/miss-understanding like request, expression of non-understanding or comprehension checks. For example, the speaker does the comprehension checks whether the hearer can follow the speaker by saying, *Am i making sense?* or whether the hearer is listening such as *Are you still here?* or *Do you listen to me?*

In sum up, this paper presented how communicative strategy could activate the students participation in grammar subject and what the communcative strategies were employed by the students in the class discussion

3. METHODOLOGY

The research conducted in the form of classroom action research. The data of this study were analyzed by using quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative approach was used to analyze the percentage of the students' participation. The qualitative approach was used to describe the characteristic of the data. The subject of the study was the students of Third year of English Department STKIP yayasan Abdi Pendidikan ,especially, the students who took Grammar IV course. There were 25 students in this class. The data were collected by using observation sheet, recording and lecturer's journal. This study ran for two cycles. In the early of semester, the researcher gave an explanation to the students about communcative strategies. In the beginning of every meeting, she always motivated the students by applying the strategies. Then, she asked the students to rehearse and familiarize in using these strategies. The data were analyzed using qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative method was used to describe the characteristics of the data taken from the observation and the journal, while the quantitative method was used to analyze the percentage of the students participation based on the indicators such as the students activity in looking for the answer, in discussing, in asnwering the question, in noting down the conclusion.

In analyzing quantitative data, to seek the percentage of the students participation, the researcher used propotion technique proposed by Sudjana (1996)

$$K = \frac{A}{N} \times 100\% \quad \text{where:}$$

K = Percentage of students active

A = the number of students active

N= the total number of students

Then, the percentage of the students active was converted into (2010)

Table 1. active category

Percentage	Category
76-100	very active
51-75	Active
26-50	less active
1-25	Passive

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The procedures of this research study include several steps. In the reconnaissance step, the researcher did observation to find the problem related to the students' participation in the classroom activity especially in the classroom discussion. The problems were only a few of students that participated in the classroom activities, the students participating in the classroom activities were the same from time to time, The students were reluctant to be active in the class discussion because they afraid being laughed at by their classmates, they were nervous and difficult to express their ideas because of the ineduquacy of vocabulary.

In planning step, the lecturer prepared the sylabus and the lesson plan. In the lesson plan the lecturer added an activity in the beginning of the class. In the first three meetings, before starting the class activity, the lecturer gave an explanation to the students about communcative strategies. In the beginning of the next meeting, she motivated the students to apply the strategies. Then, she asked the students to rehearse and familiarize in using these strategies in every communicative activity outside of the class.

The grammar course was conducted by applying class discussion which several procedures. First, prior to the class started, the lecturer had given the students the items of the question to to be answered as homework. They had to find the answers and analyze those items. Second, During the class, one of the students would be called to present one of the items they preferred to be answered. She/he would give the answer and the analysis of the item presented. next, the other students would ask and discuss about his/her answer. After that, the presenter would answer the question. The last, the other students would jot down the conclusion of the student presentation and the lecturer would clarify the previous explanation or sum up what had been explained and then, the lecturer would call the other student to present another item of the question.

In the action and observation, The lecturer was helped by her colaborator, the other lecturer. The collaborator would take some note during the class, and fill in the observation sheet. In the reflection, the lecturer and the collaborator evaluated the teaching and learning process in general. In reconnaissance, it was found that the active students were only few. Only 8 students actively participate in finding the answer(homework), 5 students involved in dicussion, 4 in asking question, 8 in giving answer and 18 wrote down the summary.

Findings and Discussion of Cycle I and II

After conducting the action research on activating students participation through communicative strategies in the classroom activity such as the classroom discussion, it was found that the students participation improved. Cycle 1 was conducted from 3 october 2015 untill 6 december 2015 and Cycle 2 was done from 10 december 2015 untill 6 january 2016. It can be seen from the result of the observation sheet of each cycles. The following table showed the students participation in the classroom discussion in cycle 1 and cycle 2.

Table 3 : the percentage of the students participation in cycle 1

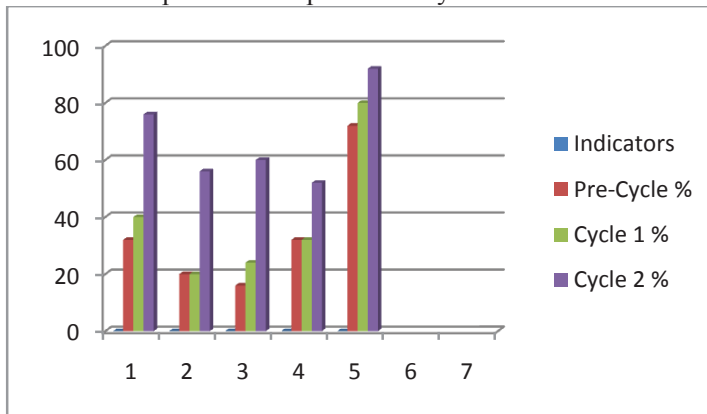
Indicators	Cycle 1			Cycle 2		
	Number of active students	%	Category	Number of active students	%	Category
The active student in finding the answer	10	40	less active	19	76	Very active
The active students in discussing	5	20	Passive	14	56	Active
The active students in asking	6	24	Passive	15	60	Active
The active students in answering question	8	32	less active	13	52	Active
The active students in noting down the main point	20	80	Very active	23	92	Very active

from the table above ,the cycle 1 was reflected that the students' participation improved a bit but not that significant and in the cycle 2 showed significant improvement. In cycle 1, Probably, it happened because it was the first time for them to obtain the communcative strategies theoretically, they still tried to memorize them. This could be seen from the colaborator's journal that noted down that some students looked a bit confused when trying to apply the strategies. Moreover, most of the students still indoubt in using the strategies, sometimes, it was seen that they looked at to the note of the communicative strategies that had been explained from the previous meeting. Yet, their motivation and interest in trying to get involved in the class discussion increased which were shown from the increase of the students participation in answering the question. Eventhough the students had already known that they would get point for each presentation to upgrade their final grade, the students seemed still reluctant to be active in the discussion.

To combat to these issues, the lecturer and the collaborator decided to increase the students motivation by giving them the target point which would be directly to be their grade for the mid term.

In the second cycle, the students had been familiarized with communicative strategies. It can be seen from their attitude while participating. When they found difficulties on vocabulary, they directly applied the strategies such as fillers, literal translation, appeal for assistance, self initiated repair technique, smurfing, and topic avoidance.

Graphic 1 : comparison of cycles



Where :

1. The active students in finding the answer
2. The active students in discussing
3. The active students in asking
4. The active students in answering question
5. The active students in noting down

This graph showed that in cycle 2 had significant improvement on students' participation in the class discussion.

The communicative strategies employed by the students

From the observation on cycle 1 and 2 and also from the recording , it was found that The most frequency strategies employed by the students in communicating their ideas in class discussion was fillers (203 times) and literal translation (115 times) respectively. They students applied this during the class activity probably, these strategies were the most common for them. The following strategies were used by the students were appeal for assistance (103 times), use of nonlinguistics (78 times), code switching (63 times) ,use all purpose words or smurfing (35 times) , approximation and message abandonment (17 times), circumlocution (9 times) and Topic Avoidance (5 times). Some of the strategies werenot applied by the students such as foreignizing and word coinage

5. CONCLUSION

This action research was conducted to find the solution for students' problem in participating in the class activity in Grammar course of STKIP Abdi pendidikan. One of the most common of the students afraid to be involved was the lack of vocabulary. The writer tried using communicative strategies in overcoming the students' problem.

It showed that in cycle 2, there was significant improvement for the students to be actively participated in the class activity. It could be seen that the average of the students participation is 67,2% which is categorized into active.

Then, the strategies commonly applied by the students were filler and literal translation

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