Communication Strategies Used By the Students of Surabaya Hotel School: A Case Study

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Abstract

This study aims to discuss communication strategies used by students of Surabaya Hotel School. The writer attempts to find out the types of communication strategies used by the students and intends to find out factors why the students mostly used certain strategy when they communicate. The writer hopes that this research could give insight about the types of communication strategies that can be used by students to overcome communication problems. The students are expected to apply those strategies to keep conversation going on. The writer does this study based on theory of Communication Strategies by Brown (2007) which is adopted from Dornyei (1995). Brown (2007) classifies communication strategies into two categories, which are avoidance strategies and compensatory strategies. In doing this study, the writer uses qualitative research. The result of this study reveals that the students use eight of thirteen types of communication strategies and use four types of combination of them. Moreover, the writer found that strategies that are frequently used by students are stalling or time gaining strategies, approximation and appeal for help. The writer argues that these strategies may happen because of two factors. First is because of direct interaction in class. Second is because of lacking vocabulary. The writer concludes that those two factors make the students tend to use those three strategies more than the others.

Keywords: Avoidance Strategies; Communication Strategies; Compensatory Strategies

1. Introduction

As an international language, English is mostly used by the people around the world. If the students cannot speak English well, they might lose opportunity to study in abroad. They might also lose opportunity to interact and communicate with other people from different countries. Besides, they might lose opportunity to get a better job. Therefore, communicative competence is very important to be achieved. Communicative competence is “the underlying systems of knowledge and skill required for communication” (Canale, 1983, 5). So, the students should take every chance to communicate.

Nowadays, communicating effectively in English becomes important phenomena. In Indonesia, especially in Surabaya, there are a lot of hotels. The visitors of the hotels are not only domestic tourists but they are also foreign tourists. Therefore, hotels need a lot of workers who have good ability to communicate in English. If the workers do not have ability to communicate in English, it is impossible to give good service to foreigners who stay in those hotels.

Improving students’ speaking abilities is not easy. Students usually find difficulties to convey their ideas, especially when they communicate in English. The students are probably lacking of vocabulary and knowledge of grammar. They might also do not know how to pronounce the words correctly. To solve the problems in communication, people usually use their hands, imitate the sound or movement of things, mix language, create new words, describe or circumlocute something they do not know the word for. In short, people use communication strategies to communicate (Dornyei, 1995, p.56).

Different students may use different strategies to solve their communication problems. In class, students usually communicate with other by using their second or foreign language (English) that are not mastered yet. In this case, students usually do not realize that they apply certain strategy when they communicate. Therefore the writer assumes that communication strategy (CSs) will occur when the conversation take place.
Menahern (2002) states that the students did almost all types of communication strategies except paraphrasing. He also declares that most communication strategies used by the students is approximation strategies and combination of switching to native language and seek help. Astiluhur (2008) argues that communication strategies and repairs focused on the same phenomenon in communication as the practices of the process of negotiating meaning. In addition, Moattarian (2012) argues that speaking students generally showed negative attitudes towards the use of CSs. Those related studies are useful to develop what the writer will investigate. Although each related study has different focuses, but we can conclude that CSs is vital to be learned. Related studies that is mentioned above is incomplete. They neglect to consider background of the participants in the use of CSs. Therefore, the writer identifies CSs that are mostly used by the students and then connect them with the background of the participants. In this case, the writer wants to find out factors influence the students to use certain strategies when they communicate.

The purpose of this study is to find out types of communication strategies used by students. This will increase our knowledge of how and by means of which strategies students overcome communication problems. Hopefully from this research, the students can apply CSs to keep conversation going on and can improve their ability to speak in foreign language. Moreover, from this research, the writer hopes that the teacher will place CSs as the important things to communicate with other people not only in institutional setting but also in everyday conversation.

2. Methodology

The participants of this study were the students in one of English classes in Surabaya Hotel School. There were eleven students in this class. This class was held twice a week on Tuesday and Wednesday at 6 p.m.

The English class that is observed by the writer is an incredible class because all the students can speak in English courageously. Although some of the students have limited vocabulary and limited knowledge of grammar, but they always try to keep conversation going on when they speak. In class, to get the data that deal with communication strategies, the writer just focused on communication in discussion session or conversation, not when the instructor explaining English Grammar.

To collect data about communication strategies, the writer did three ways: observation, recording, and interview. First, the writer did observation in English class with agreement of Executive Director and instructor of Surabaya Hotel School. Second, the writer recorded the utterances of the students when communication occur in class. In doing this, the writer used video recording. Third, to collect more information which could not be found in observation, the writer also interviewed the student. The writer did face to face interview to the students of English class.

To analyze the data the writer did five ways. First is transcribing some conversations which contain of communication strategies. Second is calculating the number of communication strategies used by students. Third is identifying the types of communication strategies which are frequently used by the students. Fourth is analyzing the types of communication strategies and the combination of two strategies which is used by students. The last is interpreting the result by relating the findings with the theory and the English background of the Participants.

3. Result

In this chapter, the writer is going to discuss and analyze the data. There are seven data which are going to be analyzed by applying Brown’s theory of communication strategies. This section is divided into three sub chapters: the first part are data findings which illustrate the result of data analysis and put it in the table, the second part is discussion, the third part is interpretation of the data.

3.1 Data Findings

The types of Communication strategies used by students in one of English class in Surabaya Hotel School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Communication Strategies</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Message Abandonment</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.2 %</td>
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</table>
Table 1: Frequency of types of communication strategies

<table>
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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Communication Strategies</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Combination of Code Switching &amp; Appeal for help</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Approximation &amp; non linguistic signals</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Approximation &amp; Appeal for Help</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Non linguistic signals and appeal for help</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3 %</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>100 %</strong></td>
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Table 2: Frequency of combination of two strategies

In this research the writer also found that there are four combinations of two strategies that consist of 2 parts of combination of code switching and appeal for help, 2 parts of combination of non linguistic signals and appeal for help, one part of combination of approximation and non linguistic signals, and one part of combination of approximation and appeal for help. This combination can happen when the student faced difficulties in expressing their ideas. The emergence of the two strategies in the same utterance indicates that students want make the listener understand their talk. Therefore, sometimes the emergences of two strategies are needed to emphasize what the speakers want to say.

3.2 Discussion

In this study the writer analyzed types of communication strategies used by students in one of English classes in Surabaya Hotel School. According to Brown (2007), there are thirteen types of communication strategies. Communication strategies are grouped into two categories: Avoidance
Strategies, and Compensatory Strategies. In this discussion the writer explained about the strategies used by students as follows:

3.2.1 Communication strategies used by students

3.2.1.1 Message Abandonment

In this strategy the students leave the message unfinished because of language difficulties. When the students face difficulties such as lacking knowledge of grammar or vocabulary, forget what to say and so on, they usually do not continue their utterance and they sometime omit some words of information.

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<th>Communication Strategies</th>
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<th>D.5</th>
<th>D.6</th>
<th>D.7</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Message Abandonment</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>

Table 3: Message abandonment

Table above shows message abandonment strategy used by students of English class in Surabaya Hotel School. We can find this strategy in dialogue 1, 2, 4 and 5. Total utterances produced by students are 5. The first example of message abandonment can be found from the conversation between S and N in dialogue 5, line 35.

34. S: So how much you bet on it??
35. -> N: one thousand
36. S: one thousand rupiah???
37. N: ya one thousand.

This conversation occurs when S talks about football game to N. From the conversation above, we can see the student N says “one thousand”. Actually this nominal is too small for a bet. So, in the end of the conversation the writer asks him, what he actually wants to say, and he answers “seratus ribu”. It means that the student omits the word “hundred”. If the student omits the word and the listeners do not have the same idea of thought, then the meaning will be different. In this case, the listener will be wrong in interpreting what the speaker wants to say.

3.2.1.2 Circumlocution

In this strategy, students describe or exemplify the target object or action. This strategy was used by students when they do not know the exact term for a word and they tried to explain it by using their own words. In this case, students’ utterance usually becomes longer. However, utterances that become longer are not always categorized as circumlocution. Circumlocution happens only when the students describe or paraphrase the target object or action.

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<th>Communication Strategies</th>
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Table 4: Circumlocution

Table above shows circumlocution strategy used by students of English class in Surabaya Hotel School. We can see this strategy in dialogue 2, 6 and 7. Total utterances produced by students are 3. Here is the example of circumlocution that can be found from the conversation in dialogue 6, line 12.

10. Al: if you are in Mall and you want to smoke.
11. There is already special room for you,
12. -> close room for you to smoke.
13. Mi: So, ehh someone have to looking for...
14. what is that???
15. Al: smoking room

From the utterance of Al, the writer finds circumlocution. The utterance “close room for you to smoke” can describe the term “smoking room”. In this case, the utterance of Al becomes longer because he says “close room for you to smoke” instead of “smoking room”. Not all students can do this strategy. Most of the students who use this strategy are students that have enough vocabulary in delivering their ideas.

3.2.1.3 Approximation
In this strategy, the students use an alternative term which expresses the meaning of the target lexical item as closely as possible. This strategy was used by the student when the student tried to convey the message that less specific. In other words, the students use more general word because they might forget the specific term of the things that they mean.

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<th>Communication Strategies</th>
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<td>Approximation</td>
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**Table 5:** Approximation

The table above shows that the total number of approximation used by student is 13. We can see this strategy in dialogue 1, 2, 5, and 7. Here is the example of approximation strategy that can be found in dialogue 1, line 9.

7. Mu: I think, bicycle commonly used student going to
8. school and the bicycle and also can for
9.-> walk around with friend and commonly the cycle,
10. eeh apa ya? Ya I think enough sir.

In this conversation student Mu wants to give comment to the picture given by the teacher. When he gives opinion, he says “walk around”. These words have less specific in meaning. What he should say actually is “go around” because the object that he talks about is bicycle. If he uses the term “walk around”, it will have less specific in meaning, so he should say “go around” instead of “walk around”.

3.2.1.4 Prefabricated Pattern

In this strategy, learner uses memorize stock phrases, usually for “survival” purposes, where the morphological components are known to the learner. Brown (2007, p.139) said that these memorized chunks of language are often found in pocket bilingual phrase books, which list hundreds of sentences for various occasion.

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<td>Prefabricated Patterns</td>
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**Table 6:** Prefabricated Pattern

From table 5 above, we can see that only one student use prefabricated pattern. Here is the example of prefabricated pattern. We can see it in dialogue 6 line 3.

1. Mi: Al, I’ll ask you about smoking. What do you think
2. about smoking? What do you think about if smoking
3.-> should be.. what is that? should be permitted.

Here, Mi asks to his friend about smoking. From the utterance produced by Mi above, we can see the student says ‘what is that’ for survival purpose. By saying ‘what is that’ the student has time to think about what he should say next. Although the phrase “what is that” looks like appeal for help, but it cannot be categorized as appeal for help, because after saying “what is that” the student continues his sentence by saying “should be permitted” as soon as possible.

3.2.2 Non Linguistic Signals

In this strategy, students may use non linguistic signals such as mime, gesture, facial expression or sound imitation to deliver what they want to say. In this case, the students mostly use their hands to describe what they mean. Sometime there are some words that difficult to be explained, so the students use their hand to make the listener understand clearly what the speakers want to say. The writer can see the gesture done by the students from the video. Video recording here is very useful to record the non linguistic signals used by students.

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<tr>
<td>Nonlingistic Signals</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
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**Table 7:** Non Linguistic Signals

Table above shows non linguistic signals used by the students. We can find this strategy in dialogue 3, 4 and 7. The total numbers of non linguistic signals used by students are 4. Here the students use gesture when they describe thing in their utterance. The writer found that there were no students using
facial expression in expressing their ideas. The example of non-linguistic signal can be found from
the gesture used by student in dialogue 3 line 11.

9. R.H: I think bicycle eh can’t going anywhere because
10. R.H: eeh.. ban itu apa? ya because the tire ehh
11. (gesture, create square)
12. T: square

In this conversation student R.H tries to deliver his opinion. In this case, he uses non-linguistic
signals. When he speaks, he has difficulty to say “square” so he uses gesture by using his hand to
create square. In this case, using gesture can help other students know what the speaker means.
Another example of non-linguistic signal can be found in dialogue 4, line 27.

Code Switching

Code switching means that the students may lift words from their native language. In this strategy,
students switch directly into their first language in order to make the listener understand what they
mean.

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<th>D.6</th>
<th>D.7</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Code Switching</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
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</table>

**Table 8: Code Switching**

Table above shows that total numbers of code switching are 5. We can see it from dialogue 1, 4,
5, and 7. Code switching strategy may be more effective if the listener have known about the first
language of the speaker. If the listener does not know the first language used by the speaker, it would
be useless. However, students of English class that is observed by the writer have knowledge in using
Indonesian language, so it does not matter if the students lift the word from Indonesian language. By
switching to their native language, the students can express their opinions smoothly. Here is the
example of code switching that can be found in dialogue 4, line 19 and 21.

18. R.H: the elephant is very naughty and bad animal
19. R.H: because he wants to spy eeh spy what in the rok
20. R.H: of the women. Ya, that happen, want to know what
21. R.H: in the rok of the woman. *(laughing)*

From the utterance produced by R.H “.. spy what in the rok of the women”, we can see that he
finds difficulty to say “rok” in English, so he lifts a word from his native language. After saying
“rok”, he continues to speak in target language.

Appeal for Help

In this strategy, the students ask for help from the interlocutor either directly or indirectly such as
rising intonation and eye contact. In appeal for help strategy, students might ask help to their friends
or their teacher. They might also seek help from dictionary or textbook.

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<th>Communication Strategies</th>
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<th>D.6</th>
<th>D.7</th>
<th>F</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appeal for Help</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 9: Appeal for Help**

Table above shows that total numbers of appeal for help used by students are 10. We can see it in
each dialogue from dialogue 1 through 7. In dialogue 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 we can find 1 part of appeal for
help for each. Here is the example of appeal for help that can be found in dialogue 2, line 19.

17. T: ok, is there other comment? Michael..
18. Mi: may be the owner so creative because he makes
19. Mi: multiple eeh what is that serbaguna?
20. E: multifunction

From the conversation above, we can see when the teacher asks student Mi to give comment, and
student Mi finds difficulty to say “serbaguna” in English. It indicates that student needs help from
people around him. When he says “what is that serbaguna?”, he also moves his eyes and looks at
student E. and student E helps him by saying “multifunction”. From the conversation above, we know
that he asks for help directly by saying “what is that serbaguna?” and indirectly by using eye contact.
Stalling or Time Gaining Strategies

In this strategy, students may use filling word to fill pause and to obtain time to think. This strategy is not used to compensate for vocabulary deficiency but rather to help learners to gain more time to think and maintain their conversation with their interlocutor. These stalling and time-gaining strategies were not mentioned in previous taxonomy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Strategies</th>
<th>D.1</th>
<th>D.2</th>
<th>D.3</th>
<th>D.4</th>
<th>D.5</th>
<th>D.6</th>
<th>D.7</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stalling or Time Gaining Strategies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10: Stalling or Time Gaining Strategies

The table above shows that stalling or time gaining strategies happen in each dialogue. We can see it in dialogue 1 through 7. The total numbers of this strategy are 26. This strategy mostly used by the students because by doing this the students have time to think about what they should say next. Here is the example of stalling or time gaining strategies that can be found in dialogue 3.

3.--> S:  eem... I think this bicycle.. just an artistic  
4.--> useful eeh.. artistic decoration.. not for real  
5.--> bicycle. eem not a real bicycle just for a  
6. decoration one.

From the examples above, we can see that students say “eem and eeh” to fill pause. By using stalling or time gaining strategies, students have time to think about what they want to say in conversation. When the students obtain time to think, it means that they can survive in conversation. Combination of communication strategies used by students

In this subheading, the writer wants to discuss about combination of two strategies used by students. When the students have problem in communicating their ideas, the students did more than one strategies in the same time, and the same utterance. This situation called a combination of communication strategies.

The writer found that the student of English class in Surabaya Hotel School did four types of combination of communication strategies. First is combination of code switching and appeal for help. Second is combination of non linguistic signals and appeal for help. Third is combination of approximation and non linguistic signal. Fourth is combination of approximation and appeal for help. Each of four combinations will be discussed one by one as the following.

3.2.2.1 Combination of code switching and appeal for help

This combination happens when the students find difficulty to express their ideas. This is called combination of code switching and appeal for help because the students do two strategies at once. In this case, students switch the words into their native language and ask for help from the people around them like their friends or their teacher.

Table 11: Combination of code switching and appeal for help

Table above shows that the total numbers of this combination are 2. We can see combination of code switching and appeal for help in dialogue 2 and 7. Here is the example of this combination that can be found in dialogue 7, line 24.

22. Ar: my funny story is when I was young I meet with my  
23. friend, I met with my friend. On the road  
24.--> there is pisang pisang (eye contact and  
25. rising intonation)  
26. St: banana

Combination of code switching and appeal for help above occurs when Ar forgets the English for “pisang”. In the conversation, Ar says, “there is pisang-pisang”. This utterance shows that he switches the word, because the word “pisang” is his native language. While saying “pisang-pisang” he also changes intonation into question intonation which indicates that he needs a help from his friends. So, it can be said that student switches the word and asks for help indirectly by using eye
contact and rising intonation. Therefore, the writer categorizes the utterance of the student as combination of code switching and appeal for help.

3.2.2.2 Combination of non linguistic signals and appeal for help

Combination of non linguistic signals and appeal for help happens when students find difficulty in expressing their ideas. In this case, the students do non linguistic signals and appeal for help, which means that when the students use gesture to describe what they mean, they also ask help to their friend or their teacher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Strategies</th>
<th>D.1</th>
<th>D.2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non linguistic and appeal for help</td>
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Table 12: Combination of non linguistic signals and appeal for help

Table above shows that all kinds of combinations of these two strategies happen in dialogue 1, line 15 and 17. Here is the example:

13. S: the owner doing stupid thing because he lock
14. the bicycle on eeh
15.-> (gesture,create small stick)(eye contact)
16. small stick, and useless because
17.-> the stick is apa?(gesture, create short stick)
18. short and you can up it. You can steal it easily.

In line 15, the writer finds that the student uses gesture to deliver what he wants to speak. In this case, S has difficulty to say “small stick”, so he describes using his hand like holding small stick. While he is speaking, he also looks at his teacher. It indicates that he expects the teacher to help him to say small stick.

And then in line 17, he also uses gesture to describe “short”. At the time he describes “short” using his hands, he also looks at his friend who sits next to him which indicates that he uses non linguistic signal and asks for help indirectly using eye contact. In this case, all gesture produced by S are described using his hand.

3.2.2.3 Combination of approximation and non linguistic signals

Combination of approximation and non linguistic signals happen when the students use two kinds of strategy in the same time. In this strategy, students use alternative terms and gesture in order to make what they want to say become clearer.

<table>
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Table 13: Combination of approximation and non linguistic signals

From the table above we can see that only one student who uses combination of these two strategies. We can see the example of this combination in dialogue 2 line 8.

3. Mu: eeh may be the owner cycle boat like attractive
4. person in sekitar (eye contact)? In around,
5. around the river and the cycle boat ehh apa ya..
6. no..(pause 0.4) the cycle boat no mechine.
7. The cycle boat use mechine with
8.-> eeh rolling (gesture like paddling cycle),
9. use pedal. .aduh..duh..

The word “rolling” in line 8 has less specific meaning. What he wants to say actually is “pedal”, but at the time he speaks, he has difficulty to say “pedal”. So he uses alternative term “rolling” to express “pedal”. Moreover, he also uses gesture when he says “rolling”. In this case, he describes the word “pedal” by using his hands. His gesture is used to emphasize the word “rolling” because he is not sure about it. But after his friend gives him clue to say “pedal”, soon after that he says “use pedal”.

Combination of approximation and appeal for help
This combination happens when the students find difficulty to express their ideas. This is called combination of approximation and appeal for help because the students use two kinds of strategies in the same utterance. In this case, students use alternative terms to express their intended meaning and ask for help from the people around them like their friends or their teacher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Strategies</th>
<th>D.1</th>
<th>D.2</th>
<th>D.3</th>
<th>D.4</th>
<th>D.5</th>
<th>D.6</th>
<th>D.7</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approximation &amp; Appeal for Help</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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**Table 14:** Combination of approximation and appeal for help

Table above shows that only one student use the combination of this strategy. We can see it in dialogue 2 line 22. Here is the example:

21. Mi: ya, multifunction. I think if the man want to
22. -> run away (eye contact) cross the sea, cross the river. He will use the boat with the bicycle.

In the conversation, student Mi says “I think if the man wants to run away (eye contact)…””. The word “run away” is categorized as approximation because it has less specific meaning. The correct term is “cross” not “run away”. Actually when the student says “run away”, he is uncertain with the words he produces. So, when he says “run away”, he also looks at his friend. This indicates that he uses two strategies in the same time, which are approximation and appeal for help (indirectly by using eye contact).

**4. Conclusion**

From the result, the writer finds that students of English class use eight of thirteen types of communication strategies. Those eight strategies include 5 message abandonment, 3 circumlocution, 15 approximation, 1 prefabricated pattern, 4 non linguistic signals, 5 code switching, 10 appeals for help and 26 stalling or time gaining strategies. No one of the students uses topic avoidance, word coinage, use of all purpose words and literal translation.

The writer also finds combination of two strategies which consist of 2 combinations of code switching and appeal for help, 1 combination of approximation and non linguistic signal, 1 combination of approximation and appeal for help, and 2 combinations of non linguistic signal and appeal for help.

The writer finds that students mostly use stalling or time gaining strategies, approximation and appeal for help. The writer assumes those strategies happened because of two factors. First is because of direct interaction in class. Second is because of lacking vocabulary.

**5. References**


