

STRATEGIC AND DISCOURSE COMPETENCE A Case of English Foreign Language Students in Graduate Program

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Abstract

This study concerns with strategic and discourse competence in conversation. The aim of this study is to examine the speakers' dominance, the most strategy used when the problems of communication arise and the speakers' discourse competence. Three participants of English educational students of graduate program are involved as subject of the research. The transcripts of conversation were divided into turns, moves and clauses, and analyzed further based on the content specification of Celce Murcia (1995). The findings of the study show that three speakers are dominant in the conversation due to they speak purposively. Additionally, the result concluded that the most frequently strategy used in this conversation is stalling or time gaining. It indicates that the speakers have more hesitation problems within the conversation. Therefore, this claims that the speakers are not fluent in speaking English. Although the conversation produced by the speakers is not well formed, the conversation has involved cohesion and coherence aspects. Therefore, it can be inferred that the speakers' discourse competence is good since they produce utterances cohesively. Besides, they also create the topic in sequence and make it coherent since there is no indicator of misunderstanding or miscommunication found within the conversation. According to the findings, it is suggested to the EFL students to produce more English in their daily activities to decrease the communication problems and increase their speaking competences. Besides, the lecturer also guides and stimulates students creatively to speak more English during EFL learning.

Keywords: speakers' dominance, communication problems, strategies, discourse competence

Introduction

In concern of language, one of the most popular word in the 20th century is "communication". It has a great influence in the language teaching and learning not only because of its high frequency appearance in the research world but also because of its essential meaning that represents the gradual globalization in the past century. There are many competences involved in the communication called communicative competence. Canale and Swain (1980) proposed a theoretical framework of communicative competence into grammatical, sociolinguistic, strategic, and discourse competence.

As a sub-component of communicative competence, strategic competence becomes a basis for nonnative speakers. Its definition described by Canale (1983) as verbal and non-verbal strategies to

compensate communication breakdowns due to performance variables or insufficient competence. According to Celce Murcia, the components of strategic competence involved avoidance or reduction, achievement or compensatory, stalling or time-gaining, self-monitoring, and interactional Strategies.

Celce (1995) also has drawn discourse competence as the central competence that covers other competences in communication. Discourse competence can be defined as the ability to use (produce and recognize) coherent and cohesive texts in an oral or written form (Bachman 1990b, p. 29). Moreover, Celce Murcia (1995) added many sub-areas that contribute to discourse competence: cohesion, deixis, coherence, generic structure, and the conversational structure

inherent to the turn-taking system in conversation.

Spoken communication always becomes interesting object to be investigated. Djoko Sutopo (2014) has explored the ability of a kindergarten student of bilingual school in producing negotiation of meanings. The finding of the study shows that the child is capable to produce almost speech choices and all types of negotiation, interpersonal negotiation and logico-semantic negotiation in the conversation.

In line with the previous study, casual conversation of English foreign language learners will be rich data for analyzing strategic and discourse competence. Therefore this study is decided to analyze strategic and discourse competence of EFL learners' casual conversation.

Methodology

This study involved descriptive qualitative method in spoken discourse analysis. It starts by recording the casual conversation, transcribing, and documenting to be analyzed and interpreted further. The transcripts of conversation were divided into turns, moves and clauses. The strategic and discourse competence are analyzed further based on the content specification of Celce Murcia (1995). Eventually, interpretation on the result of analysis was conducted.

The subject of this research is students of post graduate program. The conversation involved three participants (speakers) of English students of educational program. They are first, second and third speaker. The participants (speakers) spent about 15 minutes to talk each other. In fact, because of being latecomer, the third speaker could not joint 2 minutes beginning of conversation.

This analysis focuses on answering several questions involved in this casual conversation. For instance: whether the speakers are dominant or incidental participants, what is the most strategy used

when the problems of communication arise, and how is speakers' discourse competence.

Findings and Discussion

Based on the methodology, this study addresses three different issues. First, it deals with dominant and incidental participants. Second, it focuses on communicative strategy analysis. Third, it discusses the implementation of discourse competence within the conversation. Hence, those issues will be discussed in sequence:

1. Dominant and Incidental Participants

To decide whether the speakers are dominant or incidental, the analyst had to find the number of turns, moves, and clauses in the casual conversation. Furthermore, the result of turns, moves, and clauses analysis are presented as follow:

Table 1. Number of turns, moves, clauses

Speaker	Turn	Move	Clause
First	65	81	141
Second	54	75	110
Third	50	74	115
Total	169	230	366

Table 1 shows that the first speaker produces 65 turns while the second and the third produce slightly same, 54 and 50 turns. The difference emerges a reason since the first speaker who opened and closed the conversation. Furthermore, the third speaker gets less turns because she is a latecomer for joining the conversation. Thus, the difference cannot decide that the first speaker is the dominant one and the third is the incidental one. In fact, this suggests that those three speakers are the dominants since the conversation runs smoothly.

The number of moves which are produced by the participants have a slight difference. The first speaker gives more moves than the second and the third speaker. This indicates that the first speaker emerges speech functionally dominant as she gets more moves into her turns and gets more



value out of her turns. This situation occurred since she is such talkative girl who often responds every addressee's utterances. She often spends more information in her utterances based on her experience.

However, there is no participant who is beating the others. The three speakers are not competing for turns, since they have equal turns at talk. Again, in producing clauses, the first speaker has more clauses than the second and the third for her number of turns/moves. This confirms that the first speaker gets more airspace to talk, more value as speaker and also more substantial congruence between moves and clauses in casual conversation context. Moreover, unlike her turn and move productions, the second spends less clauses than the third speaker.

Though, she is not categorized as incidental participant because she speaks purposively. Besides, the first speaker produced more clauses due to she spends more information in telling her activities, expressing her feelings, informing her ideas, and sharing experiences that she had got.

2. Strategic Competence

In doing conversation, as foreign language students, the speakers got some difficulties during their communication. Therefore, the speakers used several strategies to solve their problems of communication. There are four of the most strategies used by the speakers that reported in table 2 below:

Table 2. Strategic Competence

Problem	Strategy	Number of Clauses
Hesitation	Time gaining	66
Problematic vocabularies	Compensatory	19
Lack of accuracy	Self-Monitoring	9
Uncertain Information	Interactional	5
	Total	99

Knowing the result of the use of communicative strategies in the conversation, it is concluded that the most strategy used by the speakers is time gaining which occurred in 66 of 99 clauses. The more fillers and hesitation devices used in this conversation indicates that the speakers got more communicative problems of hesitation. This situation often occurred in the basic of second language acquisition. It can be claimed that the speakers are not fluently in speaking English as their foreign language.

Like hesitation, the speakers sometimes have problematic vocabularies during their communication. Therefore they used strategy by taking circumlocution to solve the problem of vocabularies. Besides, self-monitoring strategy is used by the speakers to solve their lack of accuracy to indicate speaker's repair who realized her mistakes. And interactional strategy is used to confirm and clarify their comprehension when they have uncertain information. Therefore, this suggests the speakers to speak English more in order to achieve more communicative competences.

The examples of the most occurring strategies in solving communication problems are represented in the following excerpts:

Time gaining : Yeah, I also have uh... some assignments as SFL, hmm Thesis Project Proposal. But for uhmSFL, do not be panic guys.

Compensatory : I like uhm..Soto, Bakso, Mie Ayam,and something that is berkuah, I don't, I don't know to say.

Self-monitoring : Actually so do I. I plan to do, no nono plan to do, Iplan to date with Systemic Functional Linguistics.

Interactional : I still remember when she said that don't be ngoyo. What is that ngoyo in English?



3. Discourse Competence

Discourse Competence refers to the way ideas are linked across sentences in spoken language. To measure the speakers' discourse competence, it is suggested to use two main aspects of *cohesive* and *coherent devices* for analyzing the conversation. In this case, the analyst found some cohesive devices, for instance, *reference, substitution, conjunction, and deixis*.

a. Reference

The most reference found in the whole conversation is anaphora or called as referring backward (in narrower sense, it is meant as the use of an expression that depends specifically upon an antecedent expression). The examples of anaphora reference that found in the conversation are presented below:

- 2nd : Do not be panic. Just take it calm and do the best. Do you agree with me?
 3rd : uhm, I agree with you. I know actually, missWiwik is such a kind lecturer right?
 1st : uhm I agree with you.
 3rd : So she will not be angry to us. She never angry to us right?
 1st : Of course, she is very kind.

- First speaker : Tahu Gimbal? What's that?
 Second speaker : Is it from Semarang food?

In this case, the result of anaphora analysis indicates that the discourse is constructed and maintained well by the speakers in this conversation.

3. Substitution

Substitution is found in some clauses in the conversation by using *so* and *do* as shown below:

Table 3. Example of Substitution

Utterance	
Second speaker	: Yeah, me too. I have some assignments.
Third speaker	: Actually so do I , I plan to do, no nono plan to do, I plan to date with Systemic Functional Linguistics.
Second speaker	: Not really, because for being a professor, there is no correlation between whether they are male or female. It depends on their effort for being professor.
Third speaker	: Yea, I think so, but the main key for being professor I think our desire to learn more and more.

According to the result of substitution analysis in the conversation, the substitution that is found is almost anaphoric since it presupposes an element within the same sentence as itself, but it frequently substitutes an element in a preceding sentence, and therefore it is a primary source of cohesion during the conversation. It indicates that sometimes the speakers avoid repetition to the words that had been mentioned. For instance, the use of *do* is to substitute for a verb and *so* to substitute object clause. Hence, it contributes to make the conversation cohesive.

4. Conjunction

In analyzing conjunctions that used in the conversation, four conjunctions are found as they are repeated more within the conversation. The result of conjunction analysis is drawn as follow:

Table 4. Types of conjunction

Type of conjunction	Number
And	19 times
But	15 times
Because	15 times
So	12 times
Also	6 times
Then	4 times
And then	1 time

The table shows that *and* is the most frequently used conjunction in the conversation. However *and* in this case is



used not only to relate ideas within the sentences as conjunction but also to avoid hesitation of uttering sentences as spoken feature. Though *and then* is insufficient used, it has function as spoken discourse marker that can relate ideas stated in the earlier sentences or reinforce the ideas.

The result indicates that the speakers used monotonous conjunctions. They did not use more variant of conjunctions as signals of semantic relation. The unavailability of variant conjunctions may be due to the speakers' spontaneity that indicates uncontrolled situation in English spoken language. However, the speakers try to relate ideas cohesively using those conjunctions.

5. Deixis

Deictic is one which takes some element of its meaning from the context of utterance in which it is used. There are four deixis that are analyzed in the casual conversation. They are person deixis, temporal deixis, spatial deixis, and textual deixis. The result of deixis analysis is shown in table 5:

Table 5. Types of deixis

Deixis	Number
Person	109
Temporal	16
Spatial	10
Textual	-
Total	135

Based on the result of deixis analysis, the most frequently occurring deixis is person deixis which uses pronoun *I* and *You*. This indicates that the conversation is not classified as gossiping but it is casual conversation since it does not discuss more about third person. In fact, there is no textual deixis found in the conversation since it is spoken language. Hence, the whole deixis made the conversation cohesive.

This study also investigates some coherent devices, for instance, *lexical repetition, generic structure, conversational*

structure and macro structure. Those will be discussed in the following points:

6. Lexical Repetition

Repetition is analyzed to measure the relevance of topic within conversation. It is a resource by which speakers create a discourse for conferring coherence on talk. In this case, the conversation is claimed to be relevant since it has some repetitions during the topic discussed within the conversation. The example of repetition occurred in the conversation is shown below:

3rd speaker : And another think also for being *honest*. Yeah, do you agree?

1st speaker : Yeah, I agree I still remember that we have uhm..she emphasize that we to be *honest*

2nd speaker : but nowadays it is so difficult to find someone or people that has uh the good *honesty*. So what do you think about that?

3rd speaker : um I think the best way to... teach um someone or maybe we as a teacher the best way the best way to teach students is being a good model for them

1st speaker : he eum or maybe we can um involve the ... values of *honesty* in their um in their lesson for example like um involving theum the value of *honesty* in the story in the classroom so it will be for it will be very better for them to be understood.

7. Generic Structure

Due to this conversation is casual chatting, the generic structure of this conversation is drawn in the following table 6:

Table 6. Generic Structure

Opening ^ (initiation ^ reinitiation ^ response ^
feedback) ^ closing

The table shows that initiation, reinitiation, response, and feedback are occurring more than one in this conversation. Those usually occur in the topic is established and changed. Unlike, opening and closing occur only once within the conversation.

8. Macro Structure

Macrostructure is a more top-down approach to the way conversation is organized. It uses predictable two-way exchanges called adjacency pair in conversation. There are many adjacency pairs occurred in this conversation due to it involved three speakers. The result of macro structure analysis shows that the exchanges in this conversation have coherence because the speakers' question and initiation can be answered and responded by their addressee accordingly.

Conclusion

Based on the result of conversation analysis, it can be concluded that the three speakers are dominant in this conversation. Though, the first speaker produces more moves and clauses, it does not mean that the second and the third are not important in the conversation. It occurred since the first speaker is such talk active girl who often responds every addressee's utterances. She often spends more informations based on her experience. However, there is no incidental participant in the conversation due to they speak purposively.

The most frequently strategy that is used in this conversation is stalling or time gaining. It indicates that the speakers have more problems of hesitation within the conversation. Moreover, they produces more fillers, and hesitation devices like actually, so, and yeah. Therefore, this claims that the speakers are not fluent in speaking English.

Though the conversation that is produced by the speakers is not well formed,

the conversation has involved cohesion and coherence aspects. Therefore, it can be inferred that the speakers' discourse competence is good since they produce utterances cohesively. Besides, they also create the topic in sequence and make it coherent since there is no indicator of misunderstanding or miscommunication found within the conversation.

According to the conclusion, it is suggested to the EFL students of graduate students to produce more English in their daily activities in order those problems of communication decrease and the students' competences in casual conversation increase. Besides, the lecturer also guide and stimulate students creatively to speak more English during EFL learning.

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