STUDENTS' STRATEGIES IN RESPONDING TEACHERS' ORAL QUESTIONS

Foristia Kencana Wensi
Universitas Bengkulu
foristia@gmail.com

Hilda Puspita
Universitas Bengkulu
hilda_unib@yahoo.com

Rudi Afriazi
Universitas Bengkulu
rudiafriazi88@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to find out the strategies used by the English Education Study Program students in responding teacher oral questions. The research was designed as a descriptive quantitative research. The population of the research was sixth semester students of English Education Study Program of Universitas Bengkulu in the 2017/2018 academic year. The samples were 69 students. The data were collected by using a set of questionnaire. There were 25 statements of responses strategies which consisted of seven categories of response strategies proposed by Lui et. al (2018) and any communication strategies proposed by Dornyei (1997). They were avoidance strategy, accommodative strategy, asking for clarification strategy, no response strategy, excuse strategy, denial strategy and apology strategy. The result of this study showed that students of English Education Study Program preferred to use six categories i.e., accommodative strategy, asking for clarification strategy, no response strategy, excuse strategy, and denial strategy and one was seldom used namely apology strategy. In addition, the most frequently used strategy group by the students was avoidance strategy.

Keywords: *Students' Responses, Response Strategies, Responding Teachers' Questions*

INTRODUCTION

An interaction always occurs between teacher and students in the classroom. The interaction may appear in giving and receiving the material, having discussion, asking and answering the questions. Based on those activities, teacher plays role to create and produce an interactive class while learning process ongoing, so the students can get the profits by learning something.

In teaching learning English, interaction is an important concept for teacher to be close with students. Basically, learning a foreign language emphasizes communicative activities that encourages the students to speak much by the language. This is apparent in Richards and Renandyas (2002) publication where they stated, a large percentage of the worlds language learners study English in order to develop proficiency in speaking. It means teacher should give student opportunities to understand and use the language as muh as possible. The development of a class depends on a greater extent the interactions between teacher and students .

We recognize that interaction occurs because there is an interactive communication inside the classroom. Communication is one of the crucial skills that students should work on it. The main reason why communication has attracted attention across disciplines not only in teaching is that communication working in all human interaction activities. Then, what makes human beings unique is that human communication is cognitively, emotionally, and socially complex.

Especially for EFL students, communication is as tool helpful to increase their ability in speaking English. Students of second or foreign language education programs are considered successful if they can communicate effectively in the language (Riggenback & Lazaraton, 1991). It also

behaves for English Education students in University of Bengkulu where students are concerned to learn English as a foreign language. As EFL students, they have to communicate in English as possible as they can. Speaking English frequently in the class can make them to be accustom with the language. Generally, EFL students spend more time in the class in practicing English than outside. Yuanfang (2009) states that English as a Foreign Language is almost rarely used in EFL students' daily life. It means that an EFL student only benefits classroom interaction in order to gain their skill in speaking English. Through these matters, teacher have to maximize their roles in the class.

Sometimes, EFL teachers face common problem in communicating with students such to deal with a passive class, where students are unresponsive and avoid interaction with the teacher. This is especially true when a teacher seeks interaction in a teacher-class dialog, such as asking questions to the class as a whole, expecting at least one student to respond. This can be a frustrating experience for the two sides. Obviously, there will be time when no student can answer a teacher's question. However, students are often reluctant to make response even if they understand the questions, know the answers, and are able to produce the answers. What more, students are rather reluctant to give feedback. The students do not respond voluntarily to the instructor's questions and don't participate in class discussions. Most of the class members sit looking straight ahead using minimal facial expressions, gestures and verbal utterances. Thus the teachers receive little oral feedback. What the teachers want are the students to be more positive and overtly communicative in their feedback.

In above explanation, we conclude that questioning becomes a process that is faced not only by students but also by the teacher in classroom. In this term, the researcher indicates questioning to teacher questions because it is the one who begins this process is teacher. Teacher questions is part of teacher talk that is simply defined as teacher language. Furthermore teacher questions both of spoken and written are defined as instructional cues or stimuli that convey to students the content elements to be learned and directions for what they do and how they do in classroom (Kathlen, 1998). It is important for teachers comprehend how to do questioning that create responses and feedback as they hope.

Based on the researcher observation in the classroom of English Education Study Program students in University of Bengkulu, the researcher found some obstacles that the students also face in communication in the class. First, student have less interpretation about a question given by teacher. Mostly in EFL case, the students have difficulties in interpretating the question because of lack of grammar and less vocabulary. That students' ability could be influenced the way students in responding to teacher.

Second, students' anxiety in speaking. Student are not enough confident to speak English because of many factors that related to lack of grammar and vocabulary. Gao (2016) affirmed that "...anxiety is quite possibly the affective factor that most pervasively obstructs the learning process." It means that student should be improved his skill through the questions given by teacher. Third, some teachers do not pause or use "wait-time" when asking questions. Meanwhile, "wait-time" is needed by students in thinking process to utter statement for the answer of the question. According to one study (Rowe, 1972), the "wait-time" periods that followed teacher questions and students' completed responses "rarely lasted more than 1.5 seconds in typical classrooms."

Based on those problems, students still have difficulties in responding teachers' question. Some causes occur because of teachers' mistake and lack of students ability. Meanwhile, teachers' questioning is important to increase students' ability in order to develop their knowledges. It could be give bad impact if the teacher have less aware about these problems. The researcher think that teacher should comprehend strategy used by students in responding question. For ease of communication, it is necessary for the students to find efficient means through which they can convey their ideas. This may be due to the absence of strategic, linguistic, or sociolinguistic competence in a language.

Many researchers conducted similar issues about communication that related with students strategies. First, from Sayuri (2016) entitled 'English Speaking Problems of EFL Learners of Mulawarman University' has conducted in the fourth semester of EFL learners as the sample. The result showed that the students faced some problems in speaking English in the class. It is related to pronunciation, fluency, grammar, and vocabulary based on the speaking test and questionnaire. The questionnaire also showed additional findings where students faced other problems, namely not having self-confidence, shyness to speak, being afraid of making mistakes, feeling nervous, and having nothing to say.

Then, the researcher also takes another study related communication strategies from Hardianti (2016) entitled 'A Study of EFL Students' Oral Communication Strategies in Discussions' was a descriptive qualitative study that intended to analyze (1) types of OCS used by students while

conducting discussion, and (2) the students' reasons for using certain types of OCS. The participants of this study were a group discussion consisting of five EFL students of English Education Department in the University of Kuningan. She found that the students participated in this study tended to use achievement strategies more frequently than avoidance strategies.

The researcher want to conduct similar research at English Education Study Program in University of Bengkulu students. The researcher combine both these studies that point speaking problems and communication strategies. These two issues are connected with the study that will be taken by the researcher. The research will be different from previous studies both of context and result. It would focus on investigating the communication strategies used by the students in responding teachers' oral question. This study aims to know what strategy is frequently used by EFL students in University of Bengkulu and it can be reference for both of teacher and students to solve problems in communicating. At last, the researcher will conduct a research entitled **"Students' Strategies in Responding to Teachers' Oral Questions."**

METHOD

This research used descriptive design with quantitative approach. According to Creswell (2002) "Quantitative research is a research which is as a type of research that is explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analyzed using mathematically based methods (in particular statistics)." A descriptive method is used to describes a set of data for a group to provide enlightenment on the characteristics of that group alone (Black, 1993).

Furthermore, the population of this research were sixth semester students in English Education Study Program. There were 79 students of the sixth semester of

English Education Study Program. In order to do trying out for the instrument, the researcher determined to take 12% of the sample for trying out the questionnaire so there were 69 students as a sample of this research.

The instrument of this research was questionnaire. It was adapted from response strategies by Lui et. al (2018) and communication strategies by Dornyei and Scott (1997). In making the questionnaire be valid, the researcher tried out firstly. The result were 25 valid statements and 5 invalid statements based on the index validity and realibility that used in the research. Then, the researcher distributed the valid questionnaire through online form to the students. The researcher used SPSS version 16 in order to analyzed the data.

Here below and frequency to determine each items in the result.

Table 1. Strategy Category

Class	Name	Category
3,28 – 4,0	A	Always
2,52 – 3,27	O	Often
1,76 – 2,51	S	Seldom
1,0 - 1,75	N	Never

The researcher used this category in order to interpret the mean score of the data.

Table 2. Frequency Used

Class	Name	Category
≥ 3.00	H	High
2.40 – 2.90	S	Sometimes
≤ 2.40	L	Low

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The strategies used by the students

Below the mean scores of seven strategies used by the sixth semester students.

Table 3. Mean Scores for the Seven Strategy Categories

Strategies group	Mean score	Percentage	Category
Avoidance	2.84	28%	Sometimes
Accomo-Dative	2.82	24%	Sometimes
Asking for clarification	2.73	8%	Sometimes
No response	2.66	12%	Sometimes
Excuse	2.59	8%	Sometimes
Denial	2.56	12%	Sometimes
Apology	2.22	8%	Low

As seen on the table 3 showed the average use of the seven strategy categories on the questionnaire. Among them, avoidance strategies (M=2.84) appear to be the most frequently used strategies by the students to describe their strategies used, followed by accomodative strategy (M=2.82), asking for clarification strategy (M=2.73) no response strategy (M=2.66), excuse strategy (M=2.59), denial strategy (M=2.56) and apology strategy (M=2.22).

Avoidance strategy

Total average for all items of questionnaire in term of avoidance strategy was 2.84 with predicate "Sometimes". It indicated that average students of English Education Study Program often used avoidance strategy in responding teachers' oral questions.

Accomodative strategy

Total average for all items of questionnaire in term of Accomodative strategy was 2.82 with predicate "Sometimes". It indicated that average students of English Education Study Program was often used Accomodative strategy in responding teachers' oral questions.

Asking for clarification strategy

Total average for all items of questionnaire in term of accomodative strategy was 2.73 with predicate "Sometimes". It indicated that average students of English Education Study Program was often used Asking for Clarification strategy in responding teachers' oral questions.

No response strategy

Total average for all items of questionnaire in term of accomodative strategy was 2.66 with predicate "Sometimes". It indicated that average students of English Education Study Program was often used Asking for Clarification strategy in responding teachers' oral questions.

Excuse strategy

Total average for all items of questionnaire in term of accomodative strategy was 2.59 with predicate "Sometimes". It indicated that average students of English Education Study Program was often used Asking for Clarification strategy in responding teachers' oral questions.

Denial strategy

Total average for all items of questionnaire in term of accomodative strategy was 2.56 with predicate "Sometimes". It indicated that average students of English Education Study Program was often used Denial strategy in responding teachers' oral questions.

Apology strategy

Total average for all items of questionnaire in term of accomodative strategy was 2.22 with predicate "Low". It indicated that average students of English Education Study Program was seldom used Apology strategy in responding teachers' oral questions.

The most strategies used by the students

The result showed that the sixth semester students most frequently used avoidance strategy (M=2.84) to help them in responding to questions, followed by accommodative strategy (M=2.82), asking for clarification strategy (M=2.73), no response strategy (M=2.66), excuse strategy (M=2.59), denial strategy (M=2.56) and apology strategy.

In overall strategy, the researcher concluded three items that are most frequently used the strategies in responding teachers' oral questions. The first item was avoidance strategy (M=2.84) to help them in responding to questions, followed by accommodative strategy (M=2.82), asking for clarification strategy (M=2.73), no response strategy (M=2.66). It indicated the sixth semester students were sometimes used the response strategies. While, the least used response strategy was apology strategy (M=2.22). In conclusion, on total number of the students mostly tended to use response strategies with predicate "Sometimes". It indicated the students of English Educaton Study Program in University of Bengkulu sometimes used the response strategies adapted from Luit et. al (2018) and Dornyei & Scott (1997).

Discussion

In this section, the researcher discussed some important findings dealing with students response strategy in responding teachers' oral questions. The discussion is explained based on the research questions which are what response strategies are employed by the students of English Education Study Program in responding teachers' oral questions and what are most frequently used strategies by the students of English Education Study Program in responding teachers' oral questions. The researcher divided into two explanations which are individual and group strategy used.

Based on result showed, the sixth semester students highly used seven strategies in various category of response strategy which are "I answer questions in simple expression. I keep quite when I don't understand the intent of the lecturers' question. When I forget a word in English, in answering the question, I would say the fillers (e.g., umm ... uh ...). I stop for a moment when I lose the idea that will be spoken. When I forget a word in the English in answering the question, I would say "what we call it" or "apa ya..?" to give me time to think."

Based on the highest mean score of individual strategy used, the sixth semester students most frequently used strategy was **"I answer questions in simple expression."** One of the possible reasons it is because the sixth semester students mostly constructing sentence with using familiar words than trying to use new words. As we know, lack of vocabulary and grammar are general trouble as EFL student. Moreover, Khadidja (2010) quoted in Hardianti (2016) that foreign language speaking differs from first language speaking in terms of the lack of grammar and vocabulary knowledge of the learners. Beside, Gao (2016) stated that EFL students often do general avoidance as "...seeming inability to answer even the simplest questions." It means that EFL students sometimes try to avoid questions as possible as they can. Dornyei and Scott (1997) revealed avoidance as "...avoiding certain language structures or topics considered problematic language wise or by leaving out some intended elements for a lack of linguistic resources" that also

supports previous reason about the students who deliver simple expressions to help them easily in answering questions.

The second individual strategy used by the sixth semester students, **"I keep quite when I don't understand the intent of the lecturers' question."** One of the possible reasons is because the sixth semester students give no response if they want to avoid difficult questions from the teacher. As we know, it is usual happens in EFL classroom activity. As the researcher attached in Chapter Two about response strategy by Luit et. al (2018) that no response represents to the negative comments or take no overt action with the purpose of separating themselves from the negative events by remaining silent. It means that the students want to separate themselves from the teachers' questions thought as difficult question. Then, Brown (2002) powered that **silence** happens when the students pause in the interaction. It means that when the students give no response for the teacher's questions, we can define it as part of **silence**. Beside, Chuska (1995) quoted in Meng et. al (2012) also mentioned that when questions such as those mentioned (referential) are asked, students will usually not know how to respond and may answer the questions incorrectly. In this case, students will acts carefully to respond or they afraid to be failed because of their answer.

The third individual strategy used by the sixth semester students, **"When I forget a word in English, in answering the question, I would say the fillers (e.g., umm ... uh ...)**." One possible answer is when the students are trying to express what they want to say, they would take a time to process the words that will be expressed. Fillers can be a solution for them to "…fill pauses and to gain time to think" (Dornyei, p. 58).

Hardianti (2016) also revealed in her study that many of participants tended to use fillers because they wanted to keep the attention of their group members in discussion. Then Lui et. al (2018) emphasized clearly that accommodative strategy used to act politely recognize the situation and explain how they will redress the situation for future occasions. We can define simply that fillers as accommodative strategy is to help students to process what they would to say.

The fourth individual strategy used by the sixth semester students, "**I stop for a moment when I lose the idea that will be spoken.**" One possible answer is when the students suddenly lost their ideas, they try to stop whether to continue in thinking the idea or leave unfinished message. As explained by Dornyei (1997) before that avoidance means "…leaving out some intended elements for a lack of linguistic resources." From this statement, we know that sometimes EFL students leaving out unfinished message to avoid the next happens whether their answer would be accepted or not. In addition, Chin (2007) emphasized that the characterizes teacher questions as something that is "flexible" because such questions are adjusted based on students' responses in order to engage in higher – order thinking. That teachers should comprehend type of questions in order to avoid students do stop in expressing idea.

The fifth individual strategy used by the sixth semester students, **"When I forget a word in the English in answering the question, I would say "what we call it" or "apa ya..?" to give me time to think**." This statement describes a situation where the students suddenly stammer in delivering idea

4

because of lack of vocabulary or their ignorance of the certain word. They try to remember the word slowly through saying "what we call.." or mixing Indoensian language "apa ya.." We would view this statement almost similarly with the third item, describing about fillers used. Beside, Dornyei (1995) quoted in Hardianti (2016) that revealed when language learners do not know how to say a word in English, they can communicate effectively by using their hands, imitating sounds, mixing languages, inventing new words, or describing what they mean. It means that the sixth semester students choose this strategy in order to make them effectively in responding teachers' question. Contrastly with the third item, this strategy lets the EFL students to mixing their native languages in helping them to process what they want to say.

From these explanations that there are fifth individual strategy used by the sixth semester students. As seen in Table 15, actually there are seven strategy that represents response strategies used by the students where the highest strategy is avoidance strategy and the least strategy is apology strategy.

The researcher concludes that the students use six strategies in responding questions except Apology strategy (M=2.22). The realizations of apology response strategies could not be generalized in this research. As Waluyo (2017) studied about Apology Response Strategies that many factors might influence the different realization of the apology especially to the EFL learners. She founded that there are four factors as the most influential in using apology strategies i.e. power, relations, situations, and the degree of mistake. Furthermore, the factors are mostly

affected by the local cultural wisdom and their very own personal traits. In other words, although the participants use English language in uttering the apology responses, it does not merely guarantee that they also implement the appropriate English ways of communication. In this research also give similarly result that apology strategies is seldom to be used by the students.

Next, as displaying in the table, there are two of five strategies adopted from Lui et. al (2018) that appear as highly frequency namely No Response strategy and Accomodative strategy. In their study, No Response strategy and Apology strategy dominantly used by some firms in order to give responses for negative events. It is different with what the researcher found in this research. Meanwhile, it is only avoidance strategy adopted from Dornyei and Scott (1997) that appear in the table. The strategy also highly percentage used by participants in the research of Hardianti (2016) and Gao (2016). Thus, there are three strategies that highly frequency used by the students, Avoidance strategy, No Response strategy, and Accomodative strategy.

As conclusion, the researcher founded all of the sixth semester students prefer to choose all of strategies with the predicate "Sometimes" (see table 6). Although, it is not really significant difference of frequency, the result only prove about most frequently used strategies and the least frequently used strategies. The response strategies are appropriately the students' needs. As Waluyo stated before, there are some factors that influence the students in giving response and one of the most influential is local

cultural wisdom. Actually in responding questions, teacher as a facilitator have responsibility in giving questions to the students. In addition, as Toni and Parse (2012) revealed that students can be developed mentally through thoughful teacher-led but not teacher centered discourse. This statement means that when the students face difficulties in responding questions and they use their native languages, the teacher should give them chance to explore. Thus, teachers affect the way students to give responses for the questions.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This research attempted to find out acquire the response strategies in responding teachers' questions at the English Education Study Program of University of Bengkulu. The analysis of the research findings reveals that the English students used varied strategies which are The result showed that the sixth semester students most frequently used avoidance strategy (M=2.84) to help them in responding to questions, followed by accommodative strategy (M=2.82), asking for clarification strategy (M=2.73), no response strategy (M=2.66), excuse strategy (M=2.59), denial strategy (M=2.56) and apology strategy (M=2.22).

The researcher founded that the students of English Education Study Program preferred to choose sixth strategies in responding teachers' oral questions and one strategy is seldom to be used. The six strategies were avoidance strategy to help them in responding to questions, followed by accommodative strategy, asking for clarification strategy, no response strategy, excuse strategy, and denial strategy. Then, apology strategy was one strategy that is seldom used by the students. Thus, using the response

strategies is affected some factors especially for apology strategies. It is mostly influenced by local cultural wisdom at the sixth semester students. Then, teachers and classroom interaction also affect the way of students' responding in the class.

Last, the researcher conclude from overall strategies used by the students that the most frequently strategy group used by the students of English Education Study Program was Avoidance strategy. This finding is in contrast with any previous studies that found another strategy as the most frequently strategy group used by the students. It can be caused from the different of previous study, the research question, and the theory of response strategies that used in the study. Also, the researcher founded there was limitless studies about this study so that it would better to use another instrument in order to getting deeply findings.

Suggestion

There are some suggestions that the researcher can propose after doing the analysis. Firstly, the researcher suggests for the lecturers to aware in questioning technique. It is good for teachers to learn deeply how to deliver questions orally that would gain students' response. It will make the teaching and learning process more interactive and effective. At the end, the purpose of learning can be achieved successfully as the teachers hope. Secondly, the researcher suggests for the students to use response strategy in order to help them to respond teachers' questions. The students comprehend the response strategy based on their personal needs. It is better for the students to choose the response strategy in order to solve their problems in responding questions. Last, the further researcher can conduct the same scope of research by involving other

instruments, such as interview and classroom observation to obtain deeper findings. The researcher also suggests to gain the theories related to the respons strategies.

REFERENCES

Dornyei, Z. (1995). *On the teachability of communication strategies.* TESOL Quarterly, 29, 55–85.

Dornyei, Z., & Scott, M. L. (1997). *Communication strategies in a second language: Definitions and taxonomies.* Language Learning, 47, 173 - 210.

Gao, Pei-xin, (2016). *An Analysis of English Learners' Anxiety and Coping Strategies in China Binzhou University.* US-China Foreign Language, No. 8, 544-551.

Hardianti, R. (2016). *A Study of EFL Students'oral Communication Strategies In Discussions.* Indonesian EFL Journal, 2(1), 23-33.

Inan, B. & Fidan, D. (2012). *Teacher questions and their functions in Turkish as a foreign language (TFL) classes.* Procedia Social and Behavioral Science, 70:1070-1077.

Juliany, Ribka R. & Mardijono, Josefa J. (2017). *Students'Communication Strategies and Teacher's Responses In a Twelfth Grade English Classroom.* Print.

Lui et al. (2018) *Online review response strategy and its effects on competitive performance.* Tourism Management 67 (2018) 180-190.

Meng et al. (2012). *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2 (12), 2603-2610.

Waluyo, Sri. (2017). *Apology Response Strategies Performed by EFL Learners.* METATHESIS, 1(2), 94-109.

Wright, Brenda. (2016). *Display and referential questions: Effects on student responses.* Nordic Journal of English Studies 15(4):160-189