

# Communication Strategies Used by ELT Students Across Genders

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**Abstract:** This research investigated communication strategies used by female and male students of ELT at Universitas Negeri Malang and their perception on the use of communication strategies in oral communication. This research employed descriptive qualitative research design. It used purposeful sampling technique. It was found out that both female and male students only used 10 out of 12 communication strategies. Both male and female students perceived that communication strategies were helpful to cope with difficulties, to maintain the conversation, to negotiate meaning, to solve problems, and to enhance the effectiveness of communication.

**Key Words:** communication strategies, across genders, ELT, Universitas Negeri Malang

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini mencari strategi komunikasi yang digunakan oleh mahasiswa pendidikan bahasa Inggris laki-laki dan perempuan di Universitas Negeri Malang dan persepsi mereka terhadap penggunaan strategi komunikasi tersebut dalam komunikasi lisan. Penelitian ini dilaksanakan dengan menggunakan desain penelitian deskriptif kualitatif. Penelitian ini menggunakan teknik *purposive sampling*. Dari penelitian ini, ditemukan bahwa baik mahasiswi maupun mahasiswa sama-sama hanya menggunakan 10 dari 12 strategi komunikasi. Para mahasiswi dan mahasiswa juga sama-sama setuju bahwa strategi komunikasi sangat membantu mereka dalam komunikasi lisan.

**Kata kunci:** strategi komunikasi, lintas *gender*, pendidikan bahasa Inggris, Universitas Negeri Malang

## INTRODUCTION

Speaking is an important skill to be acquired by the students is undeniable. In oral communication, the students employ speaking skills which requires the mastery of communication strategies in order to solve the communication problems which they found during oral communication and to get across the communicative goals to the interlocutors. Unfortunately, speaking is still considered one of the most difficult skills to be acquired by English language learners. In line with this, Horwitz et al. (1986, p. 132) claim that speaking seems to be considered the most threatening matter in learning a foreign language. In addition, Young (1992) also mentions that speaking is probably considered as the most difficult language skill from the perspective of both foreign language teachers and learners. Horwitz et al. and Young's statement may indicate that speaking is complex because it requires active participation in the classroom and to some extent the

students become reluctant to speak English because of several reasons such as lack of prior knowledge about the topics, lack of self-confidence, and lack of linguistic knowledge. Therefore, the language learners perceive speaking English is difficult to acquire. Further than that, the students face some problems that make them reluctant to use English in English classes. According to Syarifudin (2015), one of the problems that makes the students reluctant to communicate in English is that speaking requires the ability to use the appropriate, acceptable, and comprehensible oral language through communication in many kinds of opportunities.

Because of the problems which the students faced during oral communication, the students chose reticence. In line with this, Tutyandari (2005) comments in her investigation that specifically some factors which make the students choose reticence in English classes are lack of self-confidence, lack of prior knowledge about the topics, and poor relationship with the English

teacher. Whereas in English class, the learners are required to actively participate in speaking English both monologue or dialogue in speaking activities in order to familiarize themselves with the target language (TL) in communication. Syarifudin (2015, p. 2) states that an English class is one way of practicing and learning speaking, and multitudes of opportunities for learning speaking or communication exists in context in which English needs to be used. Syarifudin's statement may indicate that learning activities in the classroom must encourage the students to use English for instance by having group discussions or presentations because speaking competence is necessary for the students in their future career.

In response to the previous explanation, in order to surmount students' problems in oral communication, they must have communicative competence. This coincides with Cravotta (2004, p. 2) who states that communicative competence is necessary in order to have an effective English communication since English is one of international languages. In other words, communicative competence is what speakers need to know in order to be communicatively competent in a speech community. Canale and Swain (1980) states that communicative competence comprises four components: grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence, which reflects the use of the linguistic system and the functional aspects of communication respectively.

The first two components reflect the use of the linguistic system itself and the last two define the functional aspects of communication. Strategic competence, which is the way learners manipulate language in order to meet communicative goals (Brown, 1994, p. 228), is possibly the most important of all communicative competence elements. A further matter emphasized in this communicative competence is the relationship between strategic competence and communication strategies. Strategic competence concerns with the knowledge of communication strategies and how to use them. This is supported by Juan and Flor (2008, p. 158) who describe strategic competence as the knowledge of how to use communication strategies to handle hindrances in communication. Juan and Flor's statement may indicate that the speakers of English need to have the knowledge on how to use communication strategies because by employing communication strategies, they will be able to surmount the problems which they face during oral communication. The more important thing is that by using communication strategies, the speakers can get across the communicative goals to the interlocutors successfully.

Related to the use of English in English classes, based on the preliminary research conducted by the researcher in April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016 until April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at English Department of State University of Malang, it was found that during English classroom activities, the students faced some problems in speaking and they tried to solve the problems by using some communication strategies such as message abandonment, circumlocution, approximation, time gaining strategy, and appeal for help. This coincides with Sari (2014) who states that the students use communication strategies in order to be able to perform well, or at least, to manage to deliver messages in oral performance. It is also in line with Nakatani (2006) who states that communication strategies can be used to maintain the conversation.

Communication strategies have been an extremely important topic of discussion particularly in oral communication. It is in line with Sari (2014) who states that communication strategies play an important role for the students to communicate. Needless to say, communication strategies assist learners to enhance their fluency in speaking English. According to Bialystok (1983, p. 102), communication strategies are all attempts to manipulate a limited linguistic system in order to promote communication.

Supporting Bialystok, Maleki (2010) defines communication strategy as an individual's attempt to find ways to fill the gap between their communication effort and immediately available linguistic resources. Bialystok and Maleki's perspective about communication strategies can be seen as the efforts made by the students in order to compensate their inadequate linguistic knowledge.

Another definition of communication strategy is that communication strategy is an endeavor that a speaker can use in order to get across the communicative goals to the interlocutor. Tarone (1983, p. 65) defines communication strategies as mutual attempts of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared. Supporting Tarone, Dornyei (1995) views communication strategies as the ways a person employs to cope with problems and difficulties in oral communication such. Problems and difficulties may be due to their deficits in linguistic knowledge or lack of content knowledge related to certain topics. In line with Tarone and Dornyei, Faerch and Kasper (1983, p. 212) define communication strategies as the potentially conscious plans for solving what an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal. Supporting them, Corder (1981,

p. 102) defines communication strategies as systematic techniques employed by a speaker to express his meaning when faced with some difficulties. Faerch and Kasper and Corder's perspective on communication strategies may be seen as the techniques that the speakers take consciously in order to convey their ideas to the interlocutors. Supporting this, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) argue that communication strategies can also be used to negotiate meaning between speakers and interlocutors. The definition of the communication strategies which was used in this research was the definition proposed by Dornyei (1995) who states that communication strategies are the ways a person employs to cope with problems and difficulties in oral communication (problems and difficulties here may be due to their deficits in linguistic knowledge or lack of content knowledge related to certain topics). This definition was chosen because it summoned the definitions from other experts and also matched with the topic of the research which was about group discussion in which needed content knowledge related to the topics of the discussion.

From definitions and explanations of the communication strategies above, it can be concluded that at least there are five functions of communication strategies. First, communication strategies can assist learners to enhance the effectiveness of communication (Canale, 1983). Second, communication strategies can be used to negotiate meaning between speakers and interlocutors (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Third, communication strategies are also tools to cope with difficulties when communicating in target language (Dornyei, 1995). Fourth, the use of communication strategies can help to solve problem in reaching a particular communicative goal (Faerch & Kasper, 1983). And fifth, communication strategies can be used to maintain the conversation (Nakatani, 2006).

Communication strategies were very helpful for the speakers in oral communication when they faced some problems when they tried to convey messages or to get across communicative goals to interlocutors in oral communication. The learners employ communication strategies in conveying their meaning because they have limited linguistic resources (Ellis, 1986, p. 181). The learners used communication strategies when they perceived that those problems would interrupt their communication. In addition, students' ability to use communication strategies in coping with communication problems let them to be more adept in oral communication (Syarifudin, 2015).

There were several reasons that made communication strategies as the emphasis of this research. First,

using communication strategies as efforts to solve communication problems was a good way to improve the achievement of communication goals. Secondly, understanding communication strategies was the first thing to be considered in improving students' speaking ability. This coincides with Nakatani (2006, p. 151) who mentions that the learners can improve their communication proficiency by developing an ability to use certain communication strategies that enable them to compensate for their deficits of English knowledge. Finally, using communication strategies could be very useful in compensating for the lack of linguistic knowledge (Karimnia & Zade, 2007 cited in Syarifudin, 2015, p. 8). Furthermore, communication strategies had a very important position in oral communication because using communication strategies, the speakers and the interlocutors negotiated meaning until they agreed to a communicative goal.

There were some previous researchers who had conducted research in this field in some countries. They were Huang (2010), Mei and Nathalang (2010), Somsai and Intaraprasert (2011), Fishman (1983), and Lai (2010). Huang (2010) investigated the factors influencing the use of communication strategies. There were ninety eight learners of Lunghwa University of Science and Technology in Taiwan as the subjects of the research. Huang found that learners most frequently used message reduction and alternative strategies and least frequently used message abandonment strategy. The factors that affected the use of those communication strategies were learners' self-perceived oral proficiency and the frequency of motivation in speaking English. Huang's (2010) findings could be commented that the learners used compensatory strategies in order to reach the communication goals.

In addition, Mei and Nathalang (2010) conducted their research focusing on the use of communication strategies employed by undergraduate Chinese EFL learners. The subjects of the research were one hundred and seventeen learners of non English majors studying English at Chinese University. The findings showed that the EFL learners needed to use communication strategies in order to facilitate their communication because they were lack of exposure to English language in their daily life.

Somsai and Intaraprasert (2011) investigated communication strategies employed by the students for coping with face to face oral communication problems at Rajamangala University of Technology in Thailand. The subjects were forty eight students majoring in English for International Communication (EIC). The results showed that there were two main

categories of communication strategies employed by students for coping with the communication problems: strategies for conveying a message to the interlocutors and the strategies for understanding the message. The students employed those communication strategies to compensate with their deficits of English knowledge.

Fishman (1983) examined the conversational strategies males and females exploited to maintain power relationship. The data included 52 hours of talk between three couples whose interactions were recorded when they were at their apartments. Fishman's analysis of the data showed that the choice of strategies by males and females were quite different. Men were more likely than women to take control of the conversations. Interestingly, women used almost three times as many questions as men did. He noted that questions were interactionally powerful utterances. They were usually followed by a response and this was enough to sustain communication for a while. Furthermore, even when males and females employed the same strategies, they exploited them for different purposes. For example, a man would use minimal responses such as yeah, umm, and huh to show lack of interest while a woman would utilize minimal responses to provide support work, to show that she was constantly attending to what was said, that she was demonstrating her participation, her interest in the interaction and the speaker.

In a recent research by Lai (2010), gender effect on CSs used among 36 Chinese EFL learners was examined while they were performing oral and written communicative tasks. The participants were requested to communicate two abstract and two concrete concepts to a native speaker. They were not allowed to use the target words and were asked to interact with the native speaker till the native speaker could identify the target concept the participant admitted that they were unable to communicate. The analysis of the recorded interviews pointed to no differences between males and females in the use of CSs which was attributed to the learning environment. It was found that females were more efficient than males in their use of CSs because of the differences in their execution phase of the production.

In Indonesian context, the research about communication strategies had been conducted by Ikawati (2011), Nugroho (2011), Rozal (2013), and Syarifudin (2015). Ikawati (2011) conducted an investigation on communication strategies employed by the senior high school students at SMAN 8 Malang. The focus of her research was on analysing the communication strategies employed by the students in group discus-

sions. Her findings showed that the students employed avoidance strategy (3.42%), message abandonment (15%), approximation (6.16%), code switching (7.53%), the use of non-linguistic means (15%), appeal for help (5.47%), literal translation (1.02%), the use of all-purpose words (0.34%), and the use of fillers (23.97%). Furthermore, Nugroho (2012) focused his research on communication strategies in speaking class at English Department of State University of Surabaya. The findings of the research showed that there were four communication strategies mostly employed by the students. They were approximation, used 35 times (30.43%), time-gaining, used 21 times (18.26%), appeal for help, used 18 times (15.65%), and literal translation, used 16 times (13.91%).

The differences between the research conducted by Ikawati (2011) and Nugroho (2012) were on the communication strategies employed by the students. Ikawati (2010) found that most often used communication strategy by the students was the use of fillers (23.97%), and least often used communication strategy by the students were the use of all-purpose words (0.34%). On the other hand, Nugroho (2012) revealed that most used communication strategy by students was approximation (30.43%), and the least often used communication strategy by students was literal translation (13.91%).

In addition, Rozal (2013) conducted an investigation on communication strategies employed by ELT students in speaking class. The subjects of the research were seventy students at Bung Hatta University Padang. The findings of the research showed that from twelve communication strategies proposed by Dornyei (1995), the students employed ten of them; namely approximation (31.40%), time-gaining (21.26%), appeal for help (9.18%), literal translation (7.25%), code switching (6.28%), message abandonment (4.83%), topic avoidance (3.38%), word coinage (0.97%), foreignizing and use of non-linguistic signal (0.48%). The results of the research also found two other strategies which were not included in Dornyei (1995) theories; namely repetition (12.08%) and self-correction (2.42%). The problems leading to the use of the communication strategies were the students' nervousness, lacking of the vocabulary, lacking of language structures, avoiding the reticence, making the word clear for the interlocutor, and the influence of their first language.

The most recent research on this topic was conducted by Syarifudin (2015). His research analyzed communication strategies as they occurred in naturally occurring talk between speakers and interlocutors in

the classroom setting, all data of verbal and nonverbal communication strategies, and learners' problems leading to the use of communication strategies. The subjects of the research were thirty two students of English Language Education Department of IKIP Mataram taking Speaking II subject in academic year 2012/2013. The findings of the research showed that there were thirteen categories of verbal communication strategies employed by the learners; they were topic avoidance, message abandonment, approximation, word coinage, circumlocution, literal translation, language switch, appeal for assistance, foreignizing, paraphrasing, self-correction, comprehension check, and self repetition. Among thirteen verbal strategies, language switch was the most frequently used by the speakers.

For non-verbal communication strategies, the results of the research showed that the learners employed nine categories; they were smiling, laughing, head nodding, head shaking, hand raising, hand moving, thumb up, and drawing something. Of the nine nonverbal strategies, hand moving was the most frequently employed by the speakers. The learners' problems leading to the use of those communication strategies were the insufficient knowledge of target language, especially lack of target language vocabulary, grammar, and deficiency about speaking content.

In the present research, the researcher extended the line of the research exploring the communication strategies employed by female and male students and their perception on the use of communication strategies in oral communication. Gender differences came into account to this research as a response to the claim that communication strategies worked best upon the pattern of both human brain's work. Meanwhile, recent evidence from the development of neuroscience reveals that men and women do in fact have differences in structures and functions in the brain (Rabinowicz et al., 2002). This coincides with Frederikse (1999) who states that brains are more asymmetric in men but not in women. The differences of structures in male and female brains began since in the womb (Achiron et al., 2001). It was believed to be the sources for the different function of the brain such as the differences in their ability to think and to solve problem. With these regards, it was logical for the researcher to investigate communication strategies employed by female and male students in order to find out what communication strategies that female students employed to solve their communication problems and what communication strategies that male students employed to solve their communication problems.

From the results of the previous research, it was obvious that the employment of communication strategies was because of several problems that the foreign language learners faced in oral communication such as insufficient linguistic knowledge and deficiency of prior knowledge related to the topics being discussed. Therefore, this research differed from the previous research in the same field. This research did not only investigate the communication problems that lead the learners to the use of certain communication strategies, but also investigated students perception on the use of communication strategies.

Students' perception on the use of communication strategies was very important to find out because if the students perceived communication strategies as helpful knowledge or tools to solve communication problems as explained by the experts of communication strategies, then the students were needed to be taught communication strategies in order to help them learning speaking skill in English. Communication strategy itself was found out as natural phenomenon and at once needed to be taught. As natural phenomenon because in the interview the students said that they sometimes did not realize that they employed communication strategies during their oral communication. Needed to be taught because there were some communication strategies such as circumlocution, use of all-purpose words, and use of non-linguistic signals that needed more explanation so that the students could use those communication strategies in their oral communication. From the findings, the researcher found out that the students perceived communication strategies as helpful tools in oral communication.

This research was conducted at English Department of State University of Malang, East Java, Indonesia. English Department of State University of Malang had two majors. First was English Language Teaching (henceforth ELT) and second was English Literature. The subject of this research were ELT students, batch 2015/2016. The researchers chose ELT students because they were going to be English teachers and by experiencing communication strategies and knowing the function and importance of communication strategies, they were expected to teach communication strategies to their students later when they became English teachers. The researchers conducted the research on Speaking class, precisely Speaking for Formal Interaction. The researchers assumed that the students had adequate skills in speaking English because they had taken Intensive Course at the previous semester. Intensive Course was a required course for English Department Students that provided students with re-

ceptive and productive skills in using English in communication.

The main data of the research were students' utterances based on the categorization of communication strategies. Therefore, the data were elicited by recording and observing students' speaking in speaking classroom activities. The teaching-learning activity that was observed was group discussion done by the students. The topics that were observed were up to date and authentic topics that related to students' real life and environments surrounding them.

Having seen the importance of communication strategies to students' communicative competence, considering the limited numbers of research on this topic, and realizing the advantages of communication strategies in acquiring English for the students, the researcher conducted a research on communication strategies employed by the students in English classes in Indonesian context. This research found out the types of communication strategies employed by female and male students and their perception on the use of communication strategies. The result of this research gave the preference for female and male students in employing which communication strategies among twelve communication strategies that were observed in this research. This research differed from most others done in the the same topic because this study analyzed the communication strategies employed by female and male students and their perception on the use of certain communication strategies in oral communication.

## **METHOD**

This research used descriptive qualitative approach since the purpose of the research was to describe the communication strategies employed by female and male students during group discussion. Ary (2002, p. 423) states that qualitative research seeks to interpret human action, institution, events, customs, and construct a portrayal of what is being studied. The main goal of this type of inquiry is to portray the complex pattern of what is being studied in sufficient depth and detail so that someone who has not experienced it can understand it. The design of this research was descriptive case study. It was used to describe an intervention or phenomenon and the real-life context in which it occurred (Yin, 2003).

The presence of the researcher was as a non-participant observer. The researcher observed the students' performance in doing speaking task and did

not interact directly with the subjects of the research. The subjects of the research knew that the presence of the researcher in their English Class was conducting a research.

The main instrument of this research was the researcher himself. The researcher played a role as a non-participant observer and as the interviewer in the interview session. This is supported by Neuman (2002, p. 355) who states that the researcher is the instrument for measuring the field data. Therefore, the researcher became the main instrument to collect the data of the research.

Furthermore, there were four supporting instruments that the researchers used in order to collect the data. The first instrument was a video recorder. It was used to record the students when they performed the oral communication in the classroom. Since communication strategies covered both verbal and non-verbal expression, video recording was very fruitful to record the students' non-verbal communication strategies. Moreover, it helped the researcher to find out the data that could be missed by the researcher in his field notes. The second instrument was rubric of communication strategies. Rubric of communication strategies then was made into an observation sheet. After recording students speaking performances in the classroom, the researcher employed observation sheets to note the communication strategies employed by the students in oral communication in the classroom.

The third instrument was field notes. Field notes were used to describe what could be seen and experienced by the researcher during the data collection. In the present research, the researcher used field notes to have the portraits of the subjects, reconstruction of the dialogue, description of physical setting, accounts of particular events, and depiction of the activities. Meanwhile, the reflective part of the field notes dealt with the researcher's ideas, impressions, and feelings on the course of the inquiry.

Finally, the fourth instrument was interview guide. After oral communication was done, the interview was conducted. The interview was conducted to find out students perception on the use of communication strategies. The benefit of conducting interview was also to get deep understanding on students' perception on the use of communication strategies in oral communication. To record the data from the interview, the researcher used video recorder.

This research was conducted at English Department of State University of Malang, East Java, Indonesia. The total number of ELT students batch 2015/2016 were 125 students. ELT major consisted of four

classes; class A (31 students; 29 females and 2 males), class B (32 students; 27 females and 5 males), class C (31 students; 18 females and 13 males), and class D (31 students; 21 females and 10 males). In this research, the researcher only took class C because it was the only class that had an almost balanced number between female and male students because this research intended to find out the communication strategies employed by female and male students. In addition, it was also for practicality reasons. The researcher conducted the research on speaking class, precisely Speaking for Formal Interaction. The researcher assumed that the students had adequate skills in speaking English because they had taken Intensive Course at the previous semester. Intensive Course was a required course for English Department Students that provided students with receptive and productive skills in using English in communication.

The data of the research were the utterances produced by the students when they performed speaking task in the classroom. An utterance was a complete unit of communication that consisted of words, phrases, and clauses spoken by the students. The utterances were recorded. In this case, a video recorder was used. In addition, the researcher also used field notes and observation sheet to help in gaining more data in the classroom during group discussion.

In conducting the research the researcher did not participate directly in the teaching and learning process. The researcher used observation sheet and field notes to observe what happened in the speaking class. The observation sheet covered the students' use of communication strategies proposed by Dornyei's

typology. They were (1) message abandonment, (2) topic avoidance, (3) circumlocution, (4) approximation, (5) use of all-purpose words, (6) word coinage, (7) use of non-linguistic signals, (8) literal translation, (9) foreignizing, (10) code switching, (11) appeal for help, and (12) time-gaining strategy.

The research data were collected for two weeks. It was started in September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2016 until September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016. The data were collected once a week. It took 100 minutes for each class. The data were collected by recording students' activity in the classroom.

To gain the students' utterances as the main data of the research, the researcher observed students' group discussions in the classroom conducted by the lecturer of Speaking for Formal Interaction Subject (Table 1 & 2). The class consisted of 31 students; 18 females and 13 males. However, the researcher took only 24 students instead of 31 students in order to have a balance number between female and male students. The students were grouped into 6 groups. Each group consisted of 2 females and 2 males.

The researchers used a video recorder and observation sheet. We recorded the speaking performance of the students when they did the group discussion in the classroom. After that, the researchers used observation sheet to note the communication strategies employed by the students in oral communication. The data covered the communication strategies which included twelve communication strategies proposed by Dornyei. The data were collected and stated in the form of words. During the classroom recording, the researcher also used field notes. The field notes were used in order to get complete and authentic des-

**Table 1. Students Grouping**

No.	Groups	Members	Group Code
1	Group A	4 students	GA
2	Group B	4 students	GB
3	Group C	4 students	GC
4	Group D	4 students	GD
5	Group E	4 students	GE
6	Group F	4 students	GF
Total	6 Groups	24 students	6 Group Codes

**Table 2. The Topics for Group Discussions**

Group	The Topics	
	First Topic	Second Topic
A	Corporal Punishment	Students who work as part time job worker
B	Corporal Punishment	Student Teacher Interaction
C	Corporal Punishment	Student Teacher Interaction
D	Corporal Punishment	Student Teacher Interaction
E	Students who work as part time job worker	Student Teacher Interaction
F	Students who work as part time job worker	Student Teacher Interaction

cription focusing on what utterances produced and in what situation they were produced by the students. The video recorder was also used to help capturing the students’ utterances and gestures which could not be gathered by using field notes. Before the recording, the researcher explained that the use of video recorder was to record their speaking activities in the classroom. After that the students’ performance in doing speaking tasks was recorded using the video camera.

Second, the researchers conducted the interview in order to find out students’ perception on the use of communication strategies. To keep the interview more focused on the data needed, the researcher employed interview guide. The researcher only interviewed the students who performed speaking tasks and employed communication strategies.

To analyze the data of the research, the researcher used the data analysis procedures suggested by Miles and Huberman (1984). The procedure covered data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

Data reduction was analysis that helped to sharpen, sort, focus, discard, and organize the data in a way that allowed for final conclusions to be drawn and verified. In this research, after collecting the data through the activity of recording, observing, taking field notes, and interviewing, the researcher transcribed, selected, and organized the raw data which referred to the research problems being investigated in the research. In other words, the irrelevant data were discarded and excluded and the relevant data were included. The data of this research were students’ utterances when they performed speaking tasks in the classroom.

Data display was the second form of data analysis after the process of selecting, simplifying, and organizing the raw data. The selected and organized data then were displayed carefully in the form of narrative text. In displaying the data, the formulation of the research questions were taken to be considered by the researcher in order to make the data display always matched with the research questions. The data that were displayed here were the utterances of the students that contained communication strategies.

Conclusion drawing was the last procedure in analyzing the data of the research. In this procedure, from the beginning of the data collection, the researcher decided what things meant and noted down regularities, patterns, explanations, and propositions until the final conclusion was drawn. The researchers came to the final conclusion drawing after knowing that the data displayed were in line with the formulation of the research problem being investigated in this research. In other words, the data found have already answered the research questions.

The trustworthiness of the result of the data analysis was important to be checked in order to reduce the researcher’s biases and prejudices. In this research, triangulation was applied to check the trustworthiness of the data analysis.

**RESULT**

The more difficulties faced by the students in their oral communication, the more communication strategies they would employ. The Table 3 was presented based on the data of the observation sheet in order to know the frequency of communication strategies employed by female and male students in group discussion.

From the data above, it could be seen that female students employed communication strategies 105 times. On the other hand, male students employed communication strategies 145 times. Therefore, it could be concluded that female students faced fewer difficulties in oral communication compared to male students.

Both female and male students employed 10 communication strategies out of 12 communication strategies proposed by Dornyei (1995). Both female and male students did not employ Word Coinage (WC) and Foreignizing (F). This is simply because they knew the rules of English well and they had sufficient English vocabulary. Therefore if they did Foreignizing, they would notice it.

Three most frequent communication strategies employed by female students were Approximation (35

**Table 3. The Frequency of Communication Strategies Across Genders**

Students	Type of Communication Strategies											
	MA	TA	C	APP	UAW	WC	UNS	LT	F	CS	AH	TG
Female	9	3	4	37	8	0	4	7	0	4	3	26
Students	8.6%	2.9%	3.8%	35.2%	7.6%	0	3.8%	6.7%	0	3.8%	2.9%	24.8%
Male	9	4	2	47	19	0	2	3	0	10	5	44
Students	6.2%	2.8%	1.4%	32.4%	13.1%	0	1.4%	2.1%	0	6.9%	3.4%	30.3%



times/35.2%), Time Gaining (26 times/24.8%), and Message Abandonment (9 times/8.6%). On the other side, three most frequent communication employed by male students were Approximation (47 times/32.4%), Time Gaining (44 times/30.3%), and Use of All-Purpose Words (19 times/13.1%).

Female students loved to explain more than male students did. It was proven by the data. Male students employed Circumlocution only 2 times (1.4%). However, female students employed Circumlocution 4 times (3.8%). On the other hand, male students employed Code Switching more than female students did. Male students switched the code into Indonesian easily. Female students avoided using code switching. This fact could be seen at the table. Male students employed Code Switching 10 times (6.9%), while female students only 4 times (3.8%).

### Communication Strategies Employed by Female Students

From twelve communication strategies proposed by Dornyei (1995), female students employed 10 of them: they were Topic Avoidance (TA), Message Abandonment (MA), Approximation (APP), Circumlocution (C), Code Switching (CS), Appeal for Help (AH), Literal Translation (LT), Use of Non-Linguistic Signal (UNS), Time Gaining (TG), and Use of All Purpose Words (UAW). Female students did not employ Foreignizing (F) and Word Coinage (WC).

#### Topic Avoidance

Learners sometimes avoided certain topics and words in order to maintain the conversation during oral communication. It was called as Topic Avoidance. Female students employed this strategy because of their insufficient knowledge about the topics of the discussion and linguistic resources. Because of those, they simply tried to talk about other topics that they understood. This strategy was found in the following utterances:

(1) Teachers can easily pinch their students, but we have to consider the case behind the... behind the punishment. (GA, FS1)

(2) Like my juniors, when I am talking to them, they tend to ignore me. So, what... eee... back to the topic ya. (GC, FS3)

At data (1) female student 1 avoided the topic. Based on the interview, she wanted to talk about considering the case behind the students' behavior. However, she finally decided to talk about punishment. This

happened simply because she realized that the topic of the discussion was about corporal punishment done by the teachers.

Therefore, the emphasis on the topic was about punishment. She prepared the materials related to the topic but she was not prepared enough to talk about students' behavior.

Data (2) showed the same pattern that FS3 wanted to talk about her juniors who did not respect her, but then finally she stopped and did not continue her talk about that topic. She decided to say "*back to the topic ya*" which the topic of the discussion was about corporal punishment done by the teacher and in her perception sometimes the teacher did corporal punishment because the students did not respect their teachers and she correlated that to her interaction with her juniors. In this case, FS3 avoided the topic because she realized that she talked about another topic which was not the topic of the discussion. It meant, it was not because FS was lack of prior knowledge about the topic or lack of vocabulary. It simply because she thought that by avoiding that topic, it could enhance the effectiveness of communication. This is supported by Canale (1983) who argues that communication strategies can assist learners to enhance the effectiveness of communication. By employing topic avoidance strategy, the students could continue the conversation because they shifted to the topics that they understood to talk to and carried on the communication with the interlocutors.

#### Message Abandonment

Message abandonment was almost the same with topic avoidance. The difference was that the students still talked about the same topic, but just different message. The learners wanted to convey a message about certain concept, but then they found difficulties in telling the message because of insufficient vocabulary mastery and prior knowledge about the concept then they left the message unfinished and moved to another idea. This strategy was found in the following utterances:

(3) For example, bullying happens in society... eee... bullying happens not only because of one person, right? (GF, FS4)

In data (3), it could be seen that FS4 wanted to give an example of bullying which happened in the society. However, she decided to leave the message unfinished and shifted to another message. This happened because FS4 found difficulties in finding and telling the example of bullying in English. Therefore,

she abandoned the message because of her insufficient knowledge about the example of bullying and insufficient English structure mastery. If she continued to talk about the message, she had to use past tense therefore she finally decided to leave the message unfinished and moved to another message by asking for agreement to her interlocutors that bullying happened not only because of one person, but also because of many other people.

### *Approximation Strategy*

Using an alternative term or English structures to express the idea in oral communication as closely as possible to the appropriate ones was called as Approximation Strategy. Approximation included all word substitution that the students knew and those words had the closest meaning to the intended meaning which they wanted to tell to their interlocutors. Approximation strategy was also about using the closest English structure to the intended English structure that the speakers wanted to use in English. This strategy was found in the following utterances:

(4) And I think, if the intention of the teacher is positive, she shouldn't rude like that. (GD, FS1)

(5) So, these people try to influence another people to bully one person. (GF, FS4)

At data (4) it could be seen that FS1 employed an inappropriate English structure but it was the closest structure to the correct one. FS1 should say, "She shouldn't be rude like that" instead of just saying, "She shouldn't rude like that" because the word "rude" was an adjective. Therefore, after modal auxiliary "should", it required "be".

At data (5), FS4 employed the word "another" instead of "other" when she delivered her idea. The word "people" was a plural form. Therefore, FS4 should not use the word "another" with it because the word "another" was only paired with singular form of noun. Female students employed approximation strategy simply because of insufficient knowledge on the target language and also because they wanted to talk fluently in English. This caused them to just speak in English. This was a good point because this could help the students to speak in English fluently without thinking too much about English structure.

### *Circumlocution*

Circumlocution was describing or exemplifying the target lexical item. There were two usage of circumlocution strategy. The first was to negotiate meaning between the speakers and the interlocutors. For

example when the speaker said certain word or sentences that the interlocutor could not understand, then the speaker would try to describe, explain, and exemplify the target lexical item. The second usage of circumlocution was to overcome the communication difficulties. When the speaker wanted to say certain word, but they did not know how to say it in English, then they chose to describe, explain, and exemplify it in order to make the interlocutors caught the intended object. This strategy was found in the following utterances:

(6) To hold the floor means to get the chance to finish delivering your opinion. (GA, FS1)

(7) Underhanded tactic is when someone tries to influence your behavior and perception. (GF, FS4)

From data (6) it could be seen that FS1 chose to explain what it meant by "to hold the floor". She did not translate the phrase into the target language. She preferred to describe and explain it to her interlocutors. The same pattern happened at data (7), FS4 explained what underhanded tactic was in English. Circumlocution was the best choice as students' communication strategy moreover when they communicated in English with native speakers who could not understand Indonesian. To communicate with non-native speakers, this strategy was also one of the best choice because this could help the learners to always practice their English and not easily gave up and resorted to using their L1.

### *Code Switching*

Code Switching was using an L1 word with an L1 pronunciation while the speaker spoke in L2. The researcher found out that the female students employed this strategy because of two reasons. First was because they did not know how to say certain word in English then they resorted to using their first language. The second was because the students wanted to give an emphasis on certain ideas. They wanted to ensure that their idea was caught by their interlocutors. This strategy was found in the following utterances:

(8) He wasn't prepared about actually his **urusan** and his school time. (GE, FS1)

(9) So, they have to arrange or manage their **KRS** first. (GA, FS3)

At data (8), it could be seen that while speaking in the target language, FS1 switched to Indonesian saying "urusan" instead of saying "business". The same pattern occurred at data (9) when FS3 switched to Indonesian by saying "KRS" which was Indonesian

term without translating it into the target language for instance by saying “study plan”. Female students rarely employed code switching strategy. They employed this strategy only twice in oral communication.

### *Appeal for Help*

The characteristic of appeal for help strategy was when the speakers asked for an aid from the interlocutor or their partner either directly or indirectly. This strategy was usually in the form of verbal effort by asking, “How to say ... in English?”, “What is ... in English?”, and “What is it?”. This strategy was found in the following utterances:

(10) In behavioral relationship between teacher & student, we can ...eee... not all the student will have ...eee... what is that? (her friend beside her helped her “eager to”) eager to that. (GB, FS2)

(11) She must work to ... (silent and her face looked trying to find what to say next then her friend helped her, “to fulfill”) ya, to fulfill her life and her academic life. (GE, FS2)

It was obvious that at data (10), FS2 employed ask for help strategy by directly asking her friend by saying “what is that?” then her friend helped her “eager to”. In this context based on video 14, what FS1 meant was “In behavioral relationship between the teacher and the students, not all students will have willingness to respect their teacher”. However then by employing asking for help strategy and her friends employed approximation strategy, the meaning between her and her interlocutors achieved well therefore she accepted her friend’s help by saying “eager to”.

In data (11), FS2 asked for help indirectly. She kept silent when she did not know what to say certain word in English, but her facial expression showed that she needed help then her friend tried to help her by saying “fulfill” and for FS2 that was the right word that she was looking for then she continued her utterance by inserting “fulfill” in her sentence.

### *Literal Translation*

Translating literally a lexical item, idiom, structure, or compound word from L1 to L2 was called as Literal translation. For example when the students said, “I need to know your number room”. It was a literal translation. It should be “room number”. Female students rarely employed Literal translation because they knew the rules of English structure. This strategy was employed only once by female students. It was found in the following utterance:

(12) The example when in the **class writing**, we are commanded to write something. (GE, FS2)

From data (12), it could be seen that FS2 employed literal translation. She translated the phrase “class writing” from L1 “kelas menulis” which was supposed to be “writing class”. This happened simply because of the influence of her L1.

### *Use of Non-linguistic Signal*

Using mime, gesture, facial expression, or sound imitation to make the interlocutor understood what the speaker tried to say was called as use of non-linguistic signal strategy. Female students employed mime, gesture, and facial expression to surmount communication problems for example because of the insufficient linguistic knowledge and to negotiate meaning with the interlocutors. This strategy was found in the following utterances:

(13) I can’t just stay like this (putting her two hands below her chin to express “sit tightly”). You know what I mean, right? (GC, FS2)

From the observation based on 19 videos recorded by the researcher, it was found out that mostly female students employed mime, facial expression, and gesture in oral communication. But for explicitly employing non-linguistic signal to replace words or phrases in speaking English was rarely done by female students. Data (13) showed how FS2 employed this strategy by acting the words simply in order to negotiate meaning with her interlocutors and to compensate for her insufficient vocabulary mastery.

### *Time Gaining Strategy*

Time gaining strategy which was also called as the use of filler strategy was one of mostly employed communication strategies by female students. Female students needed a little time to think in the time of difficulties such as recalling certain vocabulary that they suddenly forgot or prior knowledge related to the topic being discussed. This is supported by Ikawati (2011) who found out that students required a little time to think about what to say next while they have oral communication. Therefore, female students employed fillers like “emm”, “you know”, etc. While they were saying “you know” and “emm”, their brain were thinking quickly about what they were going to say next when they communicated in English. Time gaining was considered as a suitable strategy in overcoming students’ problem in speaking English. This strategy was also considered helpful to fill the pauses. By employing this strategy, silence during oral communication could

be avoided. In addition, taking little time to think was totally fine in speaking as long as it was not too long.

### *The Use of All Purpose Words*

This strategy was interesting to look at because it was different from other strategies. Use of All Purpose Words (henceforth; UAW) was a strategy employed by female students by extending a general empty lexical item into context. Based on researchers' observation, it was found out that female students did the over uses of the word "like". It could be seen at the utterances below:

(14) So, maybe the teachers can give **like eee...** kind of text... oh no, **like** test and the exercises. (GB, FS1. Video 14)

(15) **Like** our junior... **like eee...we used...** it happens to me many times. (GC, FS2. Video 4)

From data (14) and (15), it can be seen that female students over used the word "like" in their oral communication. This was not a problem actually for them. But, it was recommended to female students to make variation in their utterance. They could use 'for example', 'for instance', 'such as', 'let's have a look at', etc.

### **Communication Strategies Employed by Male Students**

Male students also employed 10 communication strategies out of twelve communication strategies proposed by Dornyei (1995). What made the difference between communication strategies employed by male and female students was the frequency of using each communication strategy in oral communication.

#### *Topic Avoidance*

Not different from female students, male students used this strategy because of their insufficient knowledge about the topics of the discussion and linguistic resources. Because of those, they simply tried to talk about other topics that they understood. This strategy was found in the following utterances:

(16) What happen when the children or the students, they are naughty like... The teacher should not say 'you are stupid', 'you are bad' or something that kind of negative. (GA, MS2)

It could be seen at data (16) that MS2 wanted to talk about student's bad behavior, but finally he changed the topic to be what teachers should not do when dealing with students' bad behavior. This was caused by

some factors such as his insufficient knowledge about the topic being discussed, limited vocabulary mastery, and the willingness to jump to the idea that he wanted to convey to his interlocutors in order to achieve the communicative goal quickly. This is supported by Faerch & Kasper (1983) who states that the use of communication strategies can help to reach a particular communicative goal.

#### *Message Abandonment*

The usage of message abandonment strategy by male students could be found in the following utterance:

(17) They really need to know more about eee... than the others I mean. (GB, MS1)

Based on the context of the discussion in video 14, MS1 at data (17) wanted to state that students who had humanistic interaction with their teacher should know more about the lessons given by the teachers than the other information and issues around them. However, MS1 decided to leave the message unfinished simply because he found out that it was a difficult message to talk about. Finally he simply finished his utterance by saying "than the others". In this case, it was not suggested to the students to employ this strategy because it could leave the interlocutors confused. However, still employing this strategy could help male students to maintain their conversation.

#### *Approximation Strategy*

The usage of approximation strategy by male students could be seen in the following utterance:

(18) Afraid and respect is really different. (GF, MS1)

MS1 employed alternative English structure in his utterance. "Afraid and respect" should use "are" instead of "is" because they were plural. However, MS1 spoke fluently and quickly and finally said, "Afraid and respect is really different" instead of saying "Afraid and respect are really different". Again, this could help male students to speak English fluently and quickly, but to improve their speaking ability in English, they needed to be aware of this case and repaired their mistake in English structures in the next oral communication.

#### *Circumlocution*

From 145 data of communication strategies employed by male students, circumlocution was employed only twice. This strategy was found in the following utterance:

(19) It means that you just okay, let it go, but the company still viable which means that the same case of the employment, it will be happen again in the future. (GA, MS2)

It could be seen at data (19) that MS2 explained what it meant by “viable” in his utterance. By saying “It will be happen again in the future” which should be “It will happen again in the future”, the interlocutor could catch the meaning of “viable” that meant “still could continue to run the company which caused the same case (employing employee underage) could happen again in the future. So, MS2 suggested that the company which employed underage employee should be closed.

Circumlocution was very useful to improve male students’ ability in speaking English. It could train them to be a good presenter or speaker of English because they could give explanation about certain words or topics, so it made the interlocutors understood more. Unfortunately, male students still did not really realize the potential of circumlocution strategy in oral communication.

### *Code Switching*

Male students employed Code Switching strategy ten times. This strategy was found in the following utterances:

(20) We must know the... eee... **batas**. (GA, MS1)

(21) I mean, the teacher, we can take anything. I could not eee... what is it, **cocok** (his friend helped “match”) ya, match, will not match with our needs.. (GC, MS1)

At data (20) from video 2, it could be seen that MS1 easily switched the code from English into Indonesian. The same case occurred at data (21) from video 15, MS1 of Group C directly switched the code from English into Indonesian by saying “cocok”. Male students tended to say what they wanted to say without thinking further on how to say certain words in English. Male students seemed “lazy” to talk “around the bush” just to explain a word in English. In oral communication with interlocutors with the same first language, using Code Switching would help to continue the conversation. However, this strategy was not recommended when having oral communication with native speakers of English and other languages.

### *Appeal for Help*

Appeal for help was one of the most frequently employed communication strategies by male students. This strategy was found in the following utterances:

(22) At that time... I just... I just... what is that (‘menggangu’, whispered to a friend beside him. ‘interrupt’, his friend helped). (GB, MS2, Video 3)

(23) And... (‘akan tetapi’ itu apa? Asking a friend beside him. ‘however’. His friend helped). However there is a negative effect too. (GF, MS1, Video 8)

Although female and male students employed the same strategy and in this case was appeal for help strategy, the way they employed that strategy was different. Female students tended to avoid code switching. Female students tried to do their best to still speaking in English although they asked for help. It was totally different from male students that could be seen obviously at data (22) and (23). In those two data, male students directly asked for help to friends beside him and it was by saying it in the first language. The reasons why male students directly asked for help using the first language was because they wanted to get a quick answer.

### *Literal Translation*

Male students only employed this strategy three times. It was found in the following utterance:

(24) When all our parents still school, yes?(GB, MS1. Video 3)

From data (24), it could be seen that MS1 employed literal translation. He wanted to say, “When all our parents still study at school, right?”. This was because of the influence of the first language. MS1 literally wanted to express, “*Ketika semua orang tua kita masih sekolah, ya?*”. In this utterance, he made the word “school” as a verb as a literal translation of “*sekolah/belajar*”. By employing this strategy, male students could continue the conversation without thinking a lot on what he was going to say next. However, this strategy was not recommended to be employed frequently because Indonesian structure as students’ first language was different from English. For communication with Indonesian in English this strategy could be useful but to communicate with speakers of other languages, employing this strategy could cause misunderstanding.

### *Use of Non-linguistic Signal*

Male students also employed the use of non-linguistic signal strategy. They employed this strategy twice. This strategy was found in the following utterances:

(25) We don’t need to... you know, punch our students. Maybe just like this or like this (while pinching his friend beside him). (GA, MS1. Video 2)

(25) How about enjoyable job like you got in the photocopy? Or you got distributor ee... pomade (while touching his hair to show that pomade is a hair gel).(GF, MS2. Video 8)

Based on the observation, the researcher found out that there were two functions of this strategy for male students. First was to help them when they were lack of vocabulary. Second was to help them to negotiate meaning with their interlocutors. From data (25), it could be seen that MS1 employed use of non-linguistic signal (henceforth; UNS) strategy to compensate with their insufficient vocabulary mastery. He did not know how to say “mencubit” in English, finally he acted it. In data (25), MS2 employed UNS to negotiate meaning with the interlocutors. He touched his hair after saying the word ‘pomade’ to show that it was a hair gel.

### ***Time Gaining Strategy***

The same with female students, time gaining strategy was one of the most frequently employed communication strategies by male students. Male students also needed a little time to think in the time of difficulties such as recalling certain vocabulary that they suddenly forgot or prior knowledge related to the topic being discussed. Male students also employed fillers like “emm”, “you know”, etc. While they were saying “you know” and “emm”, their brain were thinking quickly about what they were going to say next when they communicated in English. Time gaining was considered as a suitable strategy in overcoming students’ problem in speaking English. This strategy was also considered helpful to fill the pauses. By employing this strategy, silence during oral communication could be avoided.

### ***The Use of All Purpose Words***

Male students also employed UAW strategy and just like female students, they also did the over uses of the word “like”. The same recommendation for male students was that: made variation in their utterance. They could use ‘for example’, ‘for instance’, ‘such as’, ‘let’s have a look at’, etc. instead of always using ‘like’ in their utterances.

### **Students’ Perception on the Use of Communication Strategies**

Based on the data of the interview, the researcher found out that both female and male students perceived that communication strategies were useful in oral com-

munication. At least there were five functions of communication strategies perceived by female and male students when they had oral communication with their interlocutors.

### ***Tools to Cope with Difficulties when Communicating in Target Language***

Both female and male students perceived that communication strategies were tools which they could use in dealing with difficulties when they communicated in target language. Related to this explanation, female students said as follow:

“I think CSs here is as a mediator to help the interlocutor with us when speaking. So the people who are here having the conversation will understand each other on what they are talking about”.

In addition, male students said as follow:

“Yes, sure. Because by using communication strategies we can eliminate the obstruction when we speak to others”.

This coincides with Dornyei (1995) who states that communication strategies can be used as tools to cope with communication difficulties when learners communicate in the target language.

### ***To Maintain the Conversation***

Communication strategies were the students first choice when they wanted to maintain their conversation with the interlocutors. Both female and male students agreed that using communication strategies could help them to maintain the conversation. Especially time gaining strategy. They employed this strategy consciously and they found it really helpful because by gaining the time to think, they could recall their knowledge and solved their communication problem.

Related to this explanation, female students said as follows:

“I say yes, but it is not the only one which can help me to maintain the conversation. The topic and the prior knowledge on the topic also will do”.

In addition, male students also said as follows:

“Yes, I think so. For example when I find difficulties during speaking about a topic, I can leave that topic and I also can gain more time to think and it helps me to keep the conversation going on”.

This idea is supported by Nakatani (2006) who says that using communication strategies can help the speakers to maintain their conversation with their interlocutors.

### *To Negotiate Meaning between Speakers and Interlocutors*

When the students had group discussion, it was very important for them to negotiate meaning between them and interlocutors. They needed to make sure their interlocutors got the meaning that they were attempting to deliver. If not, there would be no point of the discussion.

Related to this issue both female and male students agreed that using communication strategies could help them to negotiate meaning when they had group discussion. This could be seen from interview the data below. Female students said:

“Yes, of course as I said before that I think CSs is as a mediator, but when it comes to the application, when it comes to the practice, sometimes that person who are talking are not really conscious when they talk. It comes smoothly without much of thinking”.

Male students said:

“Yes, exactly. Communication strategies are helpful for me to negotiate meaning with my interlocutors because I love reading English novels therefore I have much vocabulary. Then when I speak with my interlocutors, I always deal with that kind of problem”.

This is in line with O’Malley and Chamot (1990) who state that communication strategies can be used to negotiate meaning between speakers and interlocutors.

### *To Enhance the Effectiveness of Communication*

Both female and male students also perceived that communication strategies could help them to enhance the effectiveness of communication. More than that, communication strategies could also help them to improve their speaking ability. For example when they faced difficulties during oral communication, after that they asked for help to their friends, they got the help and they remembered the correction, help, or feedback from their friends then in the future when they wanted to talk about the exactly the same or similar topic, they would not find difficulties anymore.

Related to this, female students said:

“I think, yes, CSs helps me to enhance the effectiveness of communication, since it is one of the ways to make influence of our communication comes better”.

In addition, male students said:

“Yes, I think so. Because sometimes when we don’t know what we want to say and it’s hard for people

to say it, but we have to say it, because it’s very essential due to the reasons of our conversation maybe when we speak with our lecture, or our friends. So, ya, it’s very helpful”.

This is fully supported by Canale (1983) who mentions that communication strategies can help the speakers to enhance the effectiveness of the communication.

### *To Solve Problem in Reaching a Particular Communicative Goal*

To reach a particular communicative goal when having oral communication was an interesting challenge for the students. To reach a particular communicative goal here meant when the students tried to convey something to their interlocutors and they wanted to make their interlocutors agreed with them. To do this, they needed to give explanation so that their interlocutors could understand them. In this case, the students said that using communication strategies was very helpful. This could be seen from the data of the interview below:

Female students said:

“Yes, CSs can help me to solve the problem and reach the particular communicative goal. It helps me to control when to start and end the conversation.”

Still in the same idea with female students, male students said:

“Yes, I believe. I perceive that communication strategies are very helpful for me when I want to reach certain communicative goal because I have ways to explain things and even if I don’t know how to say it in English, I can ask for help or use non-linguistic signals”.

This coincides with Faerch and Kasper (1983) who argue that communication strategies are very fruitful to be used in solving problems and reaching a particular communicative goal.

## **DISCUSSION**

To use communication strategies meant to have creative ideas in mind that could be applied in oral communication. Oral communication is sometimes felt difficult because of not knowing the strategies that could be used to solve the communication problems faced in oral communication itself. Female and male students in the present research tried to employ communication strategies in their oral communication through group discussions.

### Communication Strategies Employed by Female Students

Approximation was the first mostly employed communication strategy by female students. It was employed 37 times (35.2%). They preferred to use the closest words and English structures in speaking English compared to using their L1 while having oral communication. This was simply because they wanted to perform their best speaking performance in group discussion. They were a little bit careless about English structure. The most important thing for them was to speak English fluently. This worked well for female students and this strategy was recommended because if the students thought too much on the grammar, that would be a problem for them in oral communication.

The next communication strategy that was employed by female students was time gaining strategy. This strategy was the second mostly employed communication strategy by female students (26 times/24.8%). This strategy was an opportunity for female students to take a bit more time to think about what they were going to say next. The reasons why female students employed this strategy was because they sometimes forgot how to say certain words in English and prior knowledge about the topic. The use of this strategy was frequent because even native speakers of English will also employ this strategy when they are involved in oral communication. This is supported by Tarone (1980) who argues that even native speakers use communication strategies to agree at certain meaning with the interlocutors.

The third mostly employed communication strategy was message abandonment. It was employed 9 times (8.6%) by female students. It was found out that female students employed this strategy because of two reasons. First, they did not want to look ridiculous because of their insufficient vocabulary and knowledge about the topic being discussed. This strategy became their effort to reduce the use of unfamiliar linguistic features. Using this strategy, female students abandoned the messages they wanted to convey. This behavior could negatively affect the content of the interaction. This is supported by Mariani (1994) who argues that reduction strategy can affect the content of the communication goals. In one side, this strategy did not give benefits to the students for their language learning. Using message abandonment, female students would avoid using the difficult words or sentences because they were afraid of making mistakes. Therefore, they preferred not to use the words, sentences or concepts that they wanted to express. They

continued with other words, sentences, or concepts. Second, female students thought that the messages that they wanted to convey did not have correlation with the topics being discussed in group discussions. Therefore, they decided to leave the messages unfinished. This was a good decision because if female students continued to talk about other messages that had no correlation to the topics being discussed, that would just become a waste of time and energy. For this reason, the use of message abandonment was recommended to female students.

Use of all purpose words was the fourth mostly employed communication strategy by female students. It was employed 8 times (7.6%) by female students. This strategy was employed in the middle of their utterances. The all purpose words that they employed was "like". They employed this word because they felt confident enough to make the interlocutors pay attention on what they tried to say. Mostly when they explained about certain ideas and gave examples, they always said "like... like...". Using all purpose words could help the students to speak English fluently but it might not be over used. That could make the conversation boring. It was better to make variation. They could use other phrases like "for instance" and "for example".

Literal translation was the fifth mostly employed communication strategy by female students. It was employed 7 times (6.7%). For literal translation, female students translated a lexical item, an idiom, or a structure from their L1 to L2. They translated the Indonesian words into English literally. The example of the use of this strategy by female students when one of them said, "class writing" to refer to "writing class". In this case female students got the term by translating Indonesian phrase "kelas menulis" literally to be "class writing". Female students employed literal translation simply because of the influence of their L1.

Circumlocution was the sixth mostly employed communication strategy by female students. It was employed 4 times (6.7%) by female students, while male students only twice. This indicated that female students loved to give explanation and description related to topics, messages, or words in oral communication rather than switching the code in to their L1 when they faced difficulties in oral communication. This is supported by studies done by Politzer (1983) and Benenson et. al (2009) who argue that women use more social strategies than men. Circumlocution was a social strategy since it covered more interaction be-



tween speakers and interlocutors in the use of it in oral communication.

Circumlocution was two ways strategy. It was a very useful strategy to improve students' fluency in speaking English. The first way in circumlocution was; when the speaker had certain words that the interlocutor did not understand, then the speaker could explain and described it in order to reach the communicative goal. The second way was when the speaker did not know how to say certain words in English then he or she could explain and describe it rather than directly ask for help or switch the code into the first language. From the interview, it was found out that female students argued that circumlocution was very helpful in oral communication. By using this communication strategy they could negotiate meaning and reach the communicative goal.

The seventh mostly employed communication strategy by female students was the use of non-linguistic signal such mime, gesture, and facial expression to negotiate meaning in oral communication. This strategy was employed 4 times (3.8%). This strategy involved the use of non-verbal communication to replace the target lexical item. This could help the speakers to achieve communicative goal in oral communication. Female students employed this strategy to help them creating the words or concepts clear to the interlocutors. In the present study, female students employed this strategy 4 times (3.8%). For example when FS2 from Group C said, "*I can't just stay like this (while putting her two hands below her chin to express "sit tightly") you know what I mean, right?*". FS2 put her two hands below her chin to express "*sit tightly*" as the application of the use of non-linguistic signal strategy in oral communication. Female students also used mime and gestures. They used mime and hand moving while they had oral communication in order to make their communication alive, not rigid and to negotiate meaning well with the interlocutors.

The eighth communication strategy employed by female students was code switching. It was employed 4 times (3.8%) by female students. They rarely employed this strategy because they loved to explain and give clue to the interlocutors rather than directly switched the language from L2 to L1. For example when FS1 from Group F said, "*Something like you should keep your **prinsip***". She said "*prinsip*" to refer to "*principle*". Female students employed code switching simply because of the influence of their L1. The uses of this strategy were not quite frequent. It

showed that the influence of the native language was very little on female students.

The ninth communication strategy employed by female students was topic avoidance. It was employed 3 times (2.9%) by female students. Similar to message abandonment strategy, it was found out that female students employed topic avoidance strategy because of two reasons. First, they did not want to look ridiculous because of their insufficient vocabulary and knowledge about the topic being discussed. This strategy became their effort to reduce the use of unfamiliar linguistic features. Using this strategy, female students avoided the topics they wanted to talk about. This behavior could negatively affect the content of the interaction. Using topic avoidance, female students would avoid using the difficult words or sentences because they were afraid of making mistakes. Therefore, they preferred not to use the words, sentences or concepts that they wanted to express. They continued with other words, sentences, or concepts. Second, female students thought that the topics that they wanted to talk about did not have correlation with the topic being discussed in group discussions. Therefore, they decided to avoid that topic. This was a good decision because if female students continued to talk about other topics that had no correlation to the topic being discussed, that would just become a waste of time and energy. For this reason, the use of topic avoidance was recommended to female students.

Appeal for help strategy was the tenth strategy employed by female students. It was employed 3 times (2.9%). In the observation, it was found out that female students did not always asked for help to their interlocutors while speaking in L2. Female students preferred to give an explanation first then ask for help. Ask for help was the last choice for female students when they delivered their ideas. However, appeal for help was recommended for female students if in case they forgot how to say certain words in English because this strategy could help them to recall their memory or to add their knowledge and vocabulary mastery.

Both Female and male students did not employ word coinage and foreignizing. This is supported by Karami et.al (2011) who states that word coinage and foreignizing are employed only by students with low English proficiency level. Whereas female and students as subjects in this research were at high English proficiency level which was indicated by their success in passing speaking I course at the previous semester.

### Communication Strategies Employed by Male Students

Not different from female students, male students also employed Approximation Strategy. Approximation strategy was the first mostly employed strategy by male students. Tarone (1990) mentions that approximation is the use of single target language vocabulary or structure which the learner knows is not correct, however can representatively share the intended meaning to interlocutors. In this research, this strategy was employed 47 times (32.4%). It was found out that this strategy could help male students to surmount the problems in communication because this strategy gave them chance to use their prior knowledge in oral communication. This is supported by the finding of the research conducted by Damaiyanti (2012) which says that the students used approximation strategy because they just wanted to speak quickly as long as communicative goals achieved. However, to sharpen male students' skill in speaking English, they needed to be aware of the problems that they encountered in oral communication. Once they were aware then employed approximation strategy, afterwards they should check their mistakes and learn them. From there, they would be able to significantly improve their speaking skill.

Time gaining strategy was the second mostly employed communication strategy by male students (44 times/30.3%). The students took more time to think when they faced language difficulties. This coincided with the research conducted by Ikawati (2011) which found out that the learners tend to take time to think when they faced difficulties in oral communication. While thinking about what to say next, male students used fillers like "emm...", "well", "eee...", and "you know". They used the fillers to fill the gap in pauses during the thinking time. Thus based on the present research, time gaining strategy was considered as a suitable and helpful strategy for male students when they faced language difficulties in speaking rather than just stopped then remain silent. It was considered as fine to take time to think about what to say next while having oral communication. Based on the observation on the students' performance during the group discussion, this strategy was found out very helpful for the students to overcome their hesitation, nervousness and forgetfulness during oral communication with the interlocutors.

For male students, use of all purpose words was the third mostly employed communication strategy. It was employed 19 times (13.1%) by male students.

This strategy was also employed in the middle of their utterances. The all purpose words that they employed was also "like". Mostly when they explained about certain ideas and gave examples, they always said "like.... like....". They employed this word because they were lack of other terms which had similar meaning to the word "like". Using all purpose words could help the students to speak English fluently but it may not be over used. That could make the conversation boring. It was better to make variation. They could use other phrases like "for instance" and "for example".

Code switching was the fourth mostly employed communication strategy by male students (10 times/6.9%) which meant higher than female students (only 4 times/3.8%). The example was when MS1 from Group A said the word "jarak" to refer to "distance". The use of this strategy was because male students were lack of vocabulary, showing lack of interest, or they wanted to negotiate meaning with the interlocutors quickly. Therefore, they switched the English words or sentences into Indonesian. This fact is supported by Fishman (1983) who argues that men uses short responses to show lack of interest while women would utilize more responses to demonstrate her participation and interest in the interaction.

Message abandonment was the fifth mostly employed communication strategies by male students (9 times/6.2%). Male students also had two reasons on why they employed this strategy. First was because of their insufficient vocabulary mastery or ideas about the topic (Huang, 2010; Mei & Nathalang, 2010; Ikawati, 2011; Nugroho, 2011; Rozal, 2013; Syarifudin, 2015) and the second was to keep the effectiveness of the communication. For instance when male students wanted to talk about certain message, but then they considered and realized that the message was not really necessary to tell to interlocutors or irrelevant to the topic of the group discussion, they simply left the message unfinished and moved to another message. In this case, message abandonment was very useful because in group discussion, it was very important to stick on the topic of the discussion in order to keep the discussion going on the right track. If not, the discussion would take a very long time to finish. Message abandonment was very important in this case because when the speakers considered and realized that certain messages were not important to say, not strong argument, or could possibly interrupt the discussion, and could hurt the feelings of other members of the group discussion, then message abandonment was the best choice. Therefore, it could be said that mes-

sage abandonment done by male students was not merely because of insufficient knowledge about certain topics of group discussion and insufficient linguistic knowledge but also because of the students choices to do so.

The next communication strategy employed by male students was appeal for help. This strategy was the sixth communication strategy employed by male students (5 times/3.4%). Male students employed this strategy because they were lack of vocabulary mastery or they forgot some English terms or words because of nervousness, low self confidence, and anxiety. They asked for help to their friends in the group discussion. Tarone (1990) states that appeal for help strategy takes place when the learner has tried to consult with any sources for the correctness of the words or phrases then they cannot find them and finally they ask for help to others. In this research, male students asked for help to their friends in group discussion by saying, “*what is it?*”, “*what do you call it?*” or sometimes they say “*Apa namanya? Aku lupa*”. In the observation, the students also asked for help to their friends by whispering. This strategy was employed 5 times (3.4%) by male students. They thought it would be a good idea to ask for help to others rather than just keep silent and finally got nothing to say next during oral communication. This strategy was recommended to do because instead of being silent and say nothing, it was better to ask for help to interlocutors or friends to maintain the communication.

Topic Avoidance was the seventh communication strategies employed by male students (4 times/2.8%). Similar to message abandonment, there were two reasons why male students employed this strategy. First was because of their insufficient vocabulary mastery or ideas about the topic (Huang, 2010; Mei & Nathalang, 2010; Ikawati, 2011; Nugroho, 2011; Rozal, 2013; Syarifudin, 2015) and the second was to keep the effectiveness of the communication. In the present research, the researcher found out that sometimes male students went far talking about another topic out of the main topic being discussed. In this situation, they finally chose to avoid that topic and stucked to the main topic being discussed in the group discussion. For example when they talked about corporal punishment, accidentally they talked about LGBT. But then they avoided talking about LGBT and stucked to talking about corporal punishment that became the main topic of the discussion.

In this case, topic avoidance was very useful because in group discussion, it was very important to

stick on the topic of the discussion in order to keep the discussion going on the right track. If not, the discussion would take a very long time to finish. Therefore, it could be said that topic avoidance done by male students was not merely because of insufficient knowledge about certain topics of group discussion and insufficient linguistic knowledge but also because of their choices to do so.

Literal translation was the next strategy. It was the eight communication strategy employed by male students (3 times/2.1%). Same with female students, male students employed this strategy because of the influence of their first language. For literal translation, the students translated a lexical item or an idiom from their L1 to L2. Male students translated the Indonesian words into English words literally. It is in line with Tarone (1990) who argues that literal translation takes place when the learners translate an L1 words or phrases literally into L2. In this research, the example of the use of this strategy could be found in the utterance by MS1 from Group B when he said “*That’s really over for a child*” instead of saying “*That’s too much for a child*”. In this case the students got the term by translating Indonesian phrase “*terlalu berlebihan*” to the word “*over*”.

Circumlocution was the ninth communication strategy employed by male students. It was employed twice (1.4%) by male students, while female students was 4 times. This indicated that male students did not love to give explanation and description related to topics, messages, or words in oral communication. Male students tended to directly switch the code from L2 to L1. This was proven on the use of code switching, male students did it 10 times, while female students only 4 times. Circumlocution was two ways strategy. It was a very useful strategy to improve students’ fluency in speaking English. The first way in circumlocution was; when the speaker had certain words that the interlocutor did not understand, then the speaker could explain and describe it in order to reach the communicative goal. The second way was when the speaker did not know how to say certain words in English then he or she could explain and describe it rather than directly asked for help or switched the code into the first language. Unfortunately, male students still did not realize the benefits of circumlocution strategy and finally they did not employ this strategy quite frequently.

Use of Non-linguistic Signals such as mime, gesture, and facial expression was the last communication strategy employed by male students (Twice/1.4%).

This strategy helped them to convey the communicative goals to interlocutors. For example when MS2 from Group F said *“Or you got distributor eee... pomade (while touching his hair to show that pomade was a hair gel)”*. Most students used mimes while speaking because it was almost impossible to talk without any facial expression.

### **Students' Perception on the Use of Communication Strategies**

Based on the data of the interview, the researcher found out that both female and male students perceived that communication strategies were useful in oral communication. At least there were five functions of communication strategies perceived by female and male students when they had oral communication with their interlocutors. First was as tools to cope with difficulties when communicating in target language. This coincides with Dornyei (1995) who states that communication strategies could be used as tools to cope with communication difficulties when learners communicate in the target language.

Second was to maintain the conversation. Communication strategies were the students first choice when they wanted to maintain their conversation with the interlocutors. Both female and male students agreed that using communication strategies could help them to maintain the conversation. Especially time gaining strategy. They employed this strategy consciously and they found it really helpful because by gaining the time to think, they could recall their knowledge and solve their communication problem. This idea is supported by Nakatani (2006) who says that using communication strategies can help the speakers to maintain their conversation with their interlocutors.

Third was to negotiate meaning between speakers and interlocutors. When the students had group discussion, it was very important for them to negotiate meaning between them and interlocutors. They needed to make sure their interlocutors got the meaning that they attempted to deliver. If not, there would be no point of the discussion. This is in line with O'Malley and Chamot (1990) who states that communication strategies can be used to negotiate meaning between the speakers and the interlocutors.

Forth was to enhance the effectiveness of communication. Both female and male students also perceived that communication strategies could help them to enhance the effectiveness of communication. More than that, communication strategies could also help

them to improve their speaking ability. For example when they faced difficulties during oral communication, after that they asked for help to their friends, they got the help and they remembered the correction, help, or feedback from their friends then in the future when they want to talk about the exactly the same or similar topic, they will not find difficulties anymore. This is fully supported by Canale (1983) who mentions that communication strategies can help the speakers to enhance the effectiveness of the communication.

Fifth was to solve problem in reaching a particular communicative goal. To reach a particular communicative goal when having oral communication was an interesting challenge for the students. To reach a particular communicative goal here meant when the students tried to convey something to their interlocutors and they wanted to make their interlocutors agree with them. To do this, they needed to give explanation so that their interlocutors could understand them. In this case, the students said that using communication strategies was very helpful. This coincides with Faerch and Kasper (1983) who argue that communication strategies are very fruitful to be used in solving problems to reach a particular communicative goal.

### **The Implementation of Communication Strategies in Teaching Speaking**

Teaching communication strategies to language learners was extremely important. Teaching these strategies to the students would help them to communicate more effectively and successfully. Furthermore, the students needed to be encouraged to employ communication strategies in oral communication to assist them to speak English fluently. By employing communication strategies, the students also did not need to be afraid of making mistakes or facing language difficulties because they had communication strategies that they could use to surmount the communication problems.

In this research, it was found out that female and male students employed the same communication strategies but with different frequency for every single strategy. To know this fact was very important to help them learn English. Female and male students employed approximation as the first mostly employed communication strategy in their oral communication. From the definition of approximation strategy by Dornyei (1995), it could be concluded that both female and male students were still lack of English structure, vocabulary, and prior knowledge about the topic of the

discussion. Therefore, they needed to realize this and from that, they needed to improve their knowledge on English structure, vocabulary mastery, and prior knowledge on the topic of the discussion later.

Female students employed more circumlocution than male students did (female 4 times/3.8%; male twice/1.4%). From the definition of circumlocution, it could be concluded that circumlocution was the best strategy to enhance students speaking skill in English. Female students realized this but still not quite frequent. However, this was a good starting point. Unfortunately, the same thing did not happen to male students. Male students did poorly on circumlocution strategy. They still did not realize that circumlocution was the best strategy that they could employ in order to improve their speaking skill in English. Male students preferred to employ more code switching than female students did (male 10 times/6.9%; female 4 times/3.8%). From this fact, it can be suggested to male students to decrease the use of code switching in their oral communication. Then, they need to notice the vocabulary that they do not know. Afterwards, follow up that by finding the vocabulary in the dictionary. This is the importance of knowing what communication strategies employed by female and male students differently.

The factors which influenced female and male students to employ communication strategies were because of lack of vocabulary mastery, English structure, prior knowledge about the topic of the discussion, nervousness, the influence of students' L1, students' choices, and the situation in the group discussion.

Furthermore, not all communication strategies should be taught to the students. Only those which will support the progress of students language acquisition are recommended to be taught to the students and used by the students such as approximation, circumlocution, time gaining strategy, the use of non-linguistic signal, and appeal for help. Foreignizing, word coinage, and use of all purpose words are not recommended to be employed by the students because those strategies could not assist the students to improve their language ability.

Topic avoidance, message abandonment, and code switching on the other hand depends on the intention of the students. For instance, if students' intention is because they think that the topic or message that they want to tell to the interlocutors is not important, than topic avoidance and message abandonment are recommended to be employed. Moreover if the topic is out of the topic of the discussion or the message can interrupt the discussion, then the students are recommended to avoid or leave that topic and message.

For code switching is also depends on the context. For instance when the learners are talking to Indonesian whose L1 is Indonesian, then code switching is recommended as the last choice in order to be able to negotiate meaning successfully. However, when they talk to native speakers of English or other languages, then code switching will not help at all.

The findings of the research had shown that communication strategies were very important for the students to help them solve the problems which they found in oral communication. This is supported by Nakatani (2006) who argues that students' communication practice is not enough to develop their speaking ability. They need to use communication strategies. The teaching of communication strategies will also develop students' spontaneous improvisation skills and language creativity. The findings of this research were in line with the previous research which were done by Rozal (2013), Himawan (2011), and Syarifudin (2015) who state that communication strategies are helpful for the students in oral communication. The difference is that the findings about topic avoidance and message abandonment. At the previous research, they did not recommend those two strategies to the learners. On the other hand, this present research recommends topic avoidance and message abandonment but term and condition are required. For example when the learners think and perceive that the topic and the message that they are going to deliver are not suitable with the topic of the group discussion or can create chaos during the group the discussion then they are recommended to avoid the topic and abandon the message. Therefore, it is very necessary for the students to be taught communication strategies and trained on how to employ communication strategies in oral communication.

## CONCLUSION

Communication strategy is one of the important elements in English language teaching and learning. Its usage could help the learners to surmount the problems that they faced during oral communication using the target language. This research found out the communication strategies employed by female and male students in their speaking class, aptly speaking for formal interaction class. This research also found out students perception on using communication strategies in which the students perceived that communication strategies could help them in negotiating meaning with the interlocutors in their communication.

Based on the result of the observation and the calculation of the data obtained from the observation sheet using the communication taxonomy by Dornyei (1995), this research found out that female students employed approximation 37 times (35.2%), time gaining 26 times (24.8%), message abandonment 9 times (8.6%), use of all-purpose words 8 times (7.6%), literal translation 7 times (6.7%), circumlocution 4 times (3.8%), use of non-linguistic signal 4 times (3.8%), code switching 4 times (3.8%), topic avoidance 3 times (2.9%), and appeal for help 3 times (2.9%). The factors behind the choice of communication strategies employed by the female students were because female students loved to talk. They loved to explain things to their interlocutors until their interlocutors understood and got what they were trying to tell to the interlocutors.

This research also found out communication strategies employed by male students. Male students employed approximation 47 times (32.4%), time gaining 44 times (30.3%), use of all-purpose words 19 times (13.1%), code switching 10 times (6.9%), message abandonment 9 times (6.2%), appeal for help 5 times (3.4%), topic avoidance 4 times (2.8%), literal translation 3 times (2.1%), circumlocution twice (1.4%), use of non-linguistic signal twice (1.4%). Male students did not like to explain something to their interlocutors until their interlocutors understood what they meant. When their interlocutors did not understand what they said, they directly chose code switching in order to make their interlocutors understood. The same thing happened when they found difficulties, they also did not want to take effort to try to describe something like the female students did. Male students directly chose to ask for help to other classmates. The interesting fact was that both female and male students did not employ foreignizing and word coinage because they had sufficient knowledge on English structure.

Related to students perception on the use of communication strategies, both female and male students perceived that communication strategies were very helpful in their oral communication. By employing communication strategies, they could negotiate meaning better with their interlocutors. The students also perceived that by using communication strategies, they did not easily get blank during the communication. When they faced difficulties in oral communication, they had choices whether to explain the difficulties to their interlocutors or to ask for help or using code switching. Communication strategies became ideas for the students in their communication. They did not get stuck just like that in the middle of their communi-

tion with others because they knew and could use communication strategies to maintain the conversation.

Related to the result of the present research on the communication strategies employed by ELT students across genders at State University of Malang, the researchers would like to give suggestions to English learners, English lecturers, and researchers in the future.

First to English learners, communication strategies were very helpful for the students who were learning English as a second or foreign language because when the students faced difficulties in their oral communications with their interlocutors, they had tools to deal with those difficulties. Therefore, it is highly suggested to the students to learn and use communication strategies in their oral communication.

Second to English lecturers who take very important roles in equipping the students with types of communication strategies and then helping them to practice using the communication strategies in their oral communication. Hopefully, by knowing, understanding, and using types of communication their speaking ability too, for instance when they face communication problems then they appeal for help, after that their friends help them, strategies, the students can make their communication run well. Moreover, the communication strategies will help them to enhance and automatically improve their vocabulary mastery and in the end will help them to communicate better in the future. Therefore, the researcher would like to recommend the teaching of communication strategies to the students in the speaking class.

Third, to the researchers in the future who are interested in conducting a research on communication strategies. The present researchers found some obstacles especially in recording the data of the research. The present researcher was lack of camera battery. Therefore to the future researcher, it is better to have two or three camera batteries. Then if it is possible, try to get the voice clear in order to obtain students' utterances as the main data of the research. In addition, the researcher also would like to give recommendations for the future researchers to conduct research about communication strategies with different subject for example to find out communication strategies that possibly employed by the students when they interact with native speaker of English. This is a condition where the students cannot use code switching because if they do code switching, the communication will be stopped, unless the native speakers of English can understand Indonesian.

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