



Communication Strategies for Level 1 Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers: Case Study of the Indonesian Embassy in Vientiane, Laos

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ABSTRACT

One type of Indonesian language learning program is Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA). As the name suggests, this Indonesian language learning program is specifically for foreigners. The objectives of BIPA learning include not only linguistic aspects but also an introduction to Indonesian culture. The purpose of this study is to describe the communication strategies used by BIPA Level 1 learners at the Indonesian Embassy (KBRI) in Vientiane, Laos. This study employs a descriptive qualitative method, utilising a case study to present findings related to the research objectives. This study took place from April to November 2021. Data on communication strategies include the verbal and nonverbal behaviour of BIPA Level 1 learners at the Indonesian Embassy in Vientiane, Laos. The research data consist of the communication strategies employed by BIPA Level 1 learners at the Indonesian Embassy in Vientiane, Laos. The data sources were BIPA learners and teachers at the Indonesian Embassy in Vientiane, Laos. The research data were collected using a non-test instrument, namely an interview guide. The interview guide was structured objectively and systematically to ensure content validity. Data collection used the Zoom application. Data on the communication strategies of BIPA Level 1 learners at the Indonesian Embassy in Vientiane, Laos, were analysed using a qualitative approach. The results of this study indicate that the communication strategies employed by BIPA Level 1 learners include translation, paraphrasing, and reduction strategies.

Keywords: communication strategies, level 1, Indonesian language, for foreign speakers

Strategi Komunikasi Pemelajar Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing Level 1: Studi Kasus KBRI Vientiane, Laos

ABSTRAK

Satu di antara jenis pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia adalah Bahasa Indonesia untuk Penutur Asing (BIPA). Sesuai dengan namanya, program pembelajaran bahasa Indonesia ini dikhususkan untuk warga asing. Tujuan pembelajaran BIPA bukan saja berisi aspek linguistik melainkan juga kepada pengenalan budaya Indonesia. Tujuan penelitian ini untuk mendeskripsikan strategi komunikasi yang digunakan oleh pemelajar BIPA Level 1 di Kedutaan Besar Republik Indonesia (KBRI) Vientiane, Laos. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif menggunakan studi kasus dengan mendeskripsikan temuan-temuan yang berkaitan dengan tujuan penelitian. Penelitian ini berlangsung pada April-November 2021. Data strategi komunikasi meliputi perilaku verbal dan nonverbal pemelajar BIPA level 1 di KBRI Vientiane, Laos. Data penelitian ini adalah strategi komunikasi pemelajar BIPA level 1 KBRI Vientiane, Laos. Sumber data adalah para pemelajar dan guru BIPA KBRI Vientiane, Laos. Data penelitian dikumpulkan menggunakan instrumen nontes yakni pedoman wawancara. Pedoman wawancara disusun secara objektif dan sistematis sehingga memenuhi syarat validitas isi. Pengumpulan data menggunakan aplikasi zoom. Data strategi komunikasi pemelajar BIPA level 1 di KBRI Vientiane, Laos dianalisis menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif. Hasil penelitian ini memperlihatkan strategi komunikasi yang digunakan oleh pemelajar BIPA level 1 dalam berkomunikasi adalah strategi terjemah, strategi parafrasa, dan strategi reduksi.

Kata Kunci: strategi komunikasi, pemelajar, bahasa Indonesia, penutur asing, level 1

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INTRODUCTION

Currently, teaching BIPA (Indonesian Language Acquisition) has become one of the programs of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia to promote Indonesian as an international language. Various programs are implemented to spread Indonesian throughout the country. One such program is sending BIPA teachers to target countries.

The ASEAN region is an equally important platform for spreading Indonesian. Although various media outlets have announced that Indonesian has been designated as the language of instruction in the ASEAN region, not many Laotians are aware of this. It remains our collective responsibility to ensure this information is disseminated and awareness of learning Indonesian is strengthened.

Indonesian language courses for foreign speakers (BIPA) in Laos have been running since 2010. At that time, BIPA teachers were local Indonesian Embassy staff who were also fluent in Laotian. However, since 2016, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia has begun to accommodate BIPA teachers. Since then, Indonesian language learning at the Indonesian Embassy in Vientiane has become more structured. Student levels and abilities have become more focused. Likewise, the activities created by the teachers ensure that BIPA classes are not limited to the Indonesian language but also introduce Indonesian culture. "Although BIPA classes this year are being held amidst the pandemic, learning activities are still being maximized. This year, face-to-face sessions were held for approximately two months. This was when communication and personal relationships between teachers and students began to develop, and this has continued, even though communication has been limited to online communication.

During this period, cultural classes were held regularly every Friday afternoon. During the Vientiane period, students would typically attend

the Indonesian Embassy for classes. However, with the tightened regional quarantine, learning activities had to be conducted online. The same applies to cultural courses. Typically, teachers teach music, dance, singing, and literature in class. Students from all levels are combined for cultural classes, bringing together students from grades one through three. However, due to restrictions on activities, all activities are being conducted online.

Through these Indonesian cultural activities, teachers and students interact more frequently. Teachers will speak more regularly in spoken Indonesian, and learners will also become more familiar with and understand spoken Indonesian. Through such communication, students will have more opportunities to express their ideas, despite existing limitations. These limitations are commonplace for L2 learners. Therefore, students typically employ specific methods to ensure smooth communication with their teachers or peers in Indonesian.

Second language learners often employ communication strategies to convey their intended message. Tarone, Cohen, and Dumas explain that communication strategies are systematic efforts made by learners when sending and receiving messages in the target language when they have not yet mastered the corresponding target language (1983). From this statement, it can be understood that communication strategies are conscious efforts made by learners who have not yet mastered the target language to ensure smooth communication. Although these efforts involve various forms of deviation, they are a way to maintain communication.

Anwar (1984) states that strategy is essentially the totality of conditional decisions about what will be done to achieve a goal. From this statement, strategy is a person's desire to achieve something by making plans for a specific condition or situation.

Tarone (1983) expands the definition of communication strategy as an attempt by two speakers to agree on meaning in a situation where the required meaning structure is not shared. This



statement emphasizes that the communication strategy employed by a speaker toward their interlocutor is not solely the work of one party, but rather involves both parties working cooperatively to achieve the communication goal.

Other or avoid topics that he does not master. Tarone's definition shows that there are several strategies used by second language learners when they want to achieve their communication goals.

Extensive research has been conducted on communication strategies among Indonesian Language Learning (BIPA) learners and has become an essential focus in second language learning. Purwiyanti et al. (2017) found that Indonesian Language Learning (BIPA) learners from the Philippines employ a variety of verbal and nonverbal communication strategies, including borrowing, self-correction, dictionary use, and demonstration, with borrowing from English being the most frequently used strategy. This finding is supported by Paduai's (2020) study of Indonesian Language Learning (BIPA) learners at Maejo University, Thailand, which showed that commonly used strategies included borrowing, repetition, paraphrasing, word omission, and the use of specific expressions to maintain fluency.

Furthermore, Oktaviani et al. (2020) identified 12 different communication strategies among Indonesian Language Learning (BIPA) learners from Turkmenistan and Rwanda at Sebelas Maret University. Another study by Suyitno et al. (2017) emphasized the use of cognitive strategies by learners to understand the target language, such as guessing word meanings and thinking aloud. These findings suggest that BIPA learners from various countries employ specific communication strategies to overcome language limitations. The results of this study are relevant to the current research, which focuses on the communication strategies of level 1 BIPA learners at the Indonesian Embassy in Vientiane, Laos.

The theory that will be used is Tarone's theory, namely a translation strategy that is divided into four techniques (translation technique, switching to B1, asking for help, and using gestures); a

paraphrasing strategy that is divided into three parts (approximation technique, word creation, and verbosity); and a reduction strategy that is divided into two parts (avoidance technique and message ignoring).

METHOD

This research took place from April to November 2021. This time was used for three activities: preparation, implementation, and reporting. Preparation activities included developing research instruments, determining the research subjects, and scheduling. Implementation activities included collecting research data. Reporting activities included data processing and writing a report in the form of a scientific article.

The data for this research were recorded conversations (via Zoom) with BIPA level 1 learners, classes A and B, at the Indonesian Embassy in Vientiane, Laos, on November 27, 2021. There were seven learners in BIPA 1 A and B classes: Vadsana, Apisith, Sengchane, Nouthar, Valisa, Sounthavi, and Mina.

The research employed a case study method, which is a component of the descriptive research approach. This research will describe real-life phenomena (Sukmadinata, 2007)

Technically, the first step is for the instructor to invite an Indonesian guest to a class meeting and then ask the students to introduce themselves and engage in conversation with the guest. Second, the recordings are transcribed. Finally, the transcripts are analyzed using a prepared analysis table. The analysis reveals the strategies that students frequently use to ensure successful communication. These findings will be explained in the discussion section.

RESULTS

1. Translation Strategy

Of the 66 utterances using translation strategies, 11 were classified as "translation," 47 were classified as "switching to L1," 8 were classified as "requesting help," and 0 were classified as "gesture."



The first technique in the translation strategy is "translation." Translation is a technique used by learners to translate directly from their first language. In this technique, learners translate the first language word by word. In these 11 utterances, learners generally attempted to use very concise language to ensure successful communication, for example, "Eee... hmmm... hmmm... ee... An-are you... ee... an employee or... ee... a student... now?" The words chosen by the learners were basic words constructed using language structures they knew.

The second translation technique is 'switching to L1'. Switching to L1 is a technique used by learners to maintain their first language when conveying a message. One of the utterances included in the L1 switching strategy in the conversation is "Oh... like a... #@\$%^&)(&^%\$ (Laotian)." In this utterance, the learner confirms to the teacher that what he or she said is correct. The learner returns to using their first language (Laotian) to continue the communication. Many utterances also use English in the hope that the teacher will understand or help them translate into Indonesian.

The third translation technique is "requesting help." A request for help is a technique used by asking someone who is considered familiar with something, such as asking a friend about the meaning of a word. In the research conversation, there were eight utterances included in this request for help. One of these utterances is "Huh? Office #@\$%^&)(&^%\$ (Laotian)." Based on the intonation and responses of the other learner, the learner is asking for help from their friend (using Laotian) to translate their interlocutor's utterance.

The fourth translation technique is "using gestures." This technique is used to ensure the interlocutor understands the meaning. This technique is intended, such as clapping when the learner doesn't know the Indonesian word for "tepuk tangan." In the research conversation, this technique was not used or seen because the learners' body language was limited in online learning. Learners tended to use other techniques to ensure successful communication.

2. Paraphrasing Strategy

In the research conversation, 19 utterances employed the paraphrasing strategy: 17 utilized the estimation technique, one employed the word creation technique, and one used the word-for-word technique.

3. Reduction Strategy

Data analysis revealed 10 utterances that included reduction strategies. Of these ten utterances, six were categorized as "avoidance" and four were "message-ignoring."

DISCUSSION

Estimation is a technique used by learners using vocabulary and target language structures according to their abilities. In this technique, the learner knows what they are saying is incorrect, but they still use it to ensure their interlocutor understands, such as in the utterance "Mau teman saya?", when in fact, what they mean is "Do you want to accompany me?". In this utterance, the learner estimates the appropriate sentence structure so that their interlocutor understands.

The Word creation is the vocabulary or word structure of the target language created by the learner themselves. In this research, one utterance is included in the word creation process. "Um... Games. Playing games." In this utterance, there is the word 'play' instead of 'play'.

The 'rambling' technique is used by learners when describing something but diverting it with something else to achieve successful communication. In the research conversation, there were no utterances that fell under the rambling technique.

The "avoidance" technique is a technique used by students to avoid speaking due to a lack of understanding of the topic being discussed. The teacher spontaneously gave students ten opportunities to ask questions or answer questions from the guest, but the students refused. This clearly demonstrated some students' lack of activity in communication.



The "message-ignoring" technique occurs when a student begins a conversation on a topic and then stops mid-sentence due to a lack of familiarity with the vocabulary or language structure. This can be seen in this utterance: "My full name is Sounthavy Chattavong. My nickname is Vi. I am an employee of the Lao Veterans Association. I am twenty-nine years old. That's it." The student introduced himself very briefly. In fact, students have learned a great deal and can effectively convey this knowledge to their guests.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion above, it can be concluded that of the 218 utterances, 94 use communication strategies employed by BIPA 1 class A and B students at the Indonesian Embassy in Vientiane, Laos. This communication is facilitated by students, who are introduced to guests by teachers in online classes. Of the 94 utterances used in communication strategies, 66 were used in the transfer strategy, 18 were used in the paraphrase strategy, and 10 were used in the reduction strategy.

Within the 66 utterances that use the translation strategy, 11 utterances are included in the 'translation' technique, 47 utterances are included in the 'switching to B1' technique, eight utterances are included in the 'ask for help' technique, and zero utterances are included in the technique of using 'gestures'. Of the 19 utterances that used the paraphrasing strategy, 17 used the "approximation" technique, one used word-creation, and 0 used rambling. Of the 10 utterances that used the reduction strategy, 6 used the "avoidance" technique, and 4 used the "message-ignoring" technique.

To ensure smooth communication between BIPA 1 learners in classes A and B, the researcher offers several suggestions for future teachers assigned to the Indonesian Embassy in Vientiane and future researchers: first, because the Embassy expects speaking to be a priority, the portion of speaking skills material in class should be

increased; second, teachers are expected to continue using Indonesian when talking with students both inside and outside the classroom; third, teachers can introduce other teaching materials (such as those currently available at Bakti BIPA); and fourth, further research is needed on the communication strategies of BIPA learners to evaluate and improve their ability to use Indonesian in communication.

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