

Communicative Techniques Used by EFL Learners to Accomplish Strategic Proficiency

by

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Abstract

Effective communication is of paramount importance in all aspects of life. To achieve this, verbal and nonverbal techniques may be utilized. These techniques are called Communication Strategies (CSs). The primary objective of this study was to investigate the verbal and nonverbal communication strategies used by EFL (English Foreign Language) learners in the classroom to enhance their communication ability and to achieve strategic proficiency in their communication. It also explored which strategies are more effective or successful for accomplishing strategic proficiency in communication and for compensating the limited knowledge. Data came from two sources: questionnaires which were accomplished by the 20 student participants and 2 teacher participants and an observation administered by the researcher. The results showed that the most common communication strategies used are *repetition and paraphrasing*, while the less used strategies are *literal translation and nonverbal strategies*. The findings also confirmed that *paraphrasing, repetition and replacing words* are more effective than *literal translation and nonverbal strategies*. In addition, the correlation analysis revealed that the greater experience students have in learning English, the more strategies they use and the Pearson correlation approved that *paraphrasing* clearly correlated with years of learning English, $r = .44$, $p = .05$. Therefore, the communicative technique *paraphrasing* is used by the students who have greater experience in learning English confirming that using it is dependent on the years or the experience of learning the language.

ملخص

ممارسة اللغة بطلاقة أو بجدارة له أهمية كبيرة في جميع جوانب الحياة. ولكي تتحقق هذه الغاية، يمكن استخدام الوسائل اللفظية وغير اللفظية. تسمى هذه التقنيات أو الطرق بوسائل ممارسة اللغة. الهدف الأساسي من هذه الدراسة هو التحقق من هذه الوسائل اللفظية وغير اللفظية التي يستخدمها طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في قاعات الدراسة لتعزيز قدراتهم في استعمال اللغة الانجليزية ورفع من مستوى مهارتهم اللغوية عند ممارستهم لها. كما استكشفت الطرق الأكثر فعالية لتحسين مهاراتهم وأدائهم في ممارسة اللغة الانجليزية وتعويض ما فقده من مهارات ومعلومات. استنتجت بيانات هذه الدراسة من مصدرين هما الاستبيان والملاحظة حيث أعطى الباحث استبياناً لعشرين طالب مشارك واثنان من المدرسين. كما استخدم الباحث ما يسمى بالملاحظة أيضاً ليتحصل على معلومات كافية ودقيقة. أظهرت النتائج أن طرق ممارسه اللغة الأكثر شيوعاً هي التكرار وإعادة الصياغة، في حين أن الوسائل الأقل استخداماً هي الترجمة الحرفية والوسائل غير اللفظية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، أظهر تحاليل الارتباطات أن الطلاب الذين لديهم خبرة أكبر في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية، يستخدمون وسائل التكرار وإعادة الصياغة أكثر وأفضل. لذلك يمكن القول بأن يتم استخدام ما يسمى بإعادة الصياغة والتكرار واستبدال الكلمات عند ممارسه اللغة من قبل الطلاب الذين لديهم خبرة أكبر في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية، مما يؤكد أن استخدام وسائل اللغة عند ممارستها يعتمد على سنوات الخبرة و التجربة حين استعمال اللغة وممارستها.

Keywords: communicative techniques, EFL learners, strategic proficiency.

This paper examines how EFL “English Foreign Language” students can cope in an authentic communicative situation and be able to accomplish strategic proficiency in communication.

Strategic proficiency is when students use communicative techniques to maintain and develop their communication ability and also to repair distraction and interruption communication, or avoid unclear communication (Canale & Swain, 1980). Carrier (2003) defined strategic

competence as the individual's ability to apply 'communication strategies', for example, paraphrasing, miming (using movements of hands, face, and body to communicate emotions and actions without speech) and using literal translation in order to convey their message as clearly as possible in communication.

To master strategic competence in communication, students need to pay more attention to some communication strategies. The significance of the role of the strategic competence for EFL students to improve their English communication is deemed as one of the key factors to help EFL students be competent communicators.

Maleki (2010) argued that “communication strategies should help students communicate very clearly to make the unfamiliar or difficult language much easier for their receivers and these strategies should enable them keep the communication channel open in order to help them maintain verbal flow and be competent communicators” (p. 642). Furthermore, for the strategies to be called effective they should lead students to achieve strategic competence and this can only be achieved by compensating the limited or imperfect knowledge and coping with the difficulty of communication.

Statement of the Problem

This study investigated on the strategies EFL speakers use to enhance their communication ability and explored the major strategies of communication that EFL students use in the classroom to achieve strategic communication competence. In addition, it identified which strategies are more effective and useful to help students accomplish better communication and achieve a clear communication purpose.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What techniques EFL learners use in the classroom to develop their speaking skills?
2. Which techniques are more effective for EFL learners to enhance their communication ability?

Significance of the study

The significance of this study is to investigate what techniques EFL speakers use to enhance their communicative competence inside the classroom. It also aims to discover the major communicative techniques that EFL learners need to achieve strategic communication proficiency. Furthermore, this paper will clarify which techniques are more effective to help students be more competent speakers.

Scope and Delimitation

Communication strategies are main aspect of EFL learners and it is always needed for them to know and use the effective techniques in order to be competent language speakers. Thus, this study will focus on investigating the effectiveness of using communicative techniques. This research will be conducted with EFL learners of English enrolled in the fourth semester at the Faculty of Arts in Misurata, Libya.

Hypotheses

The more strategies students have the easier for them to achieve the communication purpose. The more strategies students have the better communicators they become. Achieving communicative competence depends on using the strategies effectively. In other words, if students use the communicative strategies effectively, they achieve communicative competence. This means that the independent variable in this study is the effective strategies and the dependent variable is the communicative competence, because communicative competence is affected by the effective strategies.

Literature Review

This part is a review of previous researches on strategic competence in communication and the communication strategies that help students accomplish strategic competence in order to enable them to keep

the communication channel open and cope with their limited and imperfect knowledge.

Maleki (2010) defined strategic competence in communication as a person's attempt to have their own way to fill the gap between their communication purpose and instant existing linguistic means. Canale and Swain (1980) stated that “strategic competence refers to the learner’s ability or proficiency in communication” (as cited in Maleki, 2010, p. 604). Strategic competence is considered to be when speakers use or apply some techniques or strategies in order to maintain and develop their communication ability and also to repair distraction and interruption communication, or avoid unclear communication. But their argument does not totally agree with idea of Maleki (2010) who declares that communication strategies should “help speakers to convey unfamiliar or difficult language between communication partners and also helps in maintaining spoken or verbal flow” (p. 642) and should give rise to strategic competence or else they should not be called strategies.

Based on the Canale and Swain’s model and Bachman’s model of communicative competence, it could be said that strategic competence in communication leads to what is called communicative competence and it is an important component in achieving successful communication purpose. David (1990) stated that strategic competence is one of the components required for effective and successful communication and it deals with the ability of speakers to become more familiar with their use of verbal and nonverbal language to reduce or compensate for their communication weakness which might be a result of their inadequate awareness or knowledge or their insufficient understanding of appropriate grammar use of social behavioural and communication norm.

Tarone (1980) declared that for achieving successful communication, the speaker and the receiver should both be involved. In other words, successful communication is the responsibility of both speaker and the receiver and this helps them to understand each other. Tarone (1980) argued that EFL students become more effective communicators when they use a number of strategies such as paraphrase, miming and literal translation. This is to declare that this contention of Tarone (1980) clearly supported the claim of Kneen (2011) who stated that receiver's responsibilities communication is dependent on the capacity

of both to send and to receive messages. Therefore the effective ability to listen can help enhance the communication development. This means that in order to develop the effectiveness of communications, the sender's and receiver's responsibilities is needed and thus must be developed.

Rost, Mendelsohn, Lynch, White (2006) and Carrier (2003) all agreed that strategic competence is one of the most significant competence for enhancing the communication skills of both the speakers and hearers because it contains the proficiency of the strategies that help them communicate and understand the purpose behind their communication. In addition, they argued that strategic competence in communication is the kind of competence, which provides students with some strategies that help them comprehend and understand each other to encourage them convey clear messages. To build on this assumption, the more students improve their strategic competence in communication, the more they promote their communication. It is not easy to rigorously define the Communication Strategies (CS), where the researchers of CS have reached an agreement. In other words there have been more than one or two definitions suggested for the CS of second language learners. The definitions given can show us the nature of the communication strategies (Tarone & Yule, 1989).

Some examples or strategies for strategic competence could be using synonyms to replace with unknown words or words that speakers are unable to recall or have not learned yet. Speakers can also use nonverbal strategies such as physical gestures to help them convey clear and meaningful message. In addition they can also use repetition repeating their utterance again for raising the voice and making their speech clearer to be understood (Canale & Swain, 1980).

Faerch and Kasper (1983) defined CS as the possible planned strategies that speakers use to solve a difficulty in order to achieve a particular purpose in communication. It is widely assumed that communication strategies have an effective role in developing or achieving strategic competence. This means that the communication strategies can lead to what is called strategic competence. This supports Faucette (2001) who stated that communication strategies can be defined within the framework of strategic competence supporting the argument of Canale and Swain (1980) as well, who argued that strategic competence is the ability of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that speakers use to compensate for breakdowns or for reducing the problems

faced or experienced in communication due to inadequate competence or performance variables. This is an indication that if the strategies such as paraphrasing and repetition do not serve the students' need which is to compensate for breakdowns in communication, they will never give rise to what is called strategic competence and thus they cannot be called effective or successful strategies.

The strategies that EFL students find effective to enhance their communication and enable them to achieve strategic competence could be paraphrasing, because this strategy is considered to develop the ability of communication and encourage them to convey their message as clearly as possible (Carrier, 2003). This strategy gives rise to strategic competence and it helps students compensate or to reduce their limited or inadequate knowledge such as weakness, distraction, lack of concentration or inattention.

While Tarone and Yule (1989) consider that strategic competence contains the capability to choose a successful way of achieving a communicative performance. Strategic competence is determined by the degree of effectiveness, rather than by degree of correctness or accuracy. In other words, if the communication strategies do not make the communication clearer then the strategies are not affective or useful and thus will not help students convey clearer message. This means that if students use the communication strategies effectively, they will definitely accomplish their communication purpose.

Maleki (2010) reporteds that strategic competence can be achieved by using games focusing on communication and this can be with or without the visual support. More other activities such as “monologues, jigsaws help to allow and develop language interaction” (p. 642). According to Scattergood (2003), strategic competence is cultivated when tutors form a language classroom where communication strategies are educated and experienced. Most of the previously mentioned definitions underpins the argument that communication strategies are used when students encounter their imperfect knowledge and their breakdowns in communication, whereas the definitions of Tarone (1977), Faerch and Kasper's (1983), and Brown's (1987) give emphasis to the proposal that communication strategies can be used deliberately to achieve the purpose behind the communication.

Chen (1990) conducted a research to categorize the communication strategies used by EFL students of different levels and the findings confirmed that the effective communication strategies used varied based on the proficiency levels of students. Moreover, the study of Gökgöz (2008) which investigated if there was a correlation about the use of strategies to cope with the communication difficulty of students and their speaking proficiency levels showed a big difference between high and low proficiency groups. High oral proficiency students used social strategies such as negotiation for meaning strategies and fluency-oriented strategies.

Paribakht (1985) discovered in his study that EFL students of low linguistic proficiency use communication strategies more often than those of high linguistic proficiency. This is to say that the EFL students of high proficiency experience fewer communication problems in comparison to those of low proficiency. This argument of Paribakht (1985) is supported by Si-Qing (1990) who argued that if the linguistic proficiency increases the use of communication strategy decreases. On the one hand, what Wharton (2000) reported was that low linguistic proficiency students use communication strategies more frequently than students of high linguistic proficiency and that is because of their limited command of L2. But, the communication strategies used by students with high linguistic proficiency are not as many as those of low proficiency and that is due to their proficiency. In other words, low proficiency students use more communication strategies than students with high proficiency. Likewise, Gümüş (2007) who examined the communication strategy that EFL students use and the influence of language proficiency discovered that students of low-level used modification strategies more often than high level students.

The results of the study of Wei (2011) showed that EFL students of English prefer to use reduction strategies such as *topic avoidance*, *message abandonment*, *meaning replacement* more than achievement strategies such as *generalization*, *paraphrase*, *literal translation* although they know that the achievement strategies are very important during their communication. They rarely use *paraphrasing and word coinage*, because of their lack of proficiency and language ability. In other words they were not proficiently able to use *paraphrasing and word coinage*, therefore, they use *topic avoidance and meaning replacement* more frequently than

paraphrasing. This is an indication that low-level students are not able to use the communication strategy *paraphrasing*.

The findings of the study of Spromberg (2011) revealed that the most frequently strategies used by students were response such as asking for *confirmation, classification, rephrase or repetition*. Students also used *miming and self-rephrasing* as direct coping devices, whereas other strategies such as *self-repetition*, and other kinds of *repetition and code-switching L1 structure words*, were used as the indirect coping devices. the results also confirmed that the students who were unable to share a common *L1*, had more opportunities to use other communication strategies such as *miming and self-rephrasing, repetition and code-switching* to convey meaningful clearer messages Spromberg (2011).

Ugla et al. (2013) argued that the communication strategies used should be suitable for the level of EFL students in order to be used effectively and successfully by students or else it will be difficult for students to communicate clearly. This is to state that students face many problems and difficulties during communication because most of communication strategies used were higher than the level of students. Thus, the study of Ugla et al. (2013) suggested that communication strategies should be suitable with the level of students in order to help them improve their communication ability. This means that if students use strategies that are not appropriate to their level, the strategies will not make them competent communicators.

Method

Participants

The participants of this study were 20 EFL students, seven of them were females. They were of different ages. All the participants were of upper intermediate level. This is to show that they have had experiences in learning English for at least five years; therefore, it was not difficult for all the participants to speak English and to provide information or the date needed from them. The L1 “First Language” was the same for all the participants and that is Arabic.

In addition, they were two English teachers in this study. They both have a great teaching experience as they have been teaching for about ten years. They were asked about the effectiveness of the communication strategies that their students use during their communication in the classroom.

Instruments

Two sets of questionnaires were used in this study: one for the students and another for the teachers.

The students' questionnaires aimed to provide detailed information about their communication used in the classroom. It consists of three parts: the first part asks to tick the verbal and nonverbal communication strategies they prefer to use. In the second and the third parts of the questionnaire, students are asked to answer some questions. This questionnaire covers EFL students' preference towards the verbal and nonverbal communicative strategies they use inside the classroom.

On the other hand, the teachers' questionnaire is about the effective communication strategies used by EFL students inside the classroom. This kind of questionnaire contains the same strategies shown in students' questionnaire, but these strategies are given to two teachers to ask which strategy is more effective. For teachers to be able to confirm the effectiveness of the communication strategy, they are enquired to read these strategies with their explanation and then write *'1' for the very effective strategy '2' for just the effective strategy and '3' for the less effective strategy.*

Procedure

Selecting participants was the first step and this step was settled and developed at Leeds Language Academy. All the participants showed great motivation and cooperation as well as willingness when they were informed about the purpose of the paper. It was possible for the researcher to communicate directly with them, because they were able to speak English as they have been studying English for a long time. After informing the participants about the aim of the questionnaires and the aim of the study, questionnaires were disseminated to the participants directly. A classroom observation that lasted an hour was also conducted. The researcher took notes of the communication strategies utilized by the target participants.

Results

Quantitative Analysis: Frequency Data

1. What techniques do EFL learners use in the classroom to develop their speaking skills?

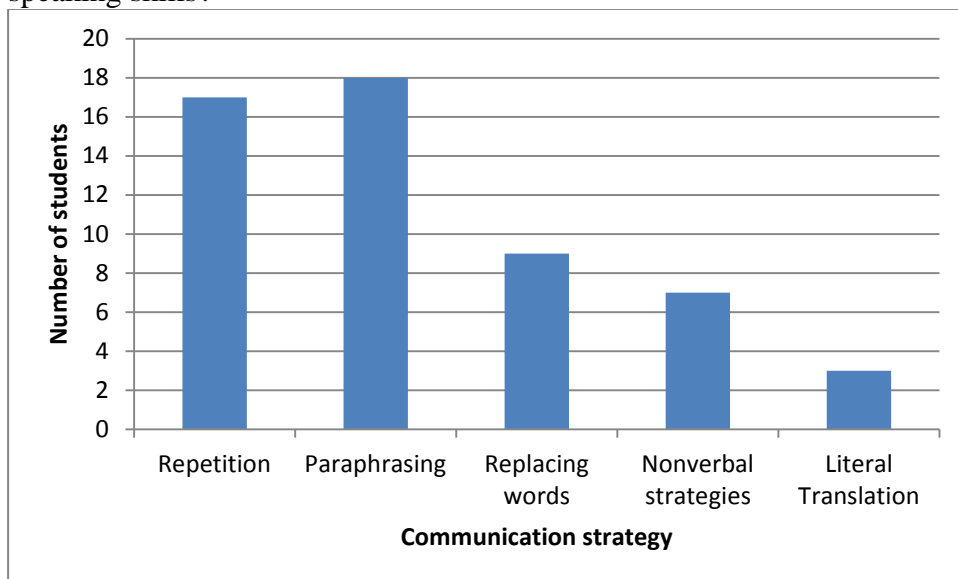


Figure 1. Communication strategies that EFL students use inside the classroom to enhance their communication ability.

It could be seen from the chart that *paraphrasing* is used by 18 students. This means that just 2 out of 20 do not use this strategy. But, *Nonverbal strategy* is only used by 7 students. Moreover, the *repetition* strategy is used by the majority of students; just 3 out of 20 do not use this strategy. This chart indicates that all strategies are used by the students and all students use at least two or three strategies in one situation. It is shown that *literal translation* is used by three students only, meaning it is very rarely used in comparison to other strategies. It can also be concluded that the most common communication strategies that EFL students use inside the classroom are *repetition and paraphrasing*, while the less commonly used strategies are *literal translation and nonverbal strategies*.

Which techniques are more effective for EFL learners to enhance their communication ability?

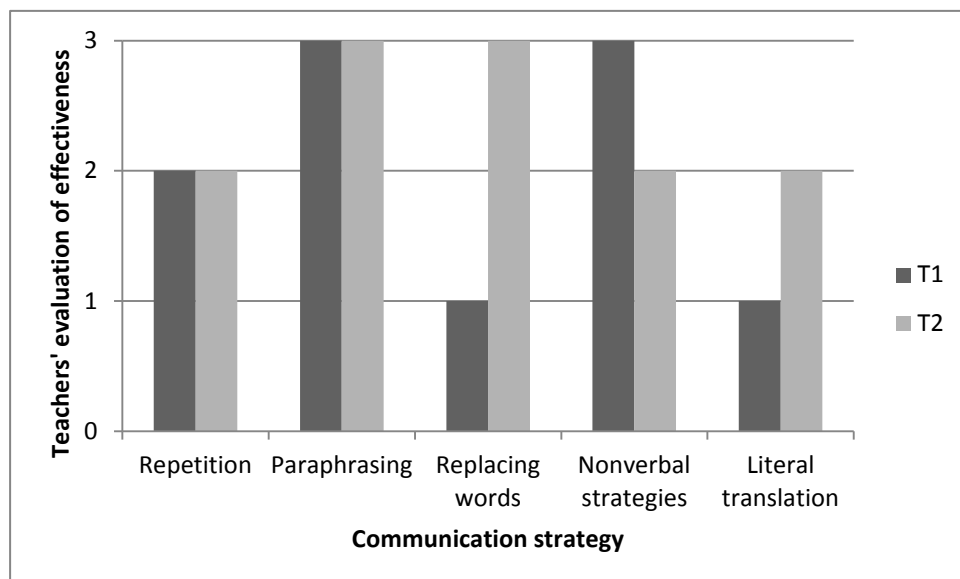


Figure 2. Teachers' judgments about the most effective techniques that successfully meet the needs of students to achieve clear communication.

The scoring system of this chart i.e. 1 = less effective, 2 = effective, 3 = very effective. This graph shows that there is both agreement and disagreement between the two teachers about the effectiveness of the communication strategies used by their students inside the classroom. For example, T1 and T2 both reported that *paraphrasing* is the most effective strategy and also agreed that *repetition* is effective too. But T1 stated that *replacing words* is the less effective strategy showing disagreement with T2 who reported that this strategy *replacing words* is very effective strategies.

In terms of the other two strategies, *Nonverbal strategies* and *Literal translation*, both teachers do not support each other as T1 declared that *nonverbal* is very effective while T2 stated it is just effective. For T1, *literal translation* is considered to be one of the less effective strategies, whereas T2 indicated that this strategy is effective. This is to say that according to T1, the very effective communication strategies are *paraphrasing* and *nonverbal strategies*. Whereas T2 argued that *paraphrasing* and *replacing words* are very effective strategies.

Correlation of the Number of Strategies Used

A Pearson correlation revealed that the number of preferred strategies positively correlated with years of learning English, $r = .5$, $p < .05$, though not with age or with L1 “First Language” (all $ps > .2$). This means that the greater experience students have in learning English, the more strategies they use. In other words, students of limited experience in learning English may not be able to convey their communication purpose successfully and clearly because they lack communicative strategies.

Correlations of the Types of Strategies Used

A Pearson correlation revealed that the communication strategy *paraphrasing* positively correlated with years of learning English, $r = .44$, $p = .05$, though not with age or with L1. There was no significant relationship between the other four strategies and the years of the learning English (all $ps > .2$). Moreover, age was not significantly correlated to the specific types of the strategies (all $ps > .2$). It could be said that there was significant relationship between L1 and the strategy *replacing words*, $r = .44$, $p = .05$.

Qualitative Analysis (Observation)

The class that was observed included 10 students of upper intermediate proficiency level. Their L1s were Arabic and Turkish. The lesson was about words and cultures. The observation took an hour to complete. The activities that were practised by the students were games and pictures focusing on developing their communication ability. The game, students played in the classroom consisted of three main questions and students communicated with each other with consideration to these three questions: What game was it?; How many people can play the game?; and How do you win the game?

The strategies which students preferred to use were *paraphrasing*, *repetition* and *nonverbal strategies such as gestures and miming*. But the most common strategies that students used with their classmates during their communication were *paraphrasing* and *nonverbal strategies*. Moreover, students used *paraphrasing* and *repetition* widely focusing on using different easier words and structures in order to make their speech or utterance as clear as possible to their receivers. However, whenever

they feel unable to speak or recall the words they want to say, they use *gestures miming and pictures*.

The games opened the communication channel for students to use their communication strategies to convey clearer messages to their receivers and to develop their communication strategic competence. The students did not use *literal translation* at all.

Discussions

Communicative Techniques EFL Students Use (Figure 1)

The reason behind the majority using *paraphrasing* could be that of their high level of proficiency because it is widely known that EFL students are unable to use *paraphrasing* unless their proficiency level is high. In addition, *paraphrasing* is considered to be a very effective communication strategy, thus it is enough for students to make their communication purpose clearer for their receivers by using this strategy. This supports the argument of Tarone (1980) who declared that EFL students make their communication easier and more effective when they use *paraphrasing*.

However the *L1* (literal translation strategy) is seen important for EFL students especially when communicating in foreign language, because students need to switch from L2 “Second Language” to L1 in order to convey clear communication. It is clear that the *literal translation* is very rarely used in comparison to other strategies and this could be due to the fact that teachers usually ask their students to avoid using their first language for practising the target language which is English in order to develop their communication ability by using other strategies such as *paraphrasing* and *repetition* instead of using their first language during communication.

This does not show agreement with Færch and Kasper (1983) who stated that EFL students frequently use the L1 with their classmates and teachers, because it helps them switch code comprehensively between L2 and L1, especially if they communicate with others in foreign language. The disagreement here could be due to the level of students, in other words if students are with high-level proficiency, they may not need to use

their first language during communication, but if they are low-level students they often need to share the L1 with their receivers to understand them.

Teachers' Judgments on Effective Strategies (Figure 2)

Both teachers agreed that *paraphrasing* and *repetition* are very effective because they do not just help the students convey their communication purpose, but they help them enhance their communication purpose as well. This is to show that there is agreement with Carrier (2003) who found in his study that *Paraphrasing* is used by EFL students to help them develop their communication ability and compensate their limited or imperfect knowledge to be strategically competent communicators.

Teacher 2 (T2) declared that *paraphrasing* and *repetition* enable students to develop their communication skills and their language in general, especially with high-level students because high-level students know that nonverbal strategy such as *miming and gestures* are not as effective as *verbal strategies*. Furthermore, nonverbal strategies are usually seen to be very unclear and vague or inaccurate as there is no utterance or use of words where the speaker can communicate meaningfully to the receiver. This means that the *gestures and miming* which are considered to be positive in a certain culture might be immoral or negative in another culture.

But Teacher 1 (T1) has different point of view reporting that *nonverbal* strategies are very effective even for high level students especially if they are younger. This is an indication that based on the two teachers; the proficiency and age play an important role in measuring the effective strategies. In this case T1 supports the study of Canale and Swain (1980) who argued that EFL speakers prefer to use *nonverbal strategies* such as physical *gestures and miming* in order to help their receivers understand them and make their communication purpose clearer especially when they are unable to make use of words or utterance.

Discussion of the correlation of the number of strategies used

A Pearson correlation revealed that the number of preferred strategies positively correlated with years of learning English, $r = .5$,

$p < .05$, in other words the greater experience students have in learning English, the more strategies they use. The reason behind this result could be that students of greater experience are high level-students, because they devoted more years for learning English. Therefore they are with a great experience or with high-level. In this case the preferred strategies are related to their level of proficiency, for example High level students prefer to use strategies that are different to the strategies used by low-level students. One of the various studies dealing with the proficiency level and the use of the communication strategy is by Chen (1990), who carried out a research to classify the communication strategies that EFL students use on different proficiency levels. The results of this study revealed that the communication strategies used or preferred varied in relation to proficiency levels.

Discussion of Correlations of Types of Strategies Used

Based on the Pearson correlation of types of strategies, *paraphrasing* is positively correlated with years of learning English, $r = .44$, $p = .05$. This means that the more years EFL spend on learning English, the more proficient, they become and thus the easier for them to use *paraphrasing* in their communication to make their message clearer for their receivers. This is an indication that the communication strategies *paraphrasing* is related to proficiency level and thus students of high proficiency level prefer to use paraphrasing, whereas low-level students are unable to use this strategy because they cannot use their own words with different structure to convey clearer meaningful message.

Discussion of the Observation

In the observation conducted in this study, it was noticed that students were playing some games inside the classroom to help them communicate and develop their communication ability. It was also observed that the *games* they played were very useful as they opened the communication channel to students to use their communication strategies during their communication to convey much clearer message to their receivers and to develop their communication strategic competence. Students also used physical gestures and miming to make their communication purpose much clearer to their classmates.

The studies of Canale and Swain (1980) and Maleki (2010) support this point of view confirming that EFL students can accomplish communication competence if they use games designed to focus on communication, because *games* and other activities such as monologues and jigsaws help EFL students to develop language interaction by “using synonyms to replace with unknown words or words that speakers are unable to recall or have not learned yet and they also use physical gestures and clarification such as repeating, paraphrasing and miming in order to convey their message as clearly as possible” (p. 642).

Furthermore, students did not use literal translation in their communication with their classmates inside the classroom and their avoidance of *literal translation* may be that they are more interested in English than their first language because they need to devote their time practising the target language which is English. But based on the observation, the students were not allowed by their teacher to use *literal translation*. Therefore, this could be the reason behind not using their first language.

The results of the current study demonstrate that strategic competence in communication is associated with knowledge of communication strategies that can lead students to be strategically competent in communication proving that students who use the strategies ineffectively or unsuccessfully can never accomplish strategic communication competence and thus they cannot be competent communicators. To build on this assumption, the more students use effective strategies during communication, the more they promote their whole communicative competence Carrier (2003).

In addition, the findings of this study support the idea of Lynch and White (2006) and the argument of Canale and Swain (1980), who regard this kind of competence as a process to help students to understand each other to be better communicators declaring that communication strategies are never useful and effective unless they help students compensate their imperfect knowledge during communication and help them achieve strategic competence.

Conclusion

Communication strategies have a noticeable influence on communication and on achieving strategic competence in communication. EFL students are expected to have communication strategies in order to use them in a meaningful way and to enhance their communication purpose. They are also expected to use their communication strategies to help them solve their communication problems and to enable them send meaningful messages to their receivers to understand them. Therefore, the aim of this study was to investigate the communication strategies used by EFL students inside the classroom and to explore what communication strategies are more effective for EFL students to be competent communicators.

The data analysed in this dissertation were collected from 20 EFL students and two English native teachers associated with Leeds Language Academy. To answer the stated research questions, both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered using appropriate methods. The results showed that EFL students used different types of communication strategies. It was also found that *repetition and paraphrasing* are the more commonly used communication strategies whereas *literal translation and nonverbal strategies* are the less used strategies. Furthermore, *paraphrasing, repetition and replacing words* are more effective than *literal translation and nonverbal strategies*.

Recommendations

It is recommended that EFL students should be prepared and encouraged to solve their communication problems in order to help them develop their fluency and improve their communication ability, because if the students are not able to solve the communication difficulties during communication then they will not be able to communicate clearly and thus it may be impossible for them to convey the right message to their receivers. Students also need to be supported to have appropriate ways to communicate effectively without using their first language.

Students should also be given enough communication activities that enhance their ability to use their strategies effectively and appropriately. These tasks should be designed to help students foster their communication and enable them to compensate their communication problems. These tasks and activities are expected to enable students increase their use of the communication strategies in the classroom. These

recommendations may help EFL students improve their communication skills and make them better communicators. They are also expected to encourage students to continue learning and promoting their use of communication strategies in real communicative situations.

Implications

The implication of this study is that students need to be informed that using communication strategies effectively or successfully means the ability of making these strategies compensate their communication difficulties and solve their communication problems in order to achieve strategic competence in communication. Teachers should make students understand that if they are not able to send and receive clear messages successfully during conversation, they are not using the strategies effectively. Students also need to be encouraged to practise and make use of their strategies through involvement or participation in communication activities to foster and increase their communication ability.

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