**Teaching L2-based Communication Strategies to Promote Students’ Autonomy in Speaking**

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**Abstract**

The research aims at investigating the frequency of students’ use of L2-based communication strategies, the effects of teaching L2-based communication strategies on the students’ autonomy in speaking and the students’ speaking achievement. **This research was conducted through quasi-experimental in which all students numbering of 33 received the same treatment. The data of the research were collected through speaking test and questionnaire. The data were then analyzed through recording, coding, and were interpreted through repeated measure t-test. The results show that there were 6 L2-based communication strategies used by the students. Before treatment the students used circumlocution (95), approximation (30), comparison (12), exemplification (10), word coinage (3), and foreignizing (1). After treatment, students used circumlocution (125), approximation (65), comparison (30), exemplification (20), word coinage (6), and foreignizing (1). The students were more independent and more autonomous in speaking in which t-value (11.807) is higher than t-table (2.042). Moreover, students’ score in speaking significantly increased from the average score 64.5 to 70.7 in which t-value (14.200) is higher than t-table (2.042). Therefore, it can be concluded that teaching L2-based communication strategies is effective to increase the students’ autonomy in speaking**

**Keywords**: students’ autonomy in speaking, L2-based communication strategies, word

 coinage, foreignizing

**1. Introduction**

**There are commonly two goals of English Language Teaching (ELT). Firstly, the teaching is directed to develop students’ communicative competence – that is – the ability to understand and to express message in varieties of communicative situations. Secondly, teaching English aims at developing students’ independence. Independent students refer to those who are able to cope with any problems faced in learning situations, i.e., choosing what learning situation that might suit to their learning styles, being able to cope with communication situations in seaking, etc.**

**There are five components of communicative competence namely grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, strategic, and actional competence (see e.g., Canale and Swain, 1980 and Celce-Murcia (1995). Grammatical competence or linguistic competence refers to the knowledge of what is grammatically correct in a language. Sociolinguistic competence deals with the knowledge of what is socially acceptable in a language, and understanding of the social context in which communication takes place (who speaks and to whom one speaks). Discourse competence concerns to the interpretation of individual message elements in terms of their interconnectedness of how meaning is represented in relationship to the entire discourse or context. Actional competence covers the knowledge of how to perform speech acts and speech events in the target language involving interactions such as information changes, interpersonal exchanges, expression of opinions and feelings, problems (complaining, blaming, regretting, apologizing, etc.). Strategic competence focuses on the knowledge of how to use one’s language to communicate intended meaning, it is the ability to cope with the situation when vocabulary and structures are lacking so that there will be no communication breakdown. It also refers to the coping strategies that a speaker employs to initiate, terminate, maintain, repair, and redirect communication. Tarone (1977) reveals that strategic competence is the ability to convey information to a listener and correctly interpret information received. It includes the use of communication strategies to solve problems that arise in the process of conveying this information. She further points out that strategic competence is the ability to convey information to a listener and correctly interpret information received. It includes the use of communication strategies to solve problems that arise in the process of conveying this information. In other words, strategic competence includes both compensatory characteristics and communication strategies.**

**Tarone (1977) considers that communication strategies are mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situation where required meaning is not shared. Tarone’s (1977, 1981) definition of communication strategy puts an emphasis in interactional aspect. Communication strategy is seen as an attempt to bridge the gap between the linguistic knowledge of L2 student and the linguistic knowledge of the student’s interlocutor in real communication situation. Tarone (2005) characterizes communication strategies as “negotiation of an agreement on meaning” between interlocutors. She sees communication strategies as the student’s contribution to the interactional work required to overcome a communication problem.**

**As L2 students are in the process of learning, they are struggling to convey the intended meaning by constructing expression to the best they can when communicating with other student in the class. Veradi (1973) points out that L2 error may arise either inadvertently or deliberately. In the case of the former, they are the results of production strategies and reflect the transitional state of student’s L2 knowledge. In the case of the latter, they are the results of communication strategies which are consciously employed by the student in order to reduce or replace some elements of meaning or form in the initial plan.**

**Even if the speaker has adequate control of language, he/she might use communication strategies when communicating with non-native speaker. Bialystok (1990) suggests that communication strategies may be used equally well in situations where no problem has risen, as in the case when a native speaker gives a road description to a stranger using a long definition instead of the actual word. She further compares some of the strategies in terms of the effectiveness and found that listeners understand word coinage much better than approximation, circumlocution, or language switch, though, in terms of sheer frequency, word coinage was rare, the commonest strategies being circumlocution.**

**However, the main reason for the second language student to use communication strategies is that they find difficulties to express communicative intentions because of the gaps in their linguistic repertoire. Littlewood (1984) said that if a student is able to anticipate such a problem, he/she may be able to forestall it by avoiding communication or modifying what he/she intended to say. If the problem arises while the student is already engaged in speaking, he/she just tries to find an alternative way of getting the meaning across. In either case, his/her way of coping with the situation is what we call “communication strategies”. The main characteristic of communication strategy is that it occurs when a student becomes aware of the problem with which his/her current knowledge has difficulty in coping with the problems.**

**Ellis (1985) places communication strategies in a hierarchy of type of L2 knowledge. L2 Knowledge is divided into declarative (knowing that) and procedural (knowing how). Procedural knowledge is divided into social process/ strategies and cognitive strategies/ processes. Cognitive process/strategies are then divided into learning L2 and using L2. The use of L2 is subdivided into /production reception process and strategies and communication strategies.**

**From the definitions above, it can be inferred that communication strategies share three main features. Firstly, problematic – it refers to the fact that student uses CSs as he/she encounters communication problem. Secondly, consciousness – it is a potentially conscious plan for solving communication problem to reach a particular communicative goal. It also refers either to the student’s awareness that the strategy is being employed for a particular purpose, or the awareness of how that strategy might achieve its intended effect. Thirdly, intentionality – it refers to the student’s control over those strategies so that particular ones may be selected from the range of options and deliberately applied to achieve certain effects. In short, communication strategies are used to resolve difficulties in expressing intended meaning (Tarone, 2005); it can also be defined as the tactic taken by the students to solve oral communication problems (Lam, 2006).**

 **Communication strategies might offer a short-term answer of communication problematic of balance. Therefore, Ellis (1985) concludes that communication strategies are psycholinguistic plans which exist as part of the language user’s communicative competence. They are potentially conscious and serve as substitutes for production plans which the student is unable to implement.**

**Apart from developing communicative competence, the second goal of ELT is to develop students’ autonomy – students who are independence and are able to direct the goal of learning, choose learning material, monitor their own progress of learning, evaluate their learning using particular learning strategies (see e.g. Holec, 1981; Wei, 2008; Wang, 2010; and Gai, 2014).**

 **Autonomous students refers to those who are able to overcome their problems confronted either when they are in learning process or when they are in the process of using the target language for communication. ‘Autonomy’ means ‘independent’ or ‘self-reliance’..** The concept of “autonomous” originated from debates about the development of life-long learning skills in the 1960s. By 1981, Holec (1981, cited in Benson & Voller, 1997, p. 1) had defined autonomy as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning”.

Dickinson (1987, p. 11) accepts the definition of autonomy as “situation in which the student is totally responsible for all of the decisions concerned with his or her learning and the implementation of those decisions”. Pemberton (1996, p. 3) defined autonomy as “the techniques used in order to direct one’s own learning”. Furthermore, Thomson (1996, p. 78) student’s autonomy refers to “learning in which the students themselves take responsibility for their own learning”.

Autonomous student is capable of setting goals and objectives, choosing material, methods and tasks, carrying out and evaluating his/her work/learning (WANG, 2010*).* The term autonomy has come to be used in at least five ways (Benson & Voller, 1997, p. 2):

1. for “situations” in which

students study entirely on their own;

1. for a set of “skills” which can

be learned and applied in self-directed learning;

1. for an inborn “capacity” which

is suppressed by institutional education;

1. for the exercise of “students’

responsibility” for their own learning;

1. for the “right” of students to

determine the direction of their own learning.

There seem to be seven main attributes characterizing autonomous

students (Omaggio, 1978, cited in Wenden, 1998, pp. 41-42):

1. Autonomous students have

insights into their learning styles and strategies;

1. take an active approach to the

learning task at hand;

1. are willing to take risks, i.e., to

communicate in the target language at all costs;

(4) are good guessers;

(5) attend to form as well as to

 content, that is, place

 importance on accuracy as well

 as appropriateness;

1. develop the target language into

a separate reference system and are willing to

 revise and reject hypotheses

 and rules that do not apply;

1. have a tolerant and outgoing

approach to the target language.

**From the definitions stated above, it can be inferred that autonomous student in speaking means the one who, without or with minimum help of teacher, possesses strategies for overcoming communication problems using necessary communication strategies. It also refers to a situation in which speaker chooses a specific syntax of each utterance so that the content of the story is packaged in a way that is consistent with the speaker’s intention. (Thornbury, 2005). Therefore the aims of this study are (1) to** invent the frequency of students’ use of L-2 based communication strategies before and after treatment, (2) to know the effects of teaching L2-based communication strategies on the students autonomy in speaking and the students’ speaking achievement.

**2. Research Method**

This research is largely experimental involving 33 students who are sitting Intermediate Speaking class. One-group-pretest-and-posttest design was used and it was conducted through 3 steps: pre-test, treatment, and post-test. Before after treatment, the students were asked to label the photo of objects, to describe an unknown object, and to answer questionnaoire. The students’ autonomy in speaking were measured using 5-point Likert-type scale. The questionnaire on students’ autonomy was developed based on the approach introduced in Holec’s study (1981) which comprised of 5 elements, i.e. goal, content, techniques, monitoring, and evaluation in speaking. This approach provides participants with statements and they have to indicate how frequently they do the particular aspects. The responses of *always* was rated as the highest score 5, *often* was rated 4, *sometimes* 3, *seldom* 2, and those of *never* was rated 1.

In treatement, the students were taught to be aware and to be able to use the 6 L2-based communication strategies, i.e. **circumlocution, approximation, comparison, exemplification, word coinage, and foreignizing.** The teaching of L2-based communication strategies was largely presented in 3 stages, i.e. orientation, exposition and practice (Sukirlan, 2011; 2014). In orientation, the students were introduced with the types of L2-based communication strategies. The students were also taught how to use the strategies to solve communication problems. In exposition, the students were exposed with dialogue of listening materials and they were asked to listen to the dialogue. After listening, the students were asked to identify particular L2-based communication strategies the speakers used in the dialogue. The students were also exposed with linguistic resources required for the success of using L2-based communication strategies like vocabulary aspects (i.e. material, shape, color, size, texture, parts, clothing, taste, synonym, antonym) and grammar aspects (i.e. tenses, passive voice). In practice, every student was given photos of unknown objects to be described in front of the class. The design of the research is depeicted below.

X1 = Pre-test

 X = Treatment

X2 = Post-test

 (Hatch and Farhady, 1982)

**3. Results**

 **This section attempts to answer the research question put forward at the previous section concerning 3 main features (1) to** invent the frequency of L-2 based communication strategies students used in speaking before and after treatment, (2) to know the effect of teaching L-2 based communication strategies on the students autonomy in speaking, and (3) to know the effect of teaching L2 based communication strategies on the students’ speaking achievement after treatment.

**L2-based Communication Strategies Used by the Students**

This subsection presents the results of research concerning the L2-based communication strategies used by the students before and after treatment. The report reveals the commonest type of communication strategy and the less common type of communication strategy used by the students.

Before treatment, it can be reported that approximation occurred 30 times, circumlocution 95 times, exemplification 10 times, comparison 12 times, word coinage 3 times, and foreignizing once.

**Table 1 Frequency of L2-Based Communication**

 **Used before Treatment**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **L-2 based Communication Strategies**  | **Frequency**  | **Example** |
| **1** | **approximation** | **30** | **[brassier] *It is a kind of stove*** |
| **2** | **circumlocution** | **95** | **[latch] it is made of metal****[latch] it is used to lock** |
| **3** | **exemplification** | **10** | **[crossbar] for example, it is used in the door** |
| **4** | **comparison** | **12** | **[lantern] it is bigger than lamp** |
| **5** | **word-coinage** | **3** | **[rug] it is welcome-mat** |
| **6** | **foreignizing** | **1** | **[screwdriver] it is to bor** |

After treatment, it was found that approximation occurred 65 times, circumlocution 125 times, exemplification 20 times, comparison 30 times, foreignizing occurred once.

**Table 2 Frequency of L2-based Communication**

 **Used After Treatment**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **NO** | **L-2 based Communication Strategies**  | **Frequency**  | **Example** |
| **1** | **approximation** | **65** | **[crossbar] it is not short but long** |
| **2** | **circumlocution** | **125** | **[barbed wire] it is used to protect** |
| **3** | **exemplification** | **20** | **[broom] example, there are many ribs of coconut leaf.** |
| **4** | **comparison** | **30** | **[hanger] it is higher than ....** |
| **5** | **word-coinage** | **6** | **[barbed wire] it is bodiless** |
| **6** | **foreignizing** | **1** | **[brazier] it can be applicated** |

 **By comparing L2-based communication strategies used before and after treatment, it can be reported that there are increases in frequencies of use, i.e.** approximation occurred from 30 to 65 times, circumlocution from 95 to 125 times, exemplification from 10 to 20 times, comparison from 12 to 30 times., and no increase in the use of foreignizing.

**Table 3 Frequency of L2-based Communication**

**Used before and after Treatment.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **NO** | **L2-based Communication Strategies**  | **Before Treatment**  | **After Treatment**  | **Gain**  |
| **1** | **approximation** | **30** | **65** | **35** |
| **2** | **circumlocution** | **95** | **125** | **30** |
| **3** | **exemplification** | **10** | **20** | **10** |
| **4** | **comparison** | **12** | **30** | **18** |
| **5** | **word-coinage** | **3** | **6** | **3** |
| **6** | **foreignizing** | **1** | **1** | **0** |

**Students’ Autonomy in Speaking**

This subsection presents the results of research concerning the student’s autonomy in speaking. It deals with the question concerning whether the students are able to set the goals, content, techniques, monitoring, and evaluation of speaking. In order to answer the research questions, a set of questionnaire consisting of 25 items was distributed. The questionnaire was set using Likert-type scale ranging 5 classifications (1 for never, 2 seldom, 3 sometimes, 4 often, 5 always).

**The data were then analyzed using repeated measure t-test. The results show that t-value (11.8075) is higher than t-table (2.042). Based on statistical test, it indicates that teaching L2-based communication strategies can significantly increase the students’ autonomy is speaking. In other words, after being made aware of the use of L2-based communication strategies, the students are more independent to set the goal, content, techniques, monitoring, and evaluation in speaking so that they are able to solve communication problem when they speak with other students in the class.**

**Speaking Achievement**

This subsection presents the results of research concerning the students’ achievement in speaking which is composed of 5 aspects, i.e. grammar, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and pronunciation. In order to answer the research questions, the researcher compared the students’ score in speaking before and after treatment. The score of speaking achievement ranged from 1 to 100.

**The data were then analyzed using repeated measure t-test. The results show that t-value (14.200) is higher than t-table (2,042). Based on statistical test, it indicates that teaching L2-based communication strategies can significantly increase the students’ speaking achievement. In other words, after being made aware of the use of L2-based communication strategies, the students are more skillful to perform in all aspects of speaking such as grammar, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and pronunciation.**

**By comparing the aspects of speaking, it can be reported that there are a number of increases in the use of every aspects of speaking, i.e. grammar** occurred from 61 to 70, vocabulary from 66 to 76, fluency from 66 to 69, comprehension from 63 to 6, and pronunciation from 65 to 69.

**Table 4 Frequency of Speaking Aspects Students**

 **Used before and after Treatment**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No** | **Aspects of Speaking** | **Frequency** | **Gain** |
| **Before treatment** | **After treatment** |
| **1** | **grammar** | **61** | **70** | **9** |
| **2** | **vocabulary** | **66** | **76** | **10** |
| **3** | **fluency** | **66** | **69** | **3** |
| **4** | **comprehension** | **63** | **67** | **4** |
| **5.** | **pronuciation** | **65** | **69** | **4** |

**4. Discussions**

**It has been generally accepted that nobody’s language mastery is perfect even if when a person communicates in his/her native language. For example, a student of chemistry department trying to explain his/her major subject to an economic students may suffer from communication problems such as misunderstanding and communication breakdown. We can imagine how difficult she/he is to find out proper communication strategies so that she/he is able to deliver the message successfully.**

**In other words, when two persons are engaged in communication, they might face communication problems if they do not use proper communication strategies. Communication strategies are attempts made by the speaker so that they are able to deliver message successfully when he/she lacks of linguistic resources (see e.g. Tarone, 1981: 288, Faerch and Kasper, 1983: 36, Bialystok, 1983: 102).**

**By observing the results of the research, it can be reported that before the treatment the students did not use L2-based communication strategies frequently as depicted in table 1. After treatment, however, the students were more frequently used L2-based communication strategies so that they are able to communicate their message successfully.** Based on table 3, it can be reported that the most frequent communication strategies used by the students was circumlocution while the least communication strategies used was foreignizing. The finding seems to be in line with the study conducted by Bialystok (1990). Bialystok compared some of the communication strategies in terms of the effectiveness and found that the listeners understand word coinage much better than approximation, circumlocution, or language switch, though in terms of sheer frequency, word coinage was very rare, the commonest strategy being circumlocution. Circumlocution is especially useful to solve gaps of communication in order to keep the flow of conversation. In addition, circumlocution functions as facilitative role of compensatory strategies as a tool to cope with problematic vocabulary (Campillo, 2006).

**In terms of students’ autonomy in speaking, it can be reported that the students were less autonomous in the sense that they lack of ability to set the goal of speaking, understand the content of speaking, choose the techniques of speaking, monitor the process of speaking, and evaluate what is wrong in speaking. After participating in the training session, the students were more autonomous in speaking in which they are able to solve the communication problems successfully. Statistical calculation showed that t-value (11.807) higher than t-table (2.042).** Chamot & O´Malley (1994: 387-8), the goal of instructing L2

students in the use of strategies is “to develop self-regulated students who can approach new learning tasks with confidence and select the most appropriate strategies for completing the task”. **It is also in line with** Weinstein & Mayer (1986) who point out that any learning/teaching situation encompasses two types of goals: *goals concerning the product of learning* and *goals concerning the process of learning*. The former focus on what to learn, that is, on what students should know or be able to do as a result of learning», whereas the latter focus on how to learn, i.e. on techniques and strategies students can use to accomplish learning (p. 315). The results also indicate that the students use more L2-based communication strategies. This seems to indicate that the students are more able to cope with the communication problems. In other words the students are more autonomous in speaking since attempts to solve the communication problems are successful (see e.g.; Manchón**, 2000;** Wei, 2008**).**

 The teaching of L2-based communication strategies seems to also affect on the students’ increase in their speaking achievement. Quantitative results indicate that the students’ speaking achievement increases significantly in which t-value (14.200) is higher that t-table (2.042). Table 4 indicates that the students perform better in every aspect of speaking in which vocabulary occupies the highest gain and subsequently followed by grammar, comprehension, pronunciation, and fluency the least. The results seem to be in line with Tarone (1981) who reveals that direct instruction either before or after the use of such an activity will be helpful in providing students with a basic set of vocabulary items useful for describing properties and functions.

**5. Conclusions**

**Based on the results and discussions of the research, there are 3 main conclusions that can be drawn:**

1. **There is an increase of the frequency in the students’ use of L2-based communication strategies before and after treatment. Of the six communication strategies, circumlocution is the most frequently used by the students while foreignizing the least.**
2. **After treatment, the students are more autonomous in speaking. In other words, the students are more capable of anticipating the communication problems when they deliver messages to other students in the class.**
3. **The treatment concerning the use of L2-based communication strategies is effective to increase the students’ achievement in speaking. The students are able to perform better in all aspects speaking.**

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