

A Study of Communication Strategies Use by Japanese EFL Learners

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Accordance with a significant growth of developing communicative competence of second language learners in the classrooms, theoretical and empirical research on communication strategies (CS) has been widely conducted, over the past two decades, to investigate how learners cope with performance problems.

Much research has been done to identify and classify CS used by second language learners and to know what type of CS is effective. Increased study of CS used by second language learners shows the need to teach CS in the classroom. When we consider what elements should be involved in CS instruction, we need to examine through empirical research what types of CS are frequently used by learners and what factors influence the effectiveness of CS. In addition to these, as teachers, we need to take into account what types of CS will be beneficial to language learning. This article argues what elements should be taken into account in teaching CS based on empirical research on lexical communication strategies employed by 10 Japanese EFL learners. This article first describes what communication strategies are and discusses previous research on CS. After this, results of a study aimed at obtaining empirical data on the use of CS are categorized in terms of frequency and effectiveness. Third, some chosen results are further analyzed to examine what factors influence the effectiveness. Finally, what elements should be involved in the instruction of strategic competence in the classroom will be discussed.

1. Introduction

While communication strategies have received considerable attention in recent interlanguage studies, research in this area is contrasted in two ways. According to interactional definition, the central function of CS is the negotiation of meaning. According to the psycholinguistic definition suggested by Færch and Kasper (1983), communication strategies are related to individual language users' experience of communicative problems and the solutions they pursue by themselves. This study will mainly consider communication strategies within the latter framework.

Foreign language learners often encounter communication problems due to limited

linguistic resources. Strategies that they employ to solve these linguistic problems are generally known as communication strategies (CS). For example, if a learner lacks a lexical item, he/she may use alternative items, syntactic structures, or gestures to get across the intended meaning. We may say that second language learners' communicative success relies heavily on their ability to communicate within restrictions (limitations) by using CS, that is, on their strategic competence.

The importance of strategic competence in communication has been widely recognized since Canale and Swain (1980) proposed the idea of communicative competence comprised of three main components: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. Canale and Swain (1980) define strategic competence as 'verbal and nonverbal strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or to insufficient competence' (Canale and Swain 1980:30).

The central issue on the research in CS has been what alternative strategies may be used to communicate that meaning. Much productive research has led to the identification and classification of CS and has provided a rich framework describing the ways in which learners can operate within their own interlanguage in order to communicate difficult concepts.

Some researchers such as Paribakht (1985), and Chen (1990) are attempting to relate type of CS used by second language learners to proficiency level. Paribakht (1985) and Chen (1990) conducted empirical research to explore the relationship between second language learners' proficiency level in the target language and their strategic competence and suggested that the proficiency level of the learner influences their choice of strategy in terms of both types and frequency of CS. That is, although learners with different proficiency level drew upon similar knowledge resources to solve their communication problems, they used different proportions of these resources in terms of types and frequency of CS.

Other researchers have given empirical research on the effectiveness of CS used by second language learners. Bialystok (1983) has done an empirical research on the relative effectiveness of strategies utilized by different proficiency level learners. The results of his research suggested that the differences between learners emerged more in the realization of strategies as effective forms rather than in the selection of strategy types. He concluded that the strategy effectiveness is related to two factors: formal proficiency in the target language and the ability that enables the learner to modify their strategy selection in more flexible ways to suit the nature of specific concept to be conveyed. Haastrup and Phillipson (1983 in Færch and Kasper) argue that L1-based strategies are the least effective and L2-based strategies the most effective. As Ellis (1985) argues, however, the results of this research are suggestive rather than definitive. Therefore, we need to obtain more data on the use of CS in different

environment second language learners are studying.

On the other hand, the teachability of CS has been a source of considerable controversy in the past decade. In recent years, however, according to the increase of CS, as stated above, there is a movement supporting the need to teach CS in the foreign language classroom (e.g. Færch and Kasper, 1983; Willems, 1987; Dörnyei, 1995; Russell and Loschky, 1998). As much research on CS has been done, results of such empirical research should be reflected in the teaching of CS. We need to examine in our own context what types of CS are preferably used by the students and what types of CS are effective to convey the intended meaning to native-speaker interlocutors, and to carry out further analysis of the realization of CS used by the students to know what factors influence the effectiveness of CS use in order to know what elements should be involved in the instruction of CS. In addition, we may need to argue instruction of CS from the viewpoint of potential learning effect in the classroom.

2. Study

The present study is intended to explore the types of CS used by 10 Japanese EFL students and their effectiveness of communication strategies to find out what element should be introduced in teaching CS. Research questions to be addressed are as follows:

- (1) What types of CS are frequently used?
- (2) What types of CS are effective to communicate with native-speaker interlocutors ?
- (3) What factors influence the effectiveness of CS ?
- (4) What elements should be involved in the instruction of teaching CS?

3. Method

3.1 Subjects

A total of 10 English-major students at Kagoshima Prefectural College were chosen to participate in this experiment. 5 of them were in the first year and the rest of them were in the second year. All of them had higher formal ability in the target language as compared with non-major students, but had little experience in using CS in a formal classroom setting.

3.2 Task

Communication problems that second language learners might face in a real-life situation are often assumed to be closely related to the lack of vocabulary. Learners, who may already possess skills in the L1, often encounter difficulties in expressing or describing concepts or words they do not know or that cannot be instantaneously retrieved. Therefore, in this study a concept-identification task was adopted as the communicative task in order to elicit

communicative strategies.

There were 20 single lexical items comprising 10 concrete and 10 abstract concepts. The point of using abstract concepts in the task was that abstract concepts were expected to put heavier linguistic or conceptual burdens on the learners than concrete concepts. Each subject was required to communicate two concrete and two abstract items to a native-speaker interlocutor in an interview setting. The 20 lexical items were as follows:

Concrete concepts	Abstract concepts
monkey	courage
guitar	kindness
cow	patience
bicycle	hope
sofa	sympathy
peacock	motivation
crab	pride
ladder	freedom
temple	honesty
scarecrow	anger

3.3 Procedure

Because of the different nature of the concept types, we conducted slightly different procedures in presenting each item to the subjects. In the case of concrete concepts, they were written in English and were presented in isolation. For abstract concepts, they were written on separate cards in both English and Japanese and were presented in isolation in order to avoid any ambiguities and to ensure that the subjects knew the meaning of the target words. The subjects were asked to try to convey the items to their native-speaker interlocutors without using the exact target words.

Each subject was assigned to convey two concrete items and two abstract items. For the sake of comparison, each concept was used twice, once by a junior student and once more by a senior student. The two native-speaker interlocutors who did not know any target items prepared were asked to interview the subjects, each was responsible for five students. They were asked to identify the concept and to rank the communication effectiveness of strategies used by the subjects to convey each concept. Interaction between the subjects and their interlocutors continued until either the interlocutors identified the target concept or the subjects gave up.

The problem of defining communicative effectiveness is difficult. In the stylized communication situation created for this study, fairly objective criteria were established based on the criteria devised by Chen (1990). In this study, the author defines 'the communicative effectiveness' is judged for determining how fast a particular item would be transmitted successfully. This judgement may be influenced by two factors: one is the frequency of CS used in conveying each item and the type of CS. In terms of a relationship between a frequency of CS used by the speakers and the comprehensibility, Albrechtsen, Henriksen, and Færch (1980) found from their research that texts with extensive use of CS have been considered difficult to understand. Although the problem of effectiveness is more complex and may not be handled without losing some objectivity, native speakers' own perspective is expected to supplement our criteria. The criteria were as follows:

- 5 very effective — identified the target item immediately
- 4 effective — easy to identify the target item
- 3 less effective — hard to identify the target item
- 2 not effective — very hard to identify the target item
- 1 failure — unable to identify the target item

The interlocutors were asked to assign a score out of 5 to each item. There was no time limit imposed. Although sometimes simple questions or some encouragement was given, the interlocutors were asked to refrain from speaking as much as possible to prevent from affecting the subjects' strategy use.

4. Results

The first purpose of the study was the development of a categorization of CS based on the present data. In order to identify and classify the CS employed by the students, a categorization was developed, partially drawing on the existing typologies (Færch and Kasper, 1983; Littlewood, 1984; Paribakht, 1985; Willems, 1987; Chen, 1990; Dörnyei, 1995; Russell and Loschky, 1998) but essentially deriving from the new data of the present study.

The strategies were largely categorized on the basis of the type of means used by the student or the type of knowledge or information assumed to be resorted to by the student. The subject's point of view was the basis for the identification of her CS regardless of the truth or informative value of them, because our concern of the analysis at this stage was to identify and categorize the CS used by the subjects. Further analysis of the realizations of the subjects' CS will be developed at the next stage to reveal their effect on the subjects' success or failure

in conveying the target concept.

The strategies were largely categorized into five major strategy types:

- I Approximation
- II Paraphrase
- III Exemplification
- IV Non-linguistic strategies
- V Interactional strategies

Further classification within each category was made according to the specific features found in each communicative strategies exploited by the students.

5. Taxonomy

I Approximation: The learner used words or phrases, which may not be correct or less specific than the intended meaning, but shares semantic features in common with the target concept. This strategy comprises such sub-strategies as 'generalization' and 'synonym'.

A. Generalization. For example:

'It's an animal.' (*monkey*)

'It's a kind of house.' (*temple*)

'This is instrument.' (*guitar*)

B. Synonym. For example :

'It's a temper.' (*anger*)

'It's a bike.' (*bicycle*)

II Paraphrase: The learner attempted to paraphrase the target item.

A. Description. The learner tried to give physical properties such as color, size, or materials. For example:

'It's color...black and white.' (*cow*)

'They have a fur.' (*monkey*)

B. Circumlocution. The learner paraphrased the target concept by providing characteristic features, locational features, functional features. For example:

'They live in rock mountain'. (*monkey*)

'It's in the sea.' (*crab*)

'This is something to people sit this.' (*sofa*)

III Exemplification: The learner gave examples such as situation, context, people, things, events or personal experience that reflect the target concept. For example:

‘This person doesn't tell a lie.’ (*honesty*)

‘I can't play this.’ (*guitar*)

‘I study English, because I want to be English teacher.’ (*motivation*)

‘If I have this, I can speak many people.’ (*courage*)

IV Non-linguistic strategies

The learner utilized non-verbal means such as mime, gesture, or sound imitation in expressing the target concept. This strategy is used to substitute for a linguistic output or accompanying verbal output. For example:

‘I know the song.’ (Hum the music) (*honesty*)

(Mime for standing) (*scarecrow*)

V Interactional strategies

The learner gave words or phrases in respond to a interlocutor's reaction. For example:

‘Close...’ (To the interlocutor's answer, ‘Perseverance?’) (*patience*)

‘Similar.’ (To the interlocutor's answer, ‘Sadness?’) (*sympathy*)

6. Analysis of results

6.1 Frequency and types of communication strategies

In order to examine what types of CS were preferably used by the students, first we put all of the CS employed by them into the categories of the taxonomy developed for the study. Then, The quantitative analysis of the data was done by a simple frequency count of the use of CS for each category. The raw frequency count of the type of CS has been calculated. The frequency distribution is shown in Table 1. The analysis was performed on both the separate data (i.e. concrete nouns and abstract nouns) and the merged data (i.e. concrete nouns + abstract nouns). The reason for conducting separate comparisons for each item type was that each item type caused some particular type of CS use specific to that noun type. For example, ‘paraphrase’ CS were used only for concrete nouns, whereas ‘exemplification’ CS were much more frequently employed for abstract nouns.

The qualitative analysis was done by converting the raw frequency count of CS for each category into proportions by representing the frequency of occurrence of each CS as a ratio of the total number of CS used by the subjects. The proportion of CS employed for each category is shown in Table 2.

Table 1
Frequency distribution of five CS

	A	P	E	N	I	Totals
CN	12	26	10	4	2	53
AN	11	0	58	1	6	76
Totals	23	26	68	5	8	130

CN = concrete nouns; AN = abstract nouns; A = approximation; P = paraphrase;
E = exemplification; N = non-linguistic; I = interactional

Table 2
Proportions of five CS

	A	P	E	N	I
CN	0.092	0.200	0.077	0.031	0.015
AN	0.085	0.000	0.446	0.008	0.046
Totals	0.177	0.200	0.523	0.039	0.062

CN = concrete nouns; AN = abstract nouns; A = approximation; P = paraphrase;
E = exemplification; N = non-linguistic; I = interactional

As clearly shown in the Table 1 and 2, the learners frequently used 'approximation,' 'paraphrase,' and 'exemplification.' In terms of the selection of 'approximation' and 'paraphrase' they differed in the use of the constituent strategies of these two largely categorized CS. The frequency of the constituent strategies is shown in the Table 3.

Table 3
Frequency distribution of constituent strategies of 'approximation' & 'paraphrase'

	Approximation		Paraphrase	
	Generalization	Synonym	Description	Circumlocution
CN	11	1	18	8
AN	9	2	0	0
Totals	20	3	18	8

In the selection of constituent strategies of 'approximation,' the learners much more frequently used 'generalization' than 'synonym.' The learners more frequently utilized 'description' than 'circumlocution.' It is assumed that the reason why the learners did not often use 'synonym' CS is that they need to draw on more linguistic knowledge. In terms of the more use of 'physical description,' the learners could more freely describe the target item without the conceptual constrain owing to this strategy.

Very limited numbers of non-linguistic CS were elicited in this study. Only 5 non-linguistic CS, 4 for 'mime' and 1 for 'sound imitation', were used by the learners. As one of the factors which affect the frequency of paralinguistic CS in the communication situation, Paribakht (1985) points out cultural differences. This also might be explained by Japanese culture where the use of much gesture is considered to be impolite.

None of L1-based CS such as foreignizing, code-switching, and literal translation was elicited in this experiment. This was probably because of the great distance between the learner's L1 (Japanese) and L2 (English). That is, learners' perception of the large distance between L1 and L2 may prevent them from depending on L1-based CS because they realize that these strategies will not work. This finding is consistent with that of Paribakht (1985) whose Persian ESL students employed few L1-based CS and of Chen (1990) whose Chinese EFL students used none of L1-based CS.

6.2 Effectiveness of communication strategies

The interlocutors assigned a score out of 5 to each item according to the criteria shown before. Both interlocutors scored 5 points (very effective) to the items which were successfully conveyed by one attempt. Therefore, we can regard the strategies themselves used in the utterance as effective. Concerning the items which were given 4 points as effective, however, some were identified at the second attempts and others were after several attempts. In this study we would like to consider that items successfully identified at the second attempts were largely or solely owing to the strategies in the second utterance. This is because that it may be difficult to consider the items succeeded after more than three attempts were identified owing to the strategies in the last utterance. There are high possibilities that the strategies employed in the previous utterances interacted with each other to increase the comprehensibility. Accordingly, in this study, strategies of items given 5 points and strategies of items given 4 points and identified at the second attempts were regarded as effective, and they are shown in the Table 4.

Table 4 Effective type of communication strategies

Item	Very effective CS	Item	Effective CS
guitar	non-linguistic	crab	paraphrase (D)
bicycle	paraphrase (C)	bicycle	approximation (S)
sofa	exemplification	temple	approximation (G)
	paraphrase(C)		+ paraphrase (C)
peacock	approximation (G)	peacock	approximation (G)
	+ paraphrase (D)		+paraphrase (D)
ladder	exemplification	courage	exemplification
courage	exemplification	kindness	approximation (G)
motivation	exemplification		+ exemplification
freedom	exemplification	freedom	exemplification
honesty	approximation (G)		
anger	approximation (S)		

C = circumlocution; G = generalization; D = description; S = synonym

There is a large overlap between the strategy deemed effective by the interlocutors and the strategy most frequently selected by the subjects for a particular item. 'Paraphrase', 'approximation', 'exemplification', which were frequently employed by the learners, often appeared as the effective types of CS. This convergence reflects, in part, the sensitivity of the subjects to the most appropriate means of expression for particular items.

6.3 Analysis of the surface realization of CS

It was sometimes the case in this study that the same type or category of CS was implemented both effectively and not effectively. The selection of CS is assumed to result in the strategic competence of the learners. However, there were significant differences among the learners in the way they handled the realization of the strategy. The differences emerged primarily in the realization of the strategies as effective or non effective forms of communication. We may say that not only appropriate selection of a communication strategy but also effective implementation of that strategy to convey the intended meaning are necessary for the successful use of CS by the learners. 'Strategic competence' which is suggested to be distinct from formal mastery of a language (e.g. Canale & Swain, 1980) involve the ability to use language effectively in spite of formal limitations. However, strategic competence will not be enough for communicating successfully with native-speaker interlocutors. Although the learners may share strategic competence, they differ greatly in implementing that competence, simply because their strategies interact with their different

levels of knowledge sources or competencies. For example, the limited target language competence of the learners may have affected their surface realization of the CS in terms of grammatical accuracy. Or that limited competence may have prevented the adoption of constituent strategies of a certain type of CS. Therefore, we would like to examine what competencies or knowledge of sources affect the effectiveness of CS in addition to the appropriate selection of the strategy, by comparing learners' utterances.

Firstly, it seems that effective strategies are those which take account of the specific features of the intended concept. We will point out some factors or competencies which seem to influence this aspect of the strategy implementation.

The learners used 'approximation' CS, but differed in the use of their constituent strategies. This affected the effectiveness of CS. While the learners quite often employed the 'approximation' CS in the form of 'generalization' (e.g. animal, bird, instrument, feeling, personality), none of them succeeded get across the intended concept within a few attempts, except one generalization which was expressed in the combination with the adjective (i.e. 'pure feeling' for *honesty*). In the same way, 'generalization' CS were successfully implemented in some combination with 'paraphrase' CS or 'exemplification' CS. For example, the learners used the strategies in such forms as 'The bird is colorful' for *peacock*, 'The reason, people start something' for *motivation*, and 'It's a Japanese traditional building' for *temple*. The usage of 'generalization' in combination with other complements or strategies is likely to provide the interlocutors with more clear information on the intended concepts so that they can easily identify them.

On the contrary, 'synonym' CS succeeded to convey the target concept at the first attempts, though the frequency in total was very small (only 'temper' for *anger*, and 'bike' for *bicycle*). The reason for success is that 'synonym' CS can more specifically transmit the similarity to the intended concept than 'generalization' CS. In order to use 'synonym' CS, however, more certain linguistic competence will be required for the learners than that of 'generalization' CS, because the use of 'synonym' CS more specifically draws on the learners' repertoire of linguistic knowledge.

Concerning the use of 'exemplification' CS, while they were most frequently employed by the learners, in particular to convey abstract nouns, many of them did not work effectively. Only 8 out of 68 attempts in total were ranked as very effective or effective. As 'exemplification' CS exploits the learners' knowledge of world or of particular contexts or situations, ineffective 'exemplification' CS was often employed in the form of situations which were too obscure for interlocutors to identify the target concept, because these situations were based on the learners' personal experience or biased understanding of the target concept:

'I can't play this.' (*guitar*)

'I have an examination and I have to study.' (*patience*)

'I always have this.' (*hope*)

'This makes me happy and I can't, I think, live without this.' (*hope*)

'People have one.' (*pride*)

In other cases of ineffective 'exemplification' CS, the information was transmitted in the form of a redundant story which made it difficult for interlocutors to identify the intended concept:

'For example, I'm very tired, so I finished school and I want to go home immediately. So I want my mother and my father to drive me to my home, but I must walk to go home.'
(*patience*)

On the other hand, effective 'exemplification' CS succeeded in creating not only a common sharing among people but also a specific or concrete context or situation which reflects the target concepts. For example:

'When people try Bunji-jump, this needs.' (*courage*)

'I study English, because I want to be English teacher.' (*motivation*)

'I think career woman have this.' (*pride*)

'If I have this, I can speak many people.' (*courage*)

From these instances shown as ineffective or effective 'exemplification' CS, we may say that the informative value of utterances affects the effectiveness of CS.

Secondly, the level of grammatical accuracy of utterances seems to influence the effectiveness of CS. For example, whereas local grammatical errors such as omission of the preposition, the pronoun, or the definite article did not seem to directly affect the success of CS, global grammatical inaccuracy such as incompleteness of the sentences clearly hindered the effectiveness of CS. For example:

'My friend go to school....' (*bicycle*)

'Don't free.' (*patience*)

'I try not to be defeated by....' (*patience*)

'Before people decide something, people think....' (*motivation*)

Grammatical inaccuracy is partly due to the learner's deficient linguistic competence as well as to the lack of clear information necessary for the realization of 'exemplification' CS.

As shown above, the analysis of the surface realization of some communication strategies used in this study made clear that not only strategic competence but other factors such as linguistic competence (e.g. grammatical accuracy) and informative value (e.g. correctness of knowledge or information) affect the effectiveness of CS.

7. Conclusion and implications for teaching CS

Although this experiment was concerned only with examining CS use in a highly controlled communicative task when learners lacked lexical items, we could gain significant insight into their attempts in using CS. The major findings from the data are:

- (1) None of L1-based CS was used and the learners resorted to only L2-based CS in this experiment.
- (2) Very limited numbers of non-linguistic CS such as mime, gesture, or sound imitation were elicited in this study.
- (3) The learners frequently used 'approximation', 'paraphrase', and 'exemplification', whereas the 'paraphrase' CS was used only to convey concrete concepts and the 'exemplification' CS was mostly utilized for transmitting abstract concepts.
- (4) 'Approximation', 'exemplification', and the combination of 'approximation' and 'paraphrase' were often judged effective by the interlocutors. The effectiveness ranked by the interlocutors, however, differed even when the same type of CS was used because of the difference of selection of constituent strategies or the difference of surface realization of the utterance involved the strategy.
- (5) Although the learners may share strategic competence, they differ greatly in implementing that competence, because strategic competence seems interact with their different level of other knowledge of sources. For example, linguistic knowledge will affect the selection of CS or the surface realization of CS, or cultural knowledge, knowledge of the world or situations will affect the informative value of the utterances.

Whereas 'paraphrase' was often found as a successfully used strategy in other studies (e. g. Haastrap and Phillipson, 1983), this type of CS was frequently used by the learners but often failed to convey the intended concept in the present study. This is probably because the communicative task carried out in the present study was to convey a lexical item in isolation in a highly controlled situations. However, we may need to take into account the effectiveness and usefulness of 'paraphrase' in considering the instruction of CS in the classroom.

While 'strategic competence' appears to have a different status from other language competencies (i. e. linguistic and sociolinguistic) proposed by Canale and Swain (1980), it is cleared in the study that the effectiveness of CS seems to be related to formal mastery of the target language and its implementation depends on upon the availability of other competencies (e. g. linguistic) in the target language and other knowledge resources such as contextual, world and paralinguistic.

In addition to the development of linguistic competence of the learners, we need to pay more attention to the training of CS in the classroom. While most researchers agree that strategic competence develops in the speaker's L1 and is transferable to target language use (e.g. Paribakht, 1985), many researchers maintain that direct strategy training in the foreign language classroom should be given (e.g. Færch and Kasper, 1983; Willems, 1987; Chen, 1990). For example, Færch and Kasper (1983) argue the benefit from teaching learners how to compensate for insufficient linguistic resources by using the totality of their communicative resources creatively and appropriately. They suggest that by learning how to use CS appropriately, learners will be more able to bridge the gap between pedagogic and non-pedagogic communicative situations. In fact, as argued by some researchers, traditional classroom instruction pays little attention to develop learners' strategic competence. Dörnyei (1995) recognized through his study that language classes do not generally prepare students to cope with performance problems where they encounter in real-life situations. And he concluded that one educational approach learners might potentially benefit from in developing their coping skills could be the explicit teaching of CS.

Here, the question as to whether all L2-based CS are equally beneficial for L2 learning also should be taken into account. Færch and Kasper (1983) make the thoughtful argument regarding the learning value of different types of CS and argue that only those CS which involve the three aspects of language learning - hypothesis formation, hypothesis testing and automatization are useful for learning. Among these three aspects, the process of 'automatization' is often suggested as the final goal of learning (e. g. Willems, 1995). According to Færch and Kasper (1983), compensatory CS by means of which the learner extends his resources without abandoning the IL system completely and lead to hypothesis formation as the first step in the L2 learning process, and they classify 'generalization' into the CS which has a positive potential learning effect and 'paraphrase' into the CS which has negative potential learning effect. Similarly, Littlewood (1984) speculates that 'paraphrase' is unlikely to produce learning since it may not help learners to expand their repertoire, while he admits that it may help them to become more fluent with what they have already possessed.

As to the desirable CS for the strategy training, Willems (1987) suggests that

'approximation' and 'paraphrase' are most suitable for practice by means of not too complex exercise material. While he seems to have some doubt about the positive learning effect of 'paraphrase,' he recommends it as preferable since the learner will become more acceptable in communicative situations and expand his chances to learn the language. In our study, 'generalization' and 'paraphrase' were frequently used by the learners but often unsuccessfully implemented. Therefore, what elements should be carried into the classroom to develop the effectiveness of these CS? Some researchers propose more substantial materials to teach CS by presenting linguistic devices to verbalize CS which have a finite range of surface structure realization. For instance, Tarone and Yule (1989) point out that circumlocution requires certain basic core vocabulary and sentence structures to describe properties (e. g. shape, color) and function. Likewise, Dörnyei and Thurrell (1992) consider the automatization of basic structures such as *it's a kind of*, *it's something you do*, necessary for circumlocution. Although these linguistic devices seem to be too simple for teaching, such exercises which specifically aim at strategic competence have not been sufficiently given even to the lower level students.

We accept Færch and Kasper's (1983) proposal that L2-based CS are involved in a speaker's hypothesis testing and automatization of an L2, and therefore can help the speaker develop communicative competence through learning. The results of the present study show that our students need to be provided with the explicit strategy training where they can not only expand their linguistic resources for language learning but utilize appropriate contextual, cultural, or world knowledge which increases the effectiveness of strategy use. Through the accumulation of such strategy training, learners will develop the availability of CS and increase their fluency in communication.

The present study may be only a preliminary attempt, since the number of subjects and concepts employed was limited and the highly controlled communicative task might have influenced the frequency of CS. However, it suggests a better understanding of the construct of learners' communication strategies, which would be of help for the improvement of the instruction to develop learners' communicative competence.

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Received September 27, 2001