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The Degree of Teaching Communication Strategies to EFL Students

Dr. Ahmed Ali Alsaghiar^{*1}

King Khalid University-Saudi Arabia^{*1}

*Corresponding Author: aaalsaghiar@kku.edu.sa

Abstract:

Foreign language students inevitably face oral communication difficulties due to their language limitation. Communication strategies are powerful tools to assist students overcome communication problems and keep conversations flowing. Yet, a few studies have examined the actual teaching of communication strategies in the classroom. This study investigated the degree of teaching communication strategies to English as a Foreign Language students and its relation to instructors' academic degree, and years of teaching experience. The researcher utilized a descriptive quantitative research method, and an online questionnaire to collect the data. The study sample involved 64 instructors $n = (64)$ from the English Language Department at King Khalid University in Saudi Arabia. The findings demonstrated that the instructors taught communication strategies to a degree ranging from almost always to rarely, and the overall mean score for teaching communication strategies was 3.53($SD=0.49$). The guessing strategy was the most communication strategy taught by the instructors, while the least communication strategy taught was the mumbling strategy. Furthermore, the findings pointed that there was statistically significant difference in teaching communication strategies degree attributed to the academic degree in the direction of instructors who hold a doctoral degree. There was no statistically significant difference between instructors in the degree of teaching communication strategies attributed to their years of teaching experience.

Keywords: Communication, Communication Strategies, Communicative Competence, Strategic Competence

درجة تدريس إستراتيجيات التواصل لطلبة اللغة الإنجليزية لغةً أجنبية

المخلص:

يواجه الطلبة الذين يتعلمون لغات أجنبية صعوبات في التواصل الشفهي بسبب محدودية لغتهم، وتعتبر إستراتيجيات التواصل من أهم الأدوات التي تساعد في التغلب على مشكلات التواصل الشفهي، والاستمرار في المحادثات، ورغم أهمية هذه الإستراتيجيات؛ فإن الدراسات التي تتناول واقع تدريسها ما تزال قليلة. هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى معرفة درجة تدريس إستراتيجيات التواصل للطلبة الذين يدرسون اللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية، وعلاقتها بمتغيري الدرجة العلمية للأستاذة، وسنوات خبرتهم في التدريس. استخدمت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي الكمي من خلال استبانة إلكترونية لجمع البيانات أجاب عنها 64 أستاذًا من الجنسين في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة الملك خالد بالملكة العربية السعودية. أظهرت النتائج أن درجة تدريس إستراتيجيات التواصل تراوحت بين درجتَي دائماً، ونادراً، بمتوسط حسابي بلغ 3.53 وانحراف معياري قدره ($SD = 0.49$). وقد جاءت إستراتيجية التخمين كأعلى إستراتيجية قام الأساتذة بتدريسها، فيما جاءت إستراتيجية التمتمة كأقل إستراتيجية تم تدريسها. أشارت النتائج كذلك إلى وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في تدريس إستراتيجيات التواصل تعزى إلى درجة العلمية للأستاذ، لصالح الأستاذة الأعلى درجة علمية في اتجاه الحاصلين على درجة الدكتوراه، وعدم وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين الأساتذة في درجة تدريس إستراتيجيات التواصل تعزى إلى عدد سنوات الخبرة التدريسية.

كلمات مفتاحية: التواصل، إستراتيجيات التواصل، الكفاية التواصلية، الكفاية الإستراتيجية

Introduction:

Nowadays, people from different countries, languages, cultures, and backgrounds communicate freely and timely. Students learn foreign languages such as English to interact with others, and extend their life horizons. English has become the most used language worldwide (El-Sourani, Keshta & Aqel, 2021). Students' ability to communicate effectively in English helps them getting better jobs, forming strong international relationships, and becoming fluent speakers. Furthermore, successful communication with others enhances students' confidence in using English and leads them to continue learning and improving their language proficiency level. In contrary, poor ability to communicate with others frustrates them and decreases their motivation, which might ultimately make them quit English learning. Communication can be defined as message encoding by the speaker and then decoded by the listener (Thao, 2005).

Mastering communication is not an easy task for English students. They face numerous communication problems because they do not have enough time to use and manage their linguistic knowledge while keeping the conversation going. Communication problems inhibit students' ability to deliver and receive messages due to their language limitation. Pawlak (2014) states that students even with a high foreign language proficiency level experience situations where they fail to communicate with others successfully. Students should learn how to overcome oral communication and improve their communicative ability in English.

Communication strategies (CSs henceforth) are powerful tools to help English students overcome oral communication problems that occur during their interaction with others (Willies, 1987). Communication problems are the mismatch between sent and received oral messages. CSs help students to communicate effectively, manage communication problems, avoid communication breakdowns, and improve communicative fluency (Doqaruni, 2013). Also, CSs provide students with confidence to use complex rules because they rely on these strategies once they experience a communication problem (Doqaruni, 2013). Accordingly, CSs are important strategic repertoire to enhance students' communicative competence and there is a need to investigate their teaching in the classroom.

Statement of the Problem

Researchers have widely examined what CSs EFL students use to address communication problems they encounter while communicating in English. For example, Wijayanto and Hastuti (2021) examined how elementary-level learners at a school in Indonesia use CSs. The study revealed that they frequently used the time-gaining strategy when they communicate their opinions and ideas. Nugroho (2019) investigated CSs used by learners with high and low English achievements. The study result showed that the time-gaining strategy was the most CSs used by both low and high English achievements followed by self-repetition. In addition, much empirical research suggests that teaching CSs improves students' speaking ability, and communication skills. For instance, Nurdini (2018) found that students' use of CSs improved their communication skills. Nevertheless, a few studies have examined the teachability of CSs, especially in the EFL context such as Laikuen, Rafik-Galea and Heng (2017), and Teng's (2012) studies. Triassanti, Mansur and Wardhono (2018) mention that CSs have not received the adequate teaching attention and there is a lack in incorporating CSs in teaching materials and in syllabi.

There is a need to examine what CSs EFL instructors teach in the classroom, and factors related to their CSs teaching. Reviewing the literature, the researcher realized that no previous studies have investigated the actual teaching of CSs in the EFL classroom in Saudi Arabia. This study attempted to close this research gap by revealing the actual practice of teaching CSs in the

EFL classroom and some factors that are related to teaching these strategies. Specifically, this study was conducted to investigate the degree of teaching CSs by instructors at the English department at King Khalid University in Saudi Arabia, and the relationship between teaching CSs and instructors' academic degree and their years of teaching experience.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the degree of teaching CSs by instructors at the English department at King Khalid University in Saudi Arabia, and the relationship between teaching CSs and instructors' academic degree and their years of teaching experience.

Objectives of the Study

This study aimed at:

- 1- Identifying CSs that are taught to EFL students.
- 2- Revealing the degree to which EFL instructors teach CSs to EFL students at the English Department at King Khalid University in Saudi Arabia.
- 3- Determining the relationship between the degree of teaching CSs to EFL students and the instructors' academic degree.
- 4- Determining the relationship between the degree of teaching CSs to EFL students and the instructors' years of teaching experience.

Research Questions

- 1- To what degree do instructors teach CSs at the English department at King Khalid University in Saudi Arabia?
- 2- Is there any statistically significance difference among instructors in teaching CSs attributed to the instructors' academic degree at the English department at King Khalid University in Saudi Arabia?
- 3- Is there any statistically significance difference among instructors in teaching CSs attributed to the instructors' years of teaching experience at the English department at King Khalid University in Saudi Arabia?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this current study can be identified in several curriculum and pedagogical aspects regarding CSs teaching:

- Drawing instructors and educators' attention to importance of SCs as tools to improve students' communicative competence.
- Encouraging researchers to conduct further studies on teaching CSs, especially in EFL contexts.
- The study emphasized the significance of CSs to improve students' language communication skills.
- The study can be helpful to teacher education programs to train pre-service and in-service teachers to the best practices in teaching CSs.

Limitation of the Study

The study is limited to the following:

Subject Limitation

The study is limited to the investigation of the degree of teaching CSs to EFL students and its relationship to the instructors' academic degree, and their years of teaching experience.

Time Limitation

The study was conducted on the Spring Semester of the (2020-2021) academic year.

Human and Spatial Limitations

The study was limited to instructors who teach English to non-native speaking- students of English at the English Department at King Khalid University in Saudi Arabia in the main campus.

Literature Review

Strategic Competence

The main goal of foreign language teaching is to develop students' communicative competence. Communicative competence can be defined as "the ability to understand and use the language to communicate successfully in authentic environments" (Negoescu, Bostina-Bratu & Morar, 2019, p. 61). Because the communicative competence is a theoretical notion, several researchers have developed models to guide its implementation in the foreign language classroom. Canale and Swain (1980) were the first to develop a communicative competence model consisting of three components: the grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence. According to Canale and Swain (1980), the grammatical competence focuses on students' knowledge of lexical items, rules of morphology, syntax, semantics, and phonology. The sociolinguistic competence concentrates on sociocultural rules of use and rules of discourse. The strategic competence is "verbal and nonverbal communication strategies that may be called in action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or insufficient competence." (Canale & Swain, 1980, p.30). According to this model, students exploit the strategic competence to remain in the conversation when the grammatical and sociolinguistic competences fall in short. Canale and Swain (1980) divided the strategic competence into two types: one that functions as a compensate for students' insufficient grammatical competence, and the other compensates for students' undeveloped sociolinguistic competence. This model emphasized the importance of the strategic component for beginning students.

Canale (1983) revised Canale and Swain's (1980) model by suggesting that the communicative competence should include four components: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. In this model, the sociolinguistic competence deals with the appropriateness of the language usage to the context, and the discourse competence concerns the unifying the spoken or written texts. Regarding the strategic competence, Canale extended its function to 1) compensating for insufficient grammatical and sociolinguistic competences and, 2) enhancing the effectiveness of communication. Trone (1983) stressed the importance of teaching students the use of the strategic competence. She urged instructors to provide students with opportunities to use this competence.

Bachman (1990) criticized Canale (1983) communicative competence model as it does not display how the communicative competence components are related to each other, and how they operate. He reduced the communicative competence components to be three: language competence, strategic competence, and psychological mechanisms. In this model, the strategic competence is seen as "a mental capacity for implementing the components of language competence in contextualized communication language. Thus, the strategic competence is no longer knowledge as suggested in the previous models, rather than it is an ability or capacity. Bachman insisted that the strategic competence should be taught and included in the syllabus. He also stated that the strategic competence is essential to all communication stages to help students communicate effectively. Negoescu, Bostina, and Morar (2019, p.63), state that the strategic competence is "the cognitive ability that allows to intervene in all sorts of research situation in concrete problems." For them, the strategic competence is planned sequence of activities that the learner goes through for the purpose of learning. It is not related to language proficiency. The student maybe proficient but not able to communicate in certain situations or about certain topics. Selin (2014) indicated that the strategic competence is related to the pragmatic and sociolinguistic competence, and it is possible to develop the pragmatic competence through teaching the strategic competence because students don't master it without teaching and training.

Communication Strategies

CSs term was first coined by Selinker (1972) as essential strategies to improving learners' second language communicative abilities, then Canale and Swain (1980), Canale (1983), and Bachman's (1990) communicative competence models include them within the strategic

competence as strategies or tools for language communication. Bialystok (1983) defined CSs as “all attempts to manipulate a limited linguistic system in order to promote communication” (p.102). Kasper and Faerch (1983) viewed these strategies as “potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal” (p. 36). Dörnyei (1995, p.55) defined CSs as “various verbal and non-verbal means of dealing with difficulties and breakdowns that occur in everyday communication.”

Candlin (1983) stated that the significance of CSs is that they enable researchers to understand learners’ internal cognitive behavior while using language, especially when they encounter difficulties in handling conversation with others. Second and foreign language learners often confront conversation difficulties because of their language limitations and lack of linguistic resources (Bialystok, 1990, Dörnyei, 1995). CSs assist learners in overcoming such oral interaction difficulties, remaining in the conversation, and providing them the confidence they need to communicate with others (Doqaruni, 2013). Rababa’ah (2015) found that teaching CSs improve students’ communicative competence. Masithoh, Fauziati, and Supriyadi (2018) stated that FL students’ use of CSs promote their speaking fluency and overcome their linguistics difficulties. Kalisa (2019) mentioned the use of CSs is essential to non-native speakers of English. CSs help students to engage in communicating with others and express their ideas. CSs provide students with confidence during conversations with native speakers of English.

CSs Categories

Some researchers have considered CSs as a cognitive phenomenon (Dörnyei, 1995, Ellis, 2015, Poullisse & Schils, 1989), emphasizing the problematic aspect of CSs. Thus, they believed that learners employ CSs only when they encounter a conversational problem. In addition, they perceived the use of CSs as a problem-solving behavior (Saeidi & Farshchi, 2015). Other researchers (e.g., Dörnyei, 1995 and Tarone, 1981) viewed CSs as interactional behavior and mutual attempts by both learners and their interlocutors to reach proper and shared understanding. Unlike the cognitive approach, which emphasizes the internal cognitive process of CS use to solve conversational difficulties, the interactive approach stresses that both a learner and the other speaker attempt to improve the quality of the conversation. The main difference between these two approaches is that the cognitive approach is less observable since it is difficult to uncover learners’ cognitive processes (Bialystok, 1990). Conversely, the interactive approach can be observed, as it focuses on speakers’ attempts to understand each other through their verbal and nonverbal CSs.

The cognitive approach neglects strategies that speakers jointly employ to negotiate meaning, such as clarification requests or the comprehension check strategy. Rather, it focuses on CSs that learners individually employ during conversation, such as paraphrase or circumlocution strategies (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997). In the cognitive approach, CSs are divided into reduction and compensatory strategies (Yule & Tarone, 1997):

- 1- Reduction CSs refer to reducing or adjusting the learner’s intended speech. Specifically, learners use this type of strategies to change or modify what they meant to say. This type of CSs include topic avoidance, message change, and abandoning the communicative goal because of understanding difficulties (Yule & Tarone, 1997). For example, learners might deliberately avoid speaking about a certain topic because they lack the vocabulary required to conduct a conversation about it. Learners may also change their intent and message if they feel that they are unable to continue speaking about a topic. For instance, learners might initially aim to talk about globalization but then find it difficult, so they adjust the topic and talk about similarities and differences among cultures instead.
- 2- Compensatory strategies concern those that learners use to understand others or to make others understand what they want to say (Yule & Tarone, 1997). Contrary to reduction strategies, learners insist on delivering their original message without change in compensatory strategies. In addition, learners use this CS to understand precisely what

others want to say. The three compensatory or comprehension achievement strategies are (a) approximation, (b) circumlocution, and (c) language transfer.

(A) Approximation: Learners use a word or structure they know is not completely correct, but it “shares enough semantic features in common with the desired item to satisfy the speaker” (Tarone, 1983, p. 62). For example, a learner might use the word pipe for water pipe.

(B) Circumlocution: Learners describe a concept when the specific word for the concept they are talking about is not available to them while speaking (Tarone, 1983). For example, learners might describe the function of a comb when they do not know the word comb.

(C) Language transfer: Learners switch to their native language.

Bialystok (1990) have criticized Kasper’s and Faerch’s cognitive approach for focusing on surface verbalization, arguing the additional importance of understanding the cognitive process of using CSs (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997). They argued that this approach should consider the “deep structure of strategic language behavior” (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997, p. 180). Bialystok (1990) also suggested classifying CSs into three cognitive perspectives: (a) L1-based strategies, (b) L2-based strategies, (c) and non-linguistic strategies.

L1-based strategies include language switching, foreignizing, and translation (described later in this section). L2-based strategies are sub-classified into approximation, circumlocution, and word coinage. The approximation and circumlocution strategies have the same functions as described in the preceding list. The word coinage strategy, however, refers to creating or making up words to express the desired concept (Tarone, 1983). For instance, learners may say air ball when they do not know the word balloon.

In contrast to the cognitive approach, (Tarone, 1983) divided CSs in the interactive approach into paraphrase, borrowing, and avoidance strategies. Paraphrase CSs consist of three sub-strategies: approximation, word coinage, and circumlocution. Borrowing strategies, which are further divided into literal translation, language switch, appeal for assistance, and miming. Literal translation refers to learners’ translation word for word from their first language, language switch means using the first language without translation, and in appeal for assistance, learners ask interlocutors about the accurate use of a linguistic rule or item. The third type of Tarone’s (1983) interactive CSs are avoidance strategies, which consist of topic avoidance and message abandonment. Topic avoidance refers to attempts to avoid discussing certain topics because learners feel that they are unable to talk about them due to their language limitations. The message abandonment strategy, meanwhile, refers to initiating discussion about a topic but then quitting because of the learner’s lack of linguistic resources. Tarone (1983) further identified three steps speakers follow when using CSs:

- 1- Speakers aim to talk about a specific topic
- 2- Speakers feel that the necessary linguistic or sociolinguistic resources required to talk about the topic are unavailable or not shared with the listener
- 3- Speakers then select either:
 - (a) Avoiding delivering the message they aimed to send
 - (b) Using alternative means to deliver the exact message

Some researchers have argued that these two approaches fail to include other important CSs. For example, Dörnyei (1995) mentioned that the cognitive and interactive approaches neglect the stalling time strategies, such as hesitation device strategies such as (mm, uh, what I want to say is...). Dörnyei believed that these strategies are important to give the learner time to think while communicating with others, which keeps the conversation alive. Dörnyei and Scott (1997) then suggested an extended taxonomy that includes all CSs learners might use. Specifically, they divided CSs into three categories: direct, interactional, and indirect strategies. The direct strategies are

further divided into (a) resource deficit-related strategies such as (message abandonment, message reduction, message replacement, circumlocution, approximation, use of all-purpose words, word coinage, restricting, literal translation, foreignizing, code switching, use of similar sounding words, mumbling, omission, retrieval, and mime); (b) own-performance problem-related strategies such as (self-rephrasing, self-repair); and (c) other-performance problem-related strategies such as (other repair). The interaction strategies are divided into (a) resource deficit-related strategies, particularly (appeal for help); (b) own-performance problem-related strategies like (comprehension check, own-accuracy check); and (c) other-performance problem-related strategies, which are the following strategies (asking for repetition, asking for clarification, asking for confirmation, guessing, expressing non-understanding, interpretive summary, responses). Finally, the indirect strategies are divided into (a) processing time pressure-related strategies such as (use of fillers, repetitions) and (b) own-performance problem-related strategies such (feigning understanding). Dörnyei and Scott's taxonomy was the last and most comprehensive taxonomy suggested to classify CSs.

Methodology

Research Design

The present study is a quantitative survey design of the descriptive research methods. According to Stockemer (2018), the quantitative survey is suitable to answer research questions regarding attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviors. The aim of this study was to describe the degree of teaching CSs in the classroom and its relationship to the instructors' academic degree and the years of teaching experience; therefore, the quantitative survey design was appropriate to conduct the study.

Participants

The study population were all instructors who taught at the English Faculty at College of Languages and Translation at King Khalid University in Saudi Arabia in the Spring Semester of (2020 -2021). An Online Google Forms Questionnaire Software was disseminated and administrated to all instructors (N=142) via the WhatsApp application, and 64 responses were returned. Basic information about the participants is displayed in Tables 1.

Table (1) the study sample distribution according to some demographic variables

variables	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	35	54.7%
	Female	29	45.3%
Degree	Bachelor	3	4.7%
	Master	32	50.0%
	Ph.D.	29	45.3%
Years of teaching experience	Less than 10 years	32	50%
	More than 10 years	32	50%
Language they teach	Native Language	8	12.5%
	Not native language	56	87.5%

The Study Tools

The researcher used a questionnaire consisted of two sections: (1) a section with four items eliciting information pertaining instructors' biographical information; and (2) a section with thirty items obtaining information about instructors teaching of CSs. The reliability, validity, and internal consistency of the questionnaire were evaluated. The correlation between each questionnaire item and the total score of the questionnaire was calculated at (30) instructors, the results are in the following table (2)

Table (2) r – value of the correlation between the item degree and total degree

No	Correlation	No	Correlation	No	Correlation
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1	0.50**	11	0.76**	21	0.77**
2	0.54**	12	0.83**	22	0.90**
3	0.83**	13	0.77**	23	0.67**
4	0.77**	14	0.84**	24	0.86**
5	0.71**	15	0.82**	25	0.84**
6	0.70**	16	0.55**	26	0.66**
7	0.60**	17	0.53**	27	0.73**
8	0.67**	18	0.56**	28	0.67**
9	0.66**	19	0.62**	29	0.54**
10	0.74**	20	0.52**	30	0.62**

** the value is significant at 0.01

Table 2 shows that there was significant correlation at ($\alpha = 0.01$) between every item and total degree, which demonstrates that the items measure what questionnaire aimed to measure.

Referee Validity: The test was presented to six experts in Applied Linguistics, Curriculum and Instruction, and Statistics majors with aim of ensuring the correct formulation the questionnaire items significantly and linguistically, and the suitability of the items. The referees suggested 3 items and adjust some items linguistically.

Reliability: the Cronbach's Alpha of the questionnaire calculation was 0.88. It can be concluded that the questionnaire is highly reliable to be used as a tool for the study.

Intrinsic Validity: The intrinsic validity was calculated from the square root of the reliability coefficient which 0.94, that there was high value of intrinsic validity coefficient. It can be concluded that the questionnaire has high validity to be used as a tool for the study.

Results and Discussions

Research Question 1: To what degree do instructors teach CSs at the English department in King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia?

To answer the first question, mean, and standard deviation were calculated for every item, and then they were arranged according to mean for each item in following criteria in Table 3.

Table (3) the criteria to measure the level of teaching CSs

The Level	Degree	
	from	To
Almost Always	From 4.20	5
Frequently	From 3.40	Less than 4.20
Sometimes	From 2.60	Less than 3.40
Rarely	From 1.80	less than 2.60
Almost never	1	Less than 1.80

Table 4 illustrates the results of analyzing the first question regarding teaching CSs.

Table (4) Averages, Standard Deviations, and Arranging for the Degree of Teaching CSs

N	Items	CSs	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank Order	The use
2	I teach my students to guess meaning from conversation context.	Guessing	4.33	.79	1	Almost Always
30	I teach my students to ask for an	Explanation Request	4.23	.86	2	Almost Always

N	Items	CSs	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank Order	The use
	explanation of any unfamiliar words, meanings, or language structures (e.g., “Can you explain what you mean by that?”).					
10	I teach my students to describe or paraphrase a concept when its specific term is not available to them.	Paraphrase	4.11	.91	3	Frequently
19	I teach my students to correct themselves when they realize that they made a linguistic error.	Self-repair	3.98	.86	4	Frequently
20	I teach my students to ask their conversation partner to clarify what he/she has said.	clarification request	3.98	.83	5	Frequently
4	I teach my students to say a series of related words or word forms until they reach the correct one (eg., “I have eat/ate/eaten).”	retrieval strategy	3.97	1.13	6	Frequently
29	I teach my students to ask for confirmation when they doubt their understanding (e.g., “What I understood is... Is that correct?”).	confirmation request	3.96	1.05	7	Frequently
16	I teach my students to ask their conversation partner to repeat	repetition request	3.91	.90	8	Frequently

N	Items	CSs	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank Order	The use
	when they do not understand something.					
26	I teach my students to use all-purpose words (e.g., thing, stuff, make, do) when needed.	using All-purpose words	3.85	.79	9	Frequently
21	I teach my students to express a lack of understanding when they are unclear about what has been said to them.	expressing non-understanding	3.84	.98	10	Frequently
23	I teach my students to repeat what they have heard to confirm their understanding.	self-repetition	3.79	.84	11	Frequently
5	I teach my students to ask their conversation partner for linguistic help (e.g., "What is the past tense of the word 'eat').	direct appeal for help	3.78	.99	12	Frequently
22	I teach my students to monitor their language accuracy while speaking.	Own Accuracy Check	3.76	.87	13	Frequently
25	I teach my student to check dictionaries or grammar books after a conversation to correct their mistakes.	Consulting Authority	3.75	.99	14	Frequently
9	I teach my students to approximate by using similar words or structures (e.g., pipe for water pipe, plate for bowl,	Approximation	3.63	.98	15	Frequently

N	Items	CSs	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank Order	The use
	cloth for shirt.(
28	I teach my students to talk around a topic until they are sure their listener has understood.	Circumlocution	3.59	1.16	16	Frequently
13	I teach my students to modify some of their intended message when they cannot communicate what they would like in entirety.	Topic Modification	3.55	.90	17	Frequently
1	I teach my students to use non-verbal strategies to bridge gaps in conversation (e.g., gestures, mimicry, facial expressions).	Non-Verbal Strategies	3.50	1.07	18	Frequently
6	I teach my students to indirectly ask their conversation partner for help (e.g., "Uh, I don't know how to say that).	Indirect Appeal for Help	3.45	.91	19	Frequently
7	I teach my students to change their intended message if they cannot accurately communicate what they would like to say	Message Abandonment	3.41	1.22	20	Frequently
17	I teach my students to translate from one language to another when needed.	Literal Translation	3.39	1.05	21	Sometimes
8	I teach my students to articulate their intended message without any	Insisting	3.30	1.00	22	Sometimes

N	Items	CSs	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank Order	The use
	modifications or replacemen.t.					
3	I teach my students to avoid topics or concepts that require language above their language proficiency level.	Topic Avoidance	3.25	1.13	23	Sometimes
15	I teach my students to use fillers as a time-gaining strategy (e.g., mm, uh, what I want to say is.(...	Time-Gaining strategy	3.23	1.03	24	Sometimes
12	I teach my students to make up words or phrases when needed (e.g., air ball for balloon, house shoes for slippers).	Word Coinage	3.14	1.26	25	Sometimes
14	I teach my students to avoid using words or structures they have not mastered.	Restructuring	2.98	1.29	26	Sometimes
11	I teach my students to switch to their native language when they encounter speaking difficulties.	Code Switching	2.73	1.17	27	Sometimes
18	I teach my students to foreignize or apply L1 pronunciation, morphology, and syntax to FL words or structures.	Foreignization	2.72	1.21	28	Sometimes
24	I teach my students to feign understanding to avoid embarrassment.	Feign Understanding	2.70	1.39	29	Sometimes

N	Items	CSs	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank Order	The use
27	I teach my students to mumble but pretend the correct word has been said when they do not know a word or structure (e.g., “I go to the aaaa with them).”	Omission	2.32	1.38	30	Rarely
Total			3.53	0.49	Frequently	

As shown in Table 4, the instructors taught CSs to a degree ranging from almost always to rarely, and the overall mean score for teaching CSs was 3.53 ($SD=0.49$). Most of CSs that were taught in the classroom, were at the frequently degree (18 items), while some of them (9 items) were at the degree of sometimes. The table demonstrates that none of the CSs was overlooked by the instructors as no mean score was at the degree of almost never for any item. These findings indicate that the instructors recognized the importance of teaching CSs. Several studies have found that teaching foreign language students' the use of CSs had positive results in their strategic competence (e.g., Rabab'ah, 2015, Teng, 2012). The findings of this study show that instructors taught some strategies that do not helps students to improve their foreign language such as topic avoidance and faking understanding. Perhaps the reason behind teaching of the topic avoidance and fake understanding strategies was to help students remain in the conversation. Previous studies such as Bataineh, Al-Bzour & Baniabdelrahman, (2017) were experiment studies where they targeted teaching certain CSs, especially CSs achievement strategies so it is difficult to compare the results of this study to them as this current study was descriptive.

The guessing strategy (item 2) was the most repeatedly CSs taught by the instructors holding the mean of (4.33). The higher frequency of teaching the guessing strategy more than other CSs types and its predomination might be due to three reasons. First, the guessing strategy is a popular strategy in teaching second and foreign languages. Students learn to guess the meaning of unknown words from the context. They also guess when they are not sure of what they have listened to. Second, the guessing strategy is possibly easy to use and teach as it only requires students to determine what is unknown from what is known. Third, the guessing strategy helps students keep the conversation flow. Interestingly, Uгла, Adnan & Abidin (2013) found that guessing was among less frequent CSs used by Iraqi FL students. Hence, it is essential to teach students the use of the guessing strategy.

The least recurrently CSs taught was the omission strategy (item 27), where its mean score was (1.38) This strategy assists students in focusing on interaction with other speakers. The success of its use depends on the coherence of the context and other speaker's ability to infer the meaning from the context. Teaching the omission strategy to the degree of rarely might attribute to pushing students to use words and structures even if they have mastered them. It can be said that the instructors did not prefer that students pretend and act as if they have said the correct words or structures. The table shows that the faking understanding strategy (item 26) was the immediate higher strategy above the omission strategy, which support the speculation that instructors were less interested in teaching CSs that make student fake their speaking or understanding.

Research Question 2: Is there any statistically significance difference among instructors in teaching CSs attributed to the instructors' academic degree at the English department in King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia?

To examine the significance of the differences between instructors in the degree of teaching CSs according to the academic degree, a test (*t*) was used for the differences between two independent groups and the results were as shown in the Table 6 t- value of differences between instructors in teaching communication strategies attributed to degree .

Table 6 that t- value of differences between instructors in teaching CSs attributed to academic degree

Degree	No.	Mean	Std. Deviation	t. value	Sig.
Master or less	35	103.03	12.89	1.96	0.05 significant
Ph.D.	29	110.00	15.86		

It is obvious from Table 6 that the t- value of the differences between instructors in the degree of teaching CSs according to the academic degree was significant in the direction of the instructors who hold a doctoral degree. This finding means that instructors with higher education are more likely to teach CSs. The reason behind this finding can attributed to the extensive knowledge and training instructors receive in their higher education studies, especially when they study a doctoral degree. Chen and Goh (2011) reported that English language instructors in 22 cities across China demanded for amore pedagogic knowledge and training to teach English adequately. Thus, it is necessary to provide instructors with sufficient knowledge and training as this current study revealed that the higher education the instructors have, the more they teach CSs. Instructors also need to be prepared to use and teach CSs under some circumstances such COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, Mardiana and Afkar (2020) found that CSs play significant role in online classes during COVID-19 pandemic as they make the distance communication between the instructor and students clear and comprehensible.

Research Question 3: Is there any statistically significance difference among instructors in teaching CSs attributed to the instructors' years of teaching experience at the English department in King Khalid University, in Saudi Arabia?

To determine the significance of the differences between instructors in the degree of teaching CSs according to the years of experience, a test (*t*) was used for the differences between two independent groups and the results were as shown in the following Table 7.

Table (7) t- value of differences between instructors in teaching CSs attributed to years of experience

Years of teaching experience	No.	Mean	Std. Deviation	t. value	Sig.
Less than 10 years	32	102.75	14.19	1.96	0.05 significant
More than 10 years	32	109.63	14.44		

It is clear from Table 7 that the t- value of the differences between teachers in the degree of teaching CSs according to the years of teaching experience is significant in the direction of the (More than 10 years), which means that they are more likely to teach CSs. This finding reveals the role that the years of teaching experience plays in the teaching of CSs. It can be speculated that with

more teaching experience, instructors realize the significance of teaching CSs to improve students' communicative skills.

Conclusion

The current study examined teaching CSs to foreign language students. Sixty-four instructors participated in this study. The data were collected via a questionnaire. Results revealed that the most repeatedly CSs taught by the instructors was the guessing strategy. This finding can be accounted for in terms of the fact that the guessing strategy is emphasized in classroom practice in teaching various language skills such as reading and listening. Instructors are familiar with this strategy and are aware of its importance. The second most regularly CSs was explanation request. Teaching of this strategy to the almost always degree can be attributed to the instructors' aim of encouraging students to ask for explanation when they do not understand. They want students to use this strategy to learn more about the language. Teng (2012) found out that a systematic training student of CSs use resulted in improvement of their ability to communicate effectively.

Results indicated that the most CSs taught by the instructors to the degree of frequently was the achievement type of CSs: paraphrase, self-repair, clarification request, retrieval, confirmation request, repetition request, use all-purpose words, expressing non-understanding, self-repetition, direct appeal for help, own accuracy check, consulting authority, approximation, and circumlocution. These strategies help students to achieve their communicative goal. Instructors seem to teach CSs that focus on language comprehension (paraphrase, clarification request, confirmation request, repetition request, use all-purpose words, expression non-understanding, approximation, and circumlocution) more than CSs that focus on language forms (self-repair, retrieval, direct appeal for help, own accuracy check, and consulting authority). This shows that instructors put much emphasis on comprehension than on language forms and accuracy. The instructors tended to follow the communicative language teaching principle in prioritizing comprehension over language accuracy. However, the results indicated that instructors taught two CSs to the frequently degree: topic modification, and message abandonment. These two strategies do not help students to achieve their communicative goals. It can be said that instructors consider students' language limitation and the importance of creating a safe environment where student do feel thread or required to discuss difficult topics for them. Abunawas (2012) found out that Jordanian learning English as a Foreign Language used approximation and circumlocution strategies more than other CSs. There is a need to examine if instructors teaching of CSs plays a role in frequent of their use by students. Further studies in teaching CSs should examine how these strategies are taught in online classrooms, especially during and after COVID-19 pandemic. Berardi (2021) stated that the use of distance learning during COVID-19 spread shows the importance of developing FL students' communicative and linguistic competence in online classrooms. Zou, Li, and Jin (2021) found that the unsmooth communication and, the lack of interaction with the instructor were the most learning processes face students while using online classrooms. Thus, future studies need to address this gap and find out how CSs improve online classroom interactions.

Recommendations

The following are recommendations stemmed from conducting this study:

- Including CSs in textbooks to guide instructors teaching and selection of appropriate CSs for their students.
- Including CSs in courses and workshops during English language teaching programs for pre-service and in-serves instructors.
- Enhancing instructors' awareness of the importance and the of CSs.

- Conducting further studies on how instructors teach CSs in online classrooms.

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