

The Effect of Communication Strategy Teaching on EFL Learners' Oral Production in Content-based Courses

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Abstract—Communication strategies (CSs) have been receiving ever-growing attention in the areas of foreign language teaching. This study aimed at examining the effects of teaching CSs on students' oral production in Iranian content-based courses. The study participants were 60 junior high students studying English at SAMA School affiliated with Islamic Azad University. Communication strategy instruction involved eight lessons spread over two months (Week 1 to Week 8) which was undertaken during 16 one-hour sessions. The students' oral production was measured through a series of picture-based story telling tasks. To this end, T-unit was applied to analyze the speaking samples. The results of ANCOVA revealed the positive contribution of teaching communication strategies to the students' amount of oral production in Iranian content-based courses. Thus, the inquiry provides persuasive arguments in favor of application of CST in content-based instruction. Moreover, teachers will find more efficient methods and activities for explicit teaching of communication strategies.

Index Terms—communication strategy teaching, content-based instruction (CBI), oral production, EFL

I. INTRODUCTION

Content Based Instruction (CBI) “views the target language largely as the vehicle through which subject matter content is learned rather than as the immediate object of study” (Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1989, p. 5).

While the most foreign language programs focus on learning about language, CBI highlights the importance of using language rather than talking about it. CBI put emphasis on maintaining a balance between language and content instruction (Lightbown & Spada, 1999). In a typical content-based classroom, learners use the Target Language (TL) to integrate the four language skills with academic subject matter (Brinton. et al., 1989).

According to Nunan (1998), the ability to speak in a foreign language is at the heart of what it means to be able to function in another language. However, students in a content-based classroom have serious problems in speaking (LaVan, 2001). Tarone and Swain (1995) reported the limited use of second language in immersion schools. They noted that immersion students' achievement in receptive skills is higher than their productive skills. This underachievement has caused researchers and teachers to question the nature of immersion language use (Punchard, 2002). Chen (2006) stated that less amount of speaking is a dilemma in content-based program, although it is internationally popular.

Regarding this problem, the role of communication strategies in developing communicative competence was emphasized. As Bialystok (1990) and Dornyei (1995) pointed out, the development of communication strategies enable language learners to compensate for language deficiencies and develop their communicative competence. Teaching communication strategies help learners “to offset any inadequacies they may have in grammatical ability and particularly, vocabulary” (Williams, 2006, p.1).

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND ON COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Strategies have subsequently been divided into two types; learning and communication. Learning strategies are defined by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) as conscious thoughts or behaviors used by individuals to facilitate their comprehension, learning or retaining new information. Communication strategies, on the other hand, are referred to as an individual's effort to find some techniques to bridge the gap between their communication goal and the current linguistic resources (Maleki, 2007). Since the notion of communication strategies was first introduced by Selinker in 1972, it has been investigated by different researchers (Mei & Nathalang, 2010). However, there has been no consensus on its correct definition (Huang, 2010). Scholars seem to have widespread disagreement on the exact nature of communication strategies and the issue of teachability of these strategies. There are generally two approaches to the debate (Chamot, 2005; Gallagher Brett, 2001; Lam, 2006; McDonough, 1999, 2006): intra-individual approach and inter-individual approach (Kasper & Kellerman, 1997).

Proponents of the intra-individual view (e.g., Bongaerts & Poullisse, 1989) regard Communication Strategies (CSs) as learners' problem solving behavior and evidence of their underlying mental processes. They note that since underlying

mental processes are unaffected by teaching, there is no need to teach communication strategies. According to Faerch and Kasper (1984) advanced learners are able to plan longer units and predict a communication difficulty beforehand and try to solve it in advance. Those who support the psycholinguistic problem solving school of thought on communication strategies assert that each learner select one or another strategy on the basis of his/her specific underlying cognitive processes. Kellerman (1991) advocating this approach, further mentioned that communication strategies have already been developed in L1 and since the strategic competence is transferable from first language, there is no need to teach communication strategies.

However, the proponents of inter-individual approach (Dornyei, 1995; Tarone, 1981) put emphasis on the interactional function of communication strategies and support the necessity to teach these strategies. Tarone (1980) noted that the term CSs relates to a “mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures do not seem to be shared” (p. 420). Oxford and Nyikos (1989) asserted, while characteristics such as aptitude, attitude, motivation, personality and general cognitive style cannot be taught, learning strategies are easily teachable. Considering communication strategies as one of the most common classifications of learning strategies (William, 2006), we can conclude that communication strategies lend themselves to teaching.

Various scholars developed Oral Communication Strategy Inventories (e.g., Taron, 1980; Faerch & Kasper, 1983; Dornyei, 1995) that involve similar and overlapping taxonomies. The two branches proposed by Dornyei (1995) reveal two opposite directions in communication. One is avoiding and the other is compensating (Ya-ni, 2007).

The avoidance or reduction strategies such as topic avoidance, message abandonment, and meaning replacement that have a negative effect on interaction are prevalent among low proficiency learners. Applying avoidance strategies, learners abstain from unfamiliar topics, avoid solving communication problems, and abandon the message they wanted to get across (Huang, 2010). According to Brown (2000), a learner who is not able to come up with a word or grammatical structure and has phonological difficulty wishes to avoid using it. When asked a specific question, the learners who find the answer too difficult to express will keep silent and this leads to occurrence of topic avoidance (Ya-ni, 2007). Avoidance strategies can be further divided into several subclasses, such as phonological avoidance, syntactic or lexical avoidance, and topic avoidance (Brown, 2000).

Compensatory strategies include making up for the knowledge that we do not possess (Brown, 2000). The achievement or compensatory strategies are divided into cooperative strategies (e.g. appeal for help) and non-cooperative strategies. L1-based strategies, such as code switching and literal translation; inter-language-based strategies, such as substitution, generalization, exemplification, word coinage, and restructuring; nonverbal strategies, such as mime and imitation are subdivisions of non-cooperative strategies. It should be noted that time gaining strategies, such as using fillers, prefabricated patterns, such as memorized phrases belong to the category of achievement strategies. Taking benefit of the achievement strategies, the learners find an alternative solution for reaching the communication goal and try to overcome their communication difficulties (Huang, 2010).

STUDENTS' LIMITED SPEAKING AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES TEACHING

Various scholars attributed the deficiency of students' limited speaking in language classroom to different factors. Huang (2010) attributed students' limited speaking to lack of time for oral practice in classroom and limited conversational opportunities outside the classroom. According to Huang (2010) students' speaking deficiency may, in fact, stem from their misconception of communication in a foreign language, such as necessity of having a perfect pronunciation, a good accent, a large vocabulary size, and a comprehensive knowledge of grammar. Lavan (2001) attributed the decline of the use of the target language to sociolinguistic factors, lack of instruction in L2 vernacular and colloquial structures. Broner (2000) noted that increased exposure to the first language, an increase in the first language at the curricular level, and the type of tasks children carry out in class might be regarded as reasons for limited amount of L2 talk in the classroom. Broner (2000) noted that special interactional needs of learners that may not be met by the use of L2 might be one of the factors that cause learners to resort to first language use. Williams (2006) believed that, students' limited speaking is due to the learners' fear of speaking about new and complicated topics. Students are reluctant to speak due to the fear of encountering unfamiliar words and phrases that hinder their comprehension and language production. Williams (2006) further mentioned that insufficiency and limits of learners' communicative competence in L2 prevent them from expressing themselves. Harley (1993) reported that in the content-based classroom, as the teacher does most of the talking, students have little chance to speak.

According to Dornyei (1995), the gap of limited speaking in content-based programs can be bridged by introducing and teaching some strategies that help students to improve their speaking proficiency, increase interaction in the target language, and cope with their oral communication breakdowns during communication. The findings of available research suggest that less proficient learners use more communication strategies (Labarca & Khanij, 1986; Poullisse & Schils, 1989; Liskin-Gasparro, 1996 as cited in Ting & Phan, 2008). Gallagher Brett (2001) in his study titled as ‘teaching communication strategies to beginners’ worked on an eight-week project in which communication strategies including turn taking phrases, requests for help, clarification and repetition, greetings and pause fillers were taught to beginners and the range of learners' responses to these strategies were investigated. Gallagher Brett (2001) also reported that although the use of communication strategies might depend on task and context, a range of strategic phrases could be successfully instructed to most learners. Rossiter (2003) reported the effectiveness of communication strategy

instruction on second language performance, including communicative success, speech rate, message abandonment and also communication strategy use. In this study speaking tasks including picture story narratives and object descriptions were carried out as pretests at Week 1, immediate post-tests at Week 5, and delayed post-tests at Week 10. Post-test results indicated a direct effect in favor of the communication strategy condition on range of strategies used in the object description task, which was more effective than the narrative in eliciting communication strategies.

II. EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON COMMUNICATION STRATEGY TEACHING

Maleki (2007) discussed the issue of teaching and teachability of communication strategies. He also addressed the issue of feasibility of incorporating CSs into students' school syllabi. In this study, 60 participants were divided into two classes; two different textbooks, one with CSs and the other without them, were taught in the classes. He reported that materials containing CSs are more effective than materials without them. He further mentioned that CST is pedagogically effective and conducive to language learning.

Huang (2010), extending the scope of the research on communication strategy use, investigated the effect of five variables; gender, language proficiency, self-perceived oral proficiency, English speaking frequency outside the classroom, and motivation of speaking English regarding students' oral communication strategy (OCS) use. Huang (2010) reported that students' self-perceived oral proficiency, frequent use of English speaking and motivation were strong predictors of using oral communication strategies. Neither gender nor English proficiency has any effect on the use of oral communication strategies. Mei and Nathalang (2010) reported that language proficiency, contrary to Haung's (2010) findings, task type and academic major affect learners' use of CSs. Alibakhshi and Padiz (2011), investigating the effect of communication strategy teaching regarding their use and stability reported a significant difference between experimental and control groups in the use of CSs and their stability over a period of time.

To date, there have been few studies regarding communication strategy teaching (CST) in content-based classes. Specifically, there have been few studies on the effect of explicit teaching of communication strategies concerning EFL learners' oral production in terms of their quantity of speaking, including Total Number of Words (TNW), Mean T-unit Length (MTUL), and Total Number of T-units (TNTU). Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of teaching communication strategies on students' oral production in Iranian content-based courses. Accordingly, the following research questions are asked:

1. Does CST have any effect on the Total Number of Words (TNW) of EFL learners' oral production?
2. Does CST have any effect on the Mean T-unit Length (MTUL) of EFL learners' oral production?
3. Does CST have any effect on the Total Number of T-units (TNTU) of EFL learners' oral production?

III. METHOD

A. Participants

The study's participants were 60 female students in two content-based classes at Sama private middle school in Tabriz, Iran. Their ages ranged between 14-15. There were 30 students in each class. The participants were homogenized using a standard language proficiency test. The mean score of two classes was set as a criterion score. Fifteen students whose scores were above 47 were drawn out of the 30 students in each class. Fifteen students comprised the experimental group and the other 15 served as the control group.

B. Instrumentation

Key English Test (KET), a standardized proficiency test at an elementary level, was administered to homogenize the learners on the basis of their general language proficiency. The data was collected through the description of picture-based tasks in which the students were supposed to make a story on the basis of the series of pictures. The researchers made a series of audio recordings of learners describing the story, as this would provide an opportunity to examine their speaking proficiency more closely.

C. Procedure

In the first stage of this study, KET was administered to ensure that the students are homogeneous in terms of general language proficiency. In the second stage, an author designed picture-based story telling task was administered as a pre-test. It should be mentioned here that this story-telling task had a wide potentiality for communication strategies to be used. The participants' speaking was recorded for 10 minutes. In the third stage, an eight week project was undertaken to introduce learners to a selection of communication strategies. Communication strategy instruction was given over a period of 16 one-hour sessions. Both the experimental group and the control group in addition to their common content-based instruction received communicative tasks. However, the experimental group received communication strategies instruction integrated into communicative tasks, whereas the control group did not.

In the fourth stage, to observe whether the communication strategies instruction would lead to more oral production, the same story-telling task which was used as the pre-test was administered at the end of the treatment as the post-test.

Students' descriptions were analyzed in detail. The researchers used T-unit as one main clause with all subordinate clauses attached to it (Hunt, 1966). It should be added here, T-unit analysis has been used widely in L2 research on

either speaking or writing development (Cooper, 1976, Gaies, 1979; Kameen, 1983; Halleck, 1995 as cited in Zhu Xinhua, 2008). But a few studies have shed light on measuring the quantity of speaking. The analysis of our study involved the identification of measures modeled by Zhu Xinhua (2007, 2007). The analysis of students' oral ability involved the identification of three measures, which were the total number of words (TNW), mean T-unit length (MTUL), and total number of T-units (TNTU). As far as the calculation of these indices was concerned, the total number of words included in each language sample and the total number of T-units were counted. Mean T-unit length was computed by dividing the number of words by the number of T-units (Xinhua, 2008). Learners' speaking samples were scored independently by two raters. The inter-rater reliability coefficient was 0.99 demonstrating there was a high correlation between two raters' scores.

Instructional Treatment

The treatment in this research involved eight lessons spread over two months (Week 1 to Week 8). Communication strategy instruction was undertaken over 16 one-hour sessions. Each lesson lasted about an hour. Teaching communication strategies following insights provided by studies, such as Dornyei, 1995, Lam, 2006, and Gallagher Brett, 2001, was as follows: At the beginning of every session the teacher tried to raise learners' awareness of communication strategies by speaking about the rationale, value, and communicative potentials of these strategies. In each lesson, the teacher taught the names and examples of communication strategies. Pupils were taught a number of the most common communication strategies such as non-linguistic signals, circumlocution, time-gaining strategies, approximation, code-switching, all-purpose words, and appeal for help.

It is worth mentioning here that the instructional treatment applied for the experimental group was explicit strategy teaching (Chamot, 2004, 2005; Rossiter, 2003). The instructor, one of the researchers, provided the learners with opportunities to use and practice communication strategies during pair works, role-plays, and information gap activities. Also individual description of picture-based tasks was used. As mentioned before, description of picture-based tasks was the basis of data collection in the pre-test and post-test. As it is mentioned by Gallagher Brett (2001) and Mei and Nathalang (2010), in order to encourage learners to use CSs, The instructor should provide students with the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of communicative and age-appropriate tasks.

The following description (Table 1) depicts the brief summary of treatment sessions in the experimental group.

TABLE 1
DESCRIPTION OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL TREATMENT: TYPE OF STRATEGY, EXAMPLE, AND ACTIVITY

Type of Strategy	Example	Activity
Non-linguistic signals	Using facial expression, mime, gesture or even sound imitation.	Asking students to describe a series of sport activity through non-linguistic signals.
Circumlocution	Describing the word scissor ... as "a tool used for cutting things such as paper and hair".	Asking students to list the items to be taken on a trip.
Time-gaining strategies	Using fillers and hesitation devices such as well, now let's see, as a matter of fact, uh, um, er, let me see, oh really?, and hmm....	Interviewing: Interviewees were supposed to share their likes and dislikes with other students. They had the chance to have a look at the list of time-gaining strategies written on the board.
Appeal for help	Asking for explanation by using structures, such as What do you mean? Sorry, I didn't understand.... would you please repeat it? ... I didn't get the point....	Using information gap activity; Acting as a customer and the telephone salesperson; the students practice different ways of asking for help.
Approximation	Using dairy instead of cream....	Listing ten concrete items within groups and writing the alternative terms denoting the same meaning.
Code-switching	Using "Konjed" (An L1 word with L1 pronunciation) when the L2 lexicon such as "sesame" is lacking	Role play: Acting as a chef and giving a recipe of their favorite food; students practice how to use code-switching.
All-purpose words	Using empty lexical item, such as thing, stuff, what do you call it?	Describing a picture-based story telling task and using all-purpose words in the case of not finding the specific words.

D. Design

The researcher employed a quasi-experimental design with pre-test, post test, and control group. In this research, teaching communication strategies served as an independent variable and students' speaking quantity measure, involving three measures of the total number of words (TNW), mean T-unit length (MTUL), and total number of T-units (TNTU), served as dependent variable.

IV. RESULTS

To answer the Research Questions 1, 2, and 3, three Analyses of Covariance (ANCOVA) were used for the comparison of Total Numbers of Words (TNW), Mean T-unit Length (MTUL), and Total Number of T-units (TNTU) of students' oral production in both experimental and control groups on pre-test and post-test. First, Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests were conducted to know whether the data have normal distribution or not. As Table 1 indicates, obtained

significance levels show that all variables' scores of control and experimental groups have been distributed normally in pre-test and post-test at $p > 0.05$.

TABLE 2
ONE-SAMPLE KOLMOGOROV-SMIRNOV TEST

	group	N	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
MTUL. Pre-test	control	15	.913	.375
	experimental	15	.857	.455
MTUL. Post-test	control	15	.770	.593
	experimental	15	.470	.980
TNTU. Pre-test	control	15	.785	.568
	experimental	15	.468	.981
TNTU Post-test	control	15	.979	.293
	experimental	15	.498	.965
TNW. Pre-test	control	15	.455	.986
	experimental	15	.616	.843
TNW. Post-test	control	15	.749	.628
	experimental	15	.558	.915

To answer the first research question which is: "Does CST have any effect on the Total Number of Words (TNW) of EFL learners' oral production?" an ANCOVA test was conducted. In the analysis of covariance, pre-test scores were used as a covariate for post-test scores.

TABLE 3
ANCOVA TEST TO INVESTIGATE THE EFFECT OF CST ON TNW

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
TNW_pre	7699.654	1	7699.654	51.167	.000	.655
group	5849.751	1	5849.751	38.873	.000	.590
Error	4063.013	27	150.482			
Total	104094.000	30				

As the results of the ANCOVA Test in Table 3 indicate, there is a significant difference in TNW at $p < 0.01$. That is, TNW showed a significant difference in favor of the experimental group in post-test. So, the first null hypothesis was rejected. In other words, CST enhanced the TNW of the students' amount of oral production in Iranian content-based courses.

To answer the second research question which is: "Does CST have any effect on the Mean T-unit Length (MTUL) of EFL learners' oral production?" an ANCOVA test was run. In the analysis of covariance, pre-test scores were used as a covariate of post-test scores.

TABLE 4
ANCOVA TEST TO INVESTIGATE THE EFFECT OF CST ON MTUL

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
MTUL_pre	2.114	1	2.114	1.714	.202	.060
group	.006	1	.006	.005	.945	.000
Error	33.295	27	1.233			
Total	360.131	30				

As the results of ANCOVA test presented in Table 4 show, no significant difference is seen on MTUL. It means that no significant difference was seen on MTUL in favor of the experimental group in post-test. The second null hypothesis was therefore not rejected. In other words, CST did not have any effect on MTUL of the students' amount of oral production in Iranian content-based courses.

To answer the third research question which is: "Does CST have any effect on the Total Number of T-units (TNTU) of EFL learners' oral production?" an ANCOVA test was conducted. In the analysis of covariance pre-test scores were used as a covariate for post-test scores.

TABLE 5
ANCOVA TEST TO INVESTIGATE THE EFFECT OF CST ON TNTU

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
TNTU_pre	1034.429	1	1034.429	35.313	.000	.567
group	311.192	1	311.192	10.624	.003	.282
Error	790.904	27	29.293			
Total	11571.000	30				

The results of the ANCOVA test presented in Table 5 show a significant difference on TNTU in favor of experimental group at $p < 0.01$. That is, TNTU showed a significant difference in favor of the experimental group in post-test. The third null hypothesis was then rejected. In other word, CST increased TNTU of students' oral production in Iranian content-based courses.

Tables 6 and 7 include the findings obtained from conducting correlation analysis for pre-test and post-score tests. Pearson correlation was conducted to examine the inter-rater reliability.

TABLE 6
PEARSON CORRELATION BETWEEN TWO RATERS' PRE-TEST SCORING

		MTUL.pre2	TNTU.pre2	TNW.pre2
MTUL.pre	Pearson Correlation	.998(**)	-.571(**)	-.159
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001	.403
	N	30	30	30
TNTU.pre	Pearson Correlation	-.576(**)	.999(**)	.817(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.000
	N	30	30	30
TNW.pre	Pearson Correlation	-.159	.819(**)	1.000(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.401	.000	.000
	N	30	30	30

As it is indicated in Table 6, findings of the Pearson correlation test, shows a high coefficient ($r = 0.99$) for all three variables at $p < 0.05$. As a result, there is a strong relationship between two rater's pre-test scoring.

TABLE 7
PEARSON COTER FOR ASSESSING INTER-RATER RELIABILITY OF POST-TEST SCORES

		MTUL.post2	TNTU.post2	TNW.post2
MTUL.post	Pearson Correlation	.996(**)	-.493(**)	-.069
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.006	.719
	N	30	30	30
TNTU.post	Pearson Correlation	-.489(**)	.999(**)	.838(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006	.000	.000
	N	30	30	30
TNW.post	Pearson Correlation	-.065	.847(**)	.999(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.733	.000	.000
	N	30	30	30

As it is indicated in Table 7, findings of the Pearson correlation test, shows a high coefficient ($r = 0.98$) for all three variables at $p < 0.05$. As a result, there is a strong relationship between two rater's post-test scoring.

V. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicated that communication strategies teaching affect the students' oral production in terms of the quantity of speech, including TNW and TNTU. However, there was no difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of MTUL. The experimental group, which had received instruction in the use of eight communication strategies, outperformed the control group, regarding TNW and TNTU, suggesting that the communicative strategy teaching might be associated with greater improvement in learners' oral production amount as one aspect of oral proficiency. In other words, after receiving CS instruction students produced more words and more T-units but the length of their production at clausal level did not differ (i.e., there wasn't much difference regarding median T-unit length in pretests and post test). A possible explanation for this issue can be attributed to low level of students' proficiency. It means that CS teaching helped them to increase the number of their words and T-units, yet their production of longer T-units lags behind, which requires further research comparing the performance of EFL learners, regarding MTUL, at different proficiency levels.

As mentioned in the review of the related literature, the responses to CST have not been unmixed (Chamot, 2005; Cohen, 1998; McDonough, 1995, 1999, 2006; Oxford, 2001, as cited in Lam, 2006). The findings of the present study are consistent with those of researchers, such as (Dornyei, 1995; Gallagher Brett, 2001, Lam, 2006; Tarone, 1981) who believe that communication strategies can be taught successfully and can affect language learners' oral proficiency positively. The positive effect of communication strategy instruction on student's oral proficiency was also reported by Alibakhshi and Padiz (2011), who investigated the effect of teaching communicative strategies for their use and stability over a period of time. Similarly, Rossiter (2003) reported the effectiveness of communication strategy instruction on second language performance, including communicative success, speech rate, message abandonment and also communication strategy use.

The results of this study follow along the same lines as some scholars' views, such as Bongaerts and Poulisse (1989) and Poulisse (1993) who believe that communication strategies are not teachable. As Grabe and Stoller (1997) noted, content-based instruction allows the use of strategy instruction and practice. As content-based programs enhance proficiency in the L2 by teaching academic subjects through the vehicle of the L2 (Genesee, 2001), it creates the best condition for CST. This instructional approach is regarded as a successful innovation in language teaching domain provided that it is used effectively. Creating an efficient content-based program requires particular attention to different aspects of language learning in detail. While planning lessons, the content-based teacher should take all four language skills into consideration. Teaching communication strategies is an effective way to improve students' communicative

competence (Williams, 2006), and content-based programs should attach more importance to learners' communicative competence. As mentioned before, a lesser amount of speaking is a dilemma in content-based programs and oral proficiency is an area where improvement is needed. Communication strategy instruction is a rational and practical resolution to face with students' oral proficiency problem in content-based programs.

VI. CONCLUSION

The findings of the present study might shed light on the implementation of CST in content-based courses. The present study has offered some techniques the teachers can use to teach CSs in content-based programs in order to develop students' oral proficiency. In teaching communication strategies, the teachers' role is very decisive. Most important is the teachers' attentiveness to developing students' oral proficiency in an analytical and regular way at all times (Stein, 1999). Teachers' imagination can help them to organize different activities to teach communication strategies.

Documentation of successful results of the present study, along with other empirical studies' results reviewed in this study, provides persuasive arguments in favor of application of CST in content-based courses. We hope the suggested methods and activities for explicit teaching of communication strategies are useful for all teachers, especially for those who do the difficult task of integrating language and content. Particular suggestions for further research include: 1) Investigating the effect of CST on the quality of students' speaking in content-based courses; 2) Analyzing differences in CSs use between high proficiency versus low proficiency learners in order to determine if there is a relationship between proficiency and use of CSs in content-based courses; 3) Determining the frequency of the kinds of oral communication strategies used by learners during communication tasks in content-based courses.

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