

The Effects of Attitude towards Speaking English and Exposure to Oral Communication in English on Use of Communication Strategies by English Majors in Vietnam

Quyen Thi Thuc Bui, Channarong Intaraprasert

School of Foreign Languages
Institute of Social Technology, Suranaree University of Technology, Thailand

Abstract- This study explored the relationship of attitude towards speaking English, exposure to oral communication in English and communication strategy use by English majors studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam to cope with communication breakdowns. The communication strategy questionnaire (CSQ) and the English speaking attitude questionnaire (ESAQ) were used for data collection. Data analysis involved analysis of variance (ANOVA) and the Chi-square tests. The results show significant variations in frequency of the students' use of strategies according to both factors. While the students' use of CSs reveals to be strongly associated with attitudes towards speaking English; its relationship with exposure to oral communication in English has been found to be minor.

Index Terms- communication strategies, English majors, attitudes towards speaking English, exposure to oral communication in English

I. INTRODUCTION

Today, with globalization, there has been an increasing need for being able to communicate efficiently in English. For a language learner, that ability requires communicative competence, which as suggested by Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983), includes grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competences. And of all the elements, strategic competence holds the decisive role. According to Dörnyei and Thurrell (1991), it is the underdevelopment of strategic competence that causes the lack of fluency and conversation skills which many learners often complain about. Strategic competence can be observed through the use of communication strategies (CSs), such as using paraphrase, literal translation, language switch, gestures, and appealing for assistance. These strategies help the two interlocutors reach their goal of communication. They also help raise language learners' confidence in communication (Dörnyei and Thurrell, 1991).

So far, many different definitions of CSs have been formulated based on experts' personal perceptions, beliefs, and the context of their research. Nonetheless, generally speaking, the strategies have been defined as learners' efforts (1) to maintain the conversation when facing difficulties (Corder, 1983; and Dörnyei and Scott, 1997); and/or (2) to enhance the effectiveness of the conversation (Littlemore, 2003). Besides, various taxonomies have been proposed due to different ways of classifying strategies. While Tarone, Cohen and Dumas (1976); Corder (1983); Færch and Kasper (1983); Paribakht (1985); Poulisse (1987, and 1993); Bialystok (1990), Nakatani (2006); Mariani (2010); and Somsai and Intaraprasert (2011) were generated from the experts' investigation; Bialystok (1983); Willems (1987); Dörnyei (1995); and Dörnyei and Scott (1997) have been reviewed and modified from previous topologies. Despite the variations, it can be said that CSs have been categorized as strategies for dealing with speaking difficulties and strategies for dealing with listening difficulties; the three common types of CSs are: (1) avoidance or reduction strategies, (2) achievement strategies, and (3) stalling or time-gaining strategies.

CSs have attracted many researchers. Besides the works focusing on the natures of CSs, i.e., the definitions, identifications and classifications, there have been empirical studies which explored use of CSs in relation to different factors. Examples of the investigated factors are: gender (e.g., Somsai, 2011); general language proficiency (e.g., Liskin-Gasparro, 1996); oral language proficiency (e.g., Nakatani, 2006), task type (e.g., Paramasivam, 2009); native language (e.g., Rabab'ah and Bulut, 2007); and attitude towards CS use (e.g., Dong and Fang-pen, 2010). However, the available research works on CSs have shown that 'attitude towards English speaking' and 'exposure to oral communication in English' have rarely been examined before. Besides, very few studies have been conducted with Vietnamese students. Therefore, research on use of CSs by this group of students with reference to these two factors is necessary.

Attitude is one of the factors that influence foreign language learning because how much effort students put into language learning depends partly on attitude (Gardner, Lanlonde and Moorcroft, 1985). Thus, it can be inferred that learners with positive attitude towards speaking English will be more involved in speaking activities and may try to make use of more strategies that help them deal with their difficulties in the course of conversation; and learners with negative attitude will be less willing to participate in speaking activities. Consequently, use of CSs by the two groups may be different. Additionally, as Johnson (1995) holds it, using English for

communication provides language learners with opportunities to perform a variety of language functions. This will lead to language learning. While using language to communicate, learners may try to use CSs to make themselves understood. Given that learners are different in their exposure to oral communication, use of CSs may vary among individual learners. For the above reasons, the researchers investigated CS use by English majors studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam, taking 'attitude towards speaking English' and 'exposure to oral communication in English' into consideration.

II. RESEARCH ELABORATIONS

A. Terms Used in the Study

- Communication Strategies

The term 'communication strategies' for the present investigation has been defined as attempts made by students in order to deal with oral communication difficulties in making the intended message across to the interlocutor and understanding the message sent from the interlocutor. They may be employed in pseudo-communication or real-life communication both inside and outside the classroom settings.

- Students

The term 'students' in the present study refers to Vietnamese full-time undergraduate students who are studying English major at eleven universities in the South of Vietnam. These universities consist of University of Pedagogy, Hochiminh City; University of Humanities and Social Sciences, Hochiminh City (UHSS); Ho Chi Minh City Open University; Hochiminh City University of Foreign Language and Information Technology (HUFLIT); Saigon University; Nong Lam University, Hochiminh City; University of Technical Education, Hochiminh City; Binh Duong University; An Giang University; Can Tho University; and Tra Vinh University.

- Attitude towards speaking English

The term 'attitude towards speaking English' in this study refers to the thought, feeling and emotion that the students have towards speaking English. Students' attitudes towards speaking English were classified into two groups: 'positive attitude' and 'negative attitude' based on their responses to the ESAQ.

- Exposure to oral communication in English

The term 'exposure to oral communication in English' in this study refers to the opportunities students can use English to communicate verbally. They may have a conversation in English with their teachers, their peers, or other people. 'Exposure to oral communication in English' was classified into 'limited to classroom settings' and 'non-limited to classroom settings'.

B. Research objectives

The present study lent itself to exploratory purposes. It aims at:

- Investigating whether frequency of the students' reported CS use varies significantly according to their attitudes towards speaking English and exposure to oral communication in English

- Examining the patterns of a significant variation in frequency of the students' reported CS use at different levels with regard to the students' attitudes towards speaking English and exposure to oral communication in English

C. Participants

The method of data collection employed for the present study was the stratified random sampling. The universities in the South of Vietnam were divided into two groups according to their locations: at the center of Hochiminh City - the most developed area, and in the other areas. 11 universities were chosen (5 from the former group and 6 from the latter). The purposive sampling method was also adopted. As a result, 995 students were selected from the two groups (500 from Group 1 and 495 from Group 2). The distributions of students within 'attitude towards speaking English' and 'exposure to oral communication in English' are: 929 students with positive attitude towards speaking English and 66 with negative attitude; 328 students with limited exposure to oral communication in English and 667 with non-limited exposure. Besides, the results of the Chi-square (χ^2) tests on the distributions demonstrated that:

- When compared with the students who hold negative attitude towards speaking, there was a significantly greater proportion of students holding positive attitude perceiving their levels of oral proficiency as fairly good or higher.
- When compared with the students who hold positive attitude towards speaking, a significantly greater proportion of students with negative attitude perceived their levels of oral proficiency as average or lower.
- When compared with the students who have limited exposure to classroom settings, a significantly greater proportion of students who have non-limited exposure perceived their levels of oral proficiency as fairly good or higher.
- When compared with the students who have non-limited exposure to classroom settings, a significantly greater proportion of students with limited exposure perceived their levels of oral proficiency as average or lower.
- Compared with the students who hold negative attitude towards speaking, there was a significantly greater proportion of students holding positive attitude having non-limited exposure to oral communication in English.
- Compared with the students who hold positive attitude towards speaking, a significantly greater proportion of students with negative attitude reported having limited exposure to oral communication in English.

D. Instrument

As the present study's context and population are the same with those of Bui and Intarapresent (2012), their 56-item CSQ modified from Dörnyei and Scott (1997), Nakatani (2006), Mariani (2010), and Somsai and Inatarprasert (2011) was adopted. Questions about students' exposure to oral communication in English were included. Questions on students' perceived oral proficiency levels (average or lower, fairly good, good or higher) were also added for the discussion part. Besides, to measure the students' attitudes to speaking

English, the ESAQ was used. It was constructed on the basis of the Language Learning Attitude Questionnaire (2004) and Okert's (2010) language learning questionnaire.

Moreover, to ensure that the respondents knew the purpose of investigation and answered the questionnaire with less fear and honesty, which, as stated by Intaraprasert (2000), is very important, the questionnaires' general instruction followed Dörnyei's (2003) suggestion. This involved providing information on the purpose, the importance of the study, and the organization responsible for conducting the study, stating there is no right or wrong answer, requesting honest answers, promising confidentiality, and expressing appreciation. The questionnaires were translated into Vietnamese to prevent misunderstanding or unanswered questions due to the respondents' language problem (Mackey & Gass, 2005). The translation was validated by three experts whose English and Vietnamese are comparatively good.

E. Procedure

The CSQ and the ESAQ were administered to students from the different 11 universities in the South of Vietnam. The researchers themselves carried out the process, strictly following the sampling plan so as to achieve the desired number and qualified responses,

F. Analysis

The data gathered were analyzed through five steps as follows.

1. Information about the students' CS use, attitudes towards speaking English, exposure to oral communication in English, and perceived oral proficiency levels were coded.
2. The input of data into SPSS was done and cross-checked to avoid mistakes that might influence the results. The strategy items were categorized into two groups: strategies the students used to express the intended message to the interlocutor (MS) with 38 items; and those the students used to comprehend the message (MR) with 18 items.
4. First, the reliability was examined to see whether the data would be qualified for quantitative analysis. The results of Alpha Coefficient (α) or Cronbach Alpha were used to check the internal consistency of the CSQ. The reliability estimates based on the responses of 995 students are: .90 (as a whole); .85 (for the MS category); and .80 (for the MR category). They are considered acceptable by the rule of thumb of .70 for research purposes as suggested by Fraenkel and Wallen (2007).
5. Next, ANOVA and the Chi-square tests were conducted. The data were examined at three levels: CS use in overall, CS use in the two categories, and individual CS use.

III. FINDINGS

A Variation in Frequency of Students' Overall Reported CS Use

Table 1: Summary of the first level analysis

Attitudes to Speaking English					
Positive (n = 929)	Negative (n = 66)	Comments			
Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Sig. Level	Variation Pattern
2.55	.32	2.56	.30	N.S.	Positive > Negative
Exposure to Oral Communication					

on in English					
Limited (n = 328)	Non-limited (n = 667)	Comments			
Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Sig. Level	Variation Pattern
2.54	.29	2.58	.32	N.S.	-

Note: S.D.: standard of deviation; Sig. level: significant level; N.S.: not significant

Based on the results of ANOVA, Table 1 demonstrates that frequency of students' overall CS use varied only according to their attitudes towards speaking English. In other words, the students who hold positive attitude towards speaking English reported using CSs more frequently than those who hold negative attitude. Meanwhile, no matter what type of exposure to oral communication in English students have, they did not report employing strategies, as a whole, differently.

B Variation in Frequency of Students' Use of CSs under the Two Categories MS and MR

- *Variation according to students' attitudes towards speaking English*

Table 2: Variation in Frequency of Students' Use of CSs under the Two Categories according to their Attitudes towards Speaking English

Category	Positive (n = 929)	Negative (n = 66)	Comments			
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Sig. Level	Variation Pattern
MS	2.53	.31	2.39	.32	p<.001	Positive> Negative
MR	2.64	.37	2.55	.36	p<.05	Positive> Negative

Note: S.D.: standard of deviation; Sig. level: significant level

As seen in Table 2, the results of ANOVA show that frequency of students' reported strategy use varied in both of the MS or MR categories according to their attitudes towards speaking English.

- *Variation according to students' exposure to oral communication in English*

Table 3: Variation in Frequency of students' Use of CSs under the Two Categories according to their Exposure to Oral Communication in English

Category	Limited (n = 328)	Non-limited (n = 667)	Comments			
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Sig. Level	Variation Pattern

MS	2.51	.32	2.52	.31	N.S.	-
MR	2.66	.37	2.63	.37	N.S.	-

Note: S.D.: standard of deviation; Sig. level: significant level; N.S.: not significant

The results of ANOVA (Table 3) reveal no significant variations in frequency of students' reported strategy use in either MS or MR category according to their exposure to oral communication in English.

C Variation in Frequency of Students' CS Use at individual level

● Variation according to the students' attitudes towards speaking English

The results of the Chi-square tests reveal that use of 12 out of 56 individual CSs varied significantly in association with students' attitudes towards speaking English, with two different patterns of variation: Positive>Negative; and Negative>Positive.

The first variation pattern illustrates that a significantly higher percentage of students with positive attitude towards speaking English than those with negative attitude reported high employment of 11 individual CSs. These achievement strategies which mostly involve the students' self-reliance consist of 'trying to catch the interlocutor's main point' (MR9), 'paying attention to the interlocutor's pronunciation' (MR14), 'trying to speak clearly and loudly to make oneself heard' (MS36), 'actively encouraging oneself to express what one wants to say' (MS31), 'using synonyms or antonyms instead of the exact intended words' (MS6), 'using categories instead of the exact intended words' (MS4), 'paying attention to the subject and verb of the interlocutor's sentence' (MR15), 'asking the interlocutor to confirm if one's understanding of his/her message is correct' (MR8), 'consulting a dictionary, a book, or another type of document for how to express the intended meaning' (MS30), 'using definitions instead of the exact intended words' (MS3), and 'describing characteristics or elements instead of the exact intended words' (MS9). The second variation pattern shows that a significantly greater percentage of students holding negative attitude towards speaking English than those with positive attitude reported high employment of only 1 CS, i.e. 'appealing for assistance from someone else around to clarify the interlocutor's message' (MR7).

● Variation according to the students' exposure to oral communication in English

The results of the Chi-square tests demonstrate that use of 26 out of 56 individual CSs varied significantly with regard to the students' exposure to oral communication in English. Two different patterns of variation are: Limited>Non-limited, and Non-limited>Limited.

The first variation pattern shows that a significantly higher percentage of students with limited exposure to oral communication in English than those with non-limited exposure reported high use of 12 individual CSs. These strategies, which mainly involve the students' employment of help-seeking and mother tongue (L1) as well as avoidance, are: 'using all-purpose words instead of the exact intended ones' (MS1), 'thinking first of what one wants to say in Vietnamese and then constructing the English sentence' (MS21), 'asking the interlocutor to slow down' (MR3), 'keeping silent to gain time to think about how to express the intended message' (MS14), 'appealing for help from the interlocutor for how to express the intended meaning' (MS27), 'asking the interlocutor to simplify his/her language' (MR1), 'trying to translate into Vietnamese little by little to understand what the interlocutor has said' (MR12), 'appealing for assistance from someone else around for how to express the intended meaning' (MS28), 'appealing for assistance from someone else around to clarify the interlocutor's message' (MR7), 'giving up when one can't make himself/herself understood' (MS38), 'leaving the message unfinished because of some language difficulty' (MS24), and 'asking the interlocutor to use Vietnamese' (MR4).

The second variation pattern indicates that a significantly higher percentage of students with non-limited exposure to oral communication in English than those with limited exposure reported high use of 14 individual CSs. This group mostly comprises self-reliant achievement strategies. They include: 'trying to catch the interlocutor's main point' (MR9), 'paying attention to the interlocutor's pronunciation' (MR14), 'paying attention to one's own pronunciation' (MS34), 'trying to speak clearly and loudly to make oneself heard' (MS36), 'trying to imitate native speakers' pronunciation' (MS35), 'using synonyms or antonyms instead of the exact intended words' (MS6), 'asking the interlocutor to confirm if one's understanding of his/her message is correct' (MR8), 'trying to emphasize the subject and verb of the sentence' (MS33), 'repeating or rephrasing what the interlocutor has just said to gain time to think how to get the intended message across to the interlocutor' (MS19), 'spelling or writing out the intended words' (MS12), 'using definitions instead of the exact intended words' (MS8), 'describing characteristics or elements instead of the exact intended words' (MS9), 'thinking first of a sentence one already knows in English and then trying to change it to fit the situation' (MS22), and 'self-correcting incorrect and inappropriate utterances to correct understanding' (MS20).

IV. DISCUSSIONS

● Use of CSs and the Students' Attitudes towards Speaking English

Attitude has long been found associated with language learning strategies, in which, to many scholars, some CSs are included. Different empirical research works, such as Elyidirim and Ashton (2006), Sadighi and Zarafshan (2006), and Çetingöz and Özkal (2009) have concluded that students who have positive attitude towards language learning use more strategies than those with negative attitude. Nonetheless, attitude has not been systematically investigated in the field of CSs. The researcher has hypothesized three

possible explanations: motivation to speak English, levels of oral proficiency, and opportunities to speak English for the variations in students' CS use in respect to students' attitudes towards speaking English.

Given that significant relationship between students' use of CSs and their attitudes exists at all three levels of data analysis, namely overall use, the MS and MR categories, and individual strategies; the findings of the present investigation demonstrate that students' 'attitudes' has been found the strongest factor related to their use of CSs with the students who hold positive attitude towards speaking English employing CSs significantly more frequently than those who hold negative attitude. Moreover, at the individual level, the former group reported using 11 CSs at significantly higher frequency than the latter group. They mostly consist of self-reliant achievement strategies, whereas significantly higher frequency of use of the latter group was found in only one strategy, i.e. *'appealing for assistance from someone else around to clarify the interlocutor's message (MR7)*, which belongs to help-seeking strategies.

One factor that the researcher hypothesized to possibly cause the differences in students' individual CS use related to their attitudes towards speaking English is their motivation to speak English. Gardner (1985) regards attitudes as components of motivation in language learning. Furthermore, "motivation ... refers to the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favorable attitudes toward learning the language" (Gardner, 1985, p.10). As far as Gardner's suggestion is concerned, the students with positive attitude towards speaking English are those who have high motivation in communicating orally in this language. With respect to students' use of strategies, highly motivated students reported employing CSs including functional practice strategies, such as 'extracurricular effort to communicate in the target language'; and conversational input elicitation strategies, such as 'asking for pronunciation correction', 'requesting slower speech', and 'guessing what the interlocutor will say', more often than did the less motivated students (Oxford and Nyikos, 1989).

Moreover, as found by Huang (2010) in his study on factors influencing the CSs of technological university students in Taiwan, motivation to speak English was one of the powerful predictors of the use of oral CSs. Furthermore, Peng (2007) studied the willingness to communicate in English of Chinese college students, reporting that motivation is a strong predictor of students' willingness to communicate in English. Thus, it could be said that the students with positive attitude towards speaking English are more willing to speak the language than those with negative attitude; they tend to strive to solve communicative breakdowns. This might have led to the significantly more frequent use of individual CSs, especially the self-reliant achievement ones, by the students with positive attitude when compared with those with negative attitude.

A closer look at the types of CSs used more often by each group of students has provided another possible factor that may explain the findings: students' levels of oral proficiency. In the present study, the characteristics of the research subjects in terms of students' perceived oral proficiency and their attitudes towards speaking English show that a significantly greater proportion of students who hold positive attitude is at fairly good or higher levels, while a significantly greater proportion of students who hold negative attitude falls into average or lower levels. Thus far, oral proficiency has been evidenced to relate to learners' CS use in empirical studies conducted by different researchers, namely Huang and Van Naerssen (1987), Margolis (2001), Wannaruk (2003), Weerarak (2003), Nakatani (2006), and Lam (2010). This maybe because the students who have good communicative competence are more willing to communicate (Chen, 2009; and Huang and Van Naerssen, 1987) and are not afraid of losing face (Huang and Van Naerssen, 1987). On top of that, they make use of more linguistic demanding CSs with higher frequency and a wider range than do the students with low level of oral proficiency.

Another factor - opportunities to speak English is the possible reason for the variations of individual CS use in students with different attitudes towards speaking English. On the one hand, the characteristics of the research subjects indicate that a significantly greater proportion of students who hold positive attitude towards speaking English than those with negative attitude are those whose exposure to oral communication in English is not limited to classroom settings. That is, when compared with the students who hold negative attitude, the students with positive attitudes have more opportunities to communicate orally in English. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the more opportunities students speak English, the more experiences in coping with difficulties they could accumulate due to the variety of situations and interlocutors they encounter. Hence, when compared with those who hold negative attitude, the students with positive attitude, with more opportunities to speak English, might have better ability to deal with communication breakdowns by themselves. This, in turn, has possibly led to the significantly higher use of self-reliant achievement strategies of the students who hold positive attitude than those with negative attitude as found in the present investigation.

In summary, the three hypothesized factors: motivation to speak English, levels of oral proficiency, and opportunities to speak English are possibly attributed to the significant variations in students' individual CS use according to their attitudes towards speaking English. Nevertheless, there has been no definitely certain evidence for what really caused these significant differences. Therefore, investigation of these aspects is still necessary.

● *Use of CSs and the Students' Exposure to Oral Communication in English*

Huang (2010) found that frequency of speaking English outside the classroom was strongly related to students' use of oral CSs. Additionally, Somsai (2011) explored this variable, concluding that the frequency and variety of strategy use were significantly greater for students who have had wider exposure to oral communication in English. However, such a strong relationship does not exist in the present investigation. For the present study, significant differences in CS use in association with exposure to oral communication have only been found at the individual strategy level.

When compared with the students with non-limited exposure to oral communication in English to classroom settings, those with limited exposure tend to employ non-self-reliant strategies which comprise help-seeking and L1-based CSs more frequently. These

students also prefer avoidance/reduction strategies, namely *'giving up when one can't make the interlocutor understand his message'* (MR38), and *'leaving the message unfinished because of some language difficulty'* (MS24). For the students with non-limited exposure, reported with high frequency of use are self-reliant achievement strategies, such as *'trying to catch the interlocutor's main point'* (MR9); *'trying to speak clearly and loudly to make oneself heard'* (MS36); and *'describing characteristics or elements instead of the exact intended words'* (MS9). Some factors hypothesized by the researcher to explain such significant differences are: opportunities to deal with communication difficulties, levels of oral proficiency, and attitude towards speaking English.

The first possible factor is opportunities to deal with communication problems. CSs are the ways and means speakers employ when they experience a problem in oral communication, either because they cannot say what they would like to say or because they cannot understand what is being said to them (Mariani, 2010). In this view, CSs are by no means crucial for communication in a foreign or second language. That is, the more opportunities the learners have to communicate in English, the more problems they have to cope with, and gradually, they become more skillful in using CSs to deal with the breakdowns.

The students with non-limited exposure to oral communication in English, when compared with those who have limited exposure, have more opportunities to communicate in the language; This may explain why they reported using achievement strategies more frequently than did the students with limited exposure. Consequently, opportunities to deal with communication problems can possibly be associated with the differences in high use of individual strategies of the two groups of students related to exposure to oral communication in English.

For the present investigation, a significant higher proportion of students with non-limited exposure to oral communication in English perceived their oral proficiency levels as fairly good or higher. As Norton and Toohey (2001) hold it, the success of good language learners, especially in communication, depends very much on the degree and quality of exposure to a variety of conversations in their communities. Besides conversing with the teachers and peers in class, the students with non-limited exposure have chances to communicate with other interlocutors who may have higher level of oral proficiency than them. This may have helped them become more proficient in oral communication and less dependent on L1-based CSs than the students who have limited exposure. This is in line with the findings of Wannaruk (2003) and Weerarak (2003) that students with higher level of oral proficiency employ L1-based strategies less frequently than do those with lower level. Furthermore, as asserted by Margolis (2001), oral proficiency is negatively related to the use of reduction strategies. It makes sense to say that the differences in individual CS use by the two groups of students might be attributed to levels of perceived oral proficiency accordingly.

Another possible explanation for the preferences in individual CS use of the two groups is attitude towards speaking. As observed through the characteristics of the participants, a significantly higher proportion of students with non-limited exposure to oral communication in English belongs to the group of positive attitude towards speaking English while a significant higher proportion of students with limited exposure reported holding the negative attitude. It can be said that students of the former group are more motivated to speak English than the latter group. Therefore, the students with non-limited exposure and positive attitude are likely to rely on self-reliant strategies, while those with limited exposure and negative attitude tend to go for reduction; non-self-reliant; and L1-based strategies in coping with communication breakdowns.

In sum, in terms of exposure to oral communication in English, opportunities to deal with communication breakdowns, levels of oral proficiency, and attitude towards speaking English might be the factors related to variations in use of CSs of the students. Nonetheless, we cannot be definitely sure about the real reason for these significant differences. Thus, it may be advisable that future research investigate these aspects.

V. CONCLUSION

The present study has contributed more knowledge to the field of CSs, especially on CS use by Vietnamese students of English. It suggests that use of strategy by English major students studying at the universities in the South of Vietnam for coping with communication breakdowns is strongly related to their attitudes towards speaking English. It also reveals minor relationship between use of CSs by this group of students and their exposure to oral communication in English.

One finding of the present study suggests that the students who hold positive attitude towards speaking English reported significantly higher frequency and wider variety of strategy use than did those who hold negative attitude. Hence, teachers should pay more attention to the latter group. Introduction of different CSs and how to use them effectively is necessary.

Furthermore, as found in the present study, the students who hold negative attitudes towards speaking English are likely to have average or low levels oral proficiency. They may not like to speak the language because they lack self-confidence on their conversational ability. As Tarone (1980) suggests, CSs can help learners expand their language. The learners' language output is imperfect grammatically and lexically in the course of communication, but they may be exposed to language input that may result in language learning. Thus, teachers should show the students that CSs can save them from problems, and that they can even be able to improve their oral communication skill when they speak and use CSs more frequently. Games, songs, problem-solving, and topic discussion which are related to the students' needs and interests are useful in this case. They not only give opportunities for the students to practice using CSs, but will hopefully help the students improve their language and positively change the students' attitude towards speaking English as well.

Finally, arising out of the findings, it was found that when compared to the students whose exposure to oral communication in English is not limited to classroom settings, the students with limited exposure tend to rely more on reduction strategies, translation and Vietnamese (L1-based strategies). These strategies have their disadvantages. Reduction strategies have been considered as useless

(Færch and Kasper, 1980) and even harmful (Willems, 1987) for language learning. They are not preferred by successful learners (Margolis, 2001). Besides, translation is not really appropriate for oral communication due to the time for processing, and Vietnamese does not work in conversations with foreigners. Therefore, teachers should take this into consideration. They need to encourage the students, especially those who have limited exposure to avoid using these strategies. Models and analysis on the use of different strategies should be provided to the students with limited exposure so that they can see rather than reduction strategies, translation or Vietnamese, there are alternative ways that may be better for both communication and language improvement.

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AUTHORS

First Author – Quyen Thi Thuc Bui, Ph.D. candidate, School of Foreign Languages, Suranaree University of Technology, Thailand.
Email address: thuc_quyen@yahoo.com

Second Author – Channarong Intaraprasert, Assoc Prof., Ph.D., School of Foreign Languages, Suranaree University of Technology, Thailand.
Email address: georgeintara@sut.ac.th