

Filipino College Freshman Students' Oral Compensatory Strategies

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine the compensatory strategies most frequently used by 41 Filipino college freshman students in a private university and their relation to course, first language, type of high school graduated from and English 1a grade. Two oral tasks namely oral interview and picture-cued narration were used as the primary sources of data. The results indicate that from the seven compensatory strategies namely switching to the mother tongue, getting help, using mime, selecting the topic, adjusting the message, coining words, avoiding communication partially or totally, and using circumlocution or synonym, the most frequently used was switching to mother tongue. When the compensatory strategies and the four identified variables were correlated, there was a negative relationship between compensatory strategies used and grade in English 1a. This implies the need to explicitly teach students these compensatory strategies for them to cope with their limitations in oral communication.

Key words: compensatory strategies, code-switching, approximating the message, getting help, using mime, avoiding communication partially or totally, selecting the topic, adjusting the message, coining words

Introduction

One important goal of language teaching is to develop the communicative competence of learners. Whenever language proficiency is addressed in the English classroom, both language and content area teachers face problems regarding the use of English as the students' medium of communication particularly the students' inability to express themselves orally. It has been observed that when

learners are asked to explain, discuss, converse or ask questions in English, they frequently stop speaking because they hardly know what to say. Put more simply, learners exhibit limitations in oral communication. One reason for this is that second language (L2) learners attempt to use a language which is not their own. Their experience is different from those who think and speak in the same language. Cook (1996) argues that "unlike L1 children, L2 learners are always wanting to express things for which they do not have the means in the second language" (p. 67). To cope, L2 learners need to employ compensatory strategies to be able to go on in any communicative situation.

Oxford (1990) popularized the most comprehensive listing of strategies that language learners employ. In Oxford's taxonomy, there are two main types of language learning strategies: the *direct strategies* and the *indirect strategies*. Among the direct strategies are compensatory strategies that "enable learners to use the new language for either comprehension or production despite limitations in knowledge" (Oxford, 1990, pp. 50). These compensatory strategies include (1) *switching to the mother tongue*, the use of a first language term for an English term; (2) *getting help*, used when the learner asks for the correct term; (3) *using mime*, the use of nonverbal strategies; (4) *avoiding communication partially or totally*, used when the learner starts to say something but gives up because it is too difficult or when the learner decides not to say anything in order to avoid communication; (5) *selecting the topic*, used when the learner chooses to say something about a topic that he/she knows; (6) *adjusting the message*, used when the learner tries to express the message in an alternate acceptable construction where the appropriate form or construction is not known or not yet stable; (7) *coining words*, the construction of a new word or term; and (8) using *circumlocution or synonym*, the use of another word or phrase which has similar meaning to the appropriate word or phrase.

A good number of studies on compensatory strategies and their relation to oral communication were also conducted in the past years. Poulisse (1990) as cited in Cook (n.d.), for example, found that the use of compensatory strategies varies greatly according to task and proficiency of learners. In addition, Flyman (1997) investigated the type of compensatory strategies employed in three potential oral tasks in the classroom and the role these strategies play in language

acquisition. In the Philippines, Bautista (1999) analyzed the functions of Tagalog-English code-switching using Poplack and Sankoff framework while Borlongan (2009) identified the Tagalog-English code-switching practices of teachers and students in English language classes. These studies, however, restricted their scope within the frequency of the strategies and the role they play in language acquisition. Hence, the present study aimed to identify the compensatory strategies frequently used by ESL college freshman students in a private university and to correlate them with course, type of high school graduated from, first language, and grade in English 1a, which were not taken into account in the aforementioned studies. The results of this investigation may help ESL teachers in enhancing their students' oral communication skills and eventually make them full participating members of the language classroom as they use efficient compensatory strategies.

Method

Participants

The present study involved 41 college freshman students randomly selected from eight colleges and schools in a private university: College of Accountancy (5); School of Arts and Sciences (5); School of Business (5); School of Education (4); School of Engineering and Architecture (7); College of Information Technology (5); School of Health Sciences (6); School of Public Administration and Governance (4). All were enrolled in the course English 1a or Communication Arts 1.

In reference to the respondents' first language, 20 speak *Iloco*, 16 speak *Tagalog*, 4 speak *Tuwali*, and only one speaks *Gaddang*. The respondents' profile also indicates that there is a preponderance of private high school graduates. Out of the 41 respondents 29 were from private institutions and only 12 were from public high schools.

Instruments

To gather pertinent background information, the respondents were asked to fill out a questionnaire asking for their first language

(L1), course, and type of high school graduated from. Their grades in English 1a were secured from the University Registrar's Office.

The compensatory strategies the respondents employed were obtained through an oral interview and a picture-cued narration. The oral interview consisted of 10-12 "wh" questions related to their personal background such as: (1) What course are you taking up?; (2) Is it your choice or the choice of someone else?; (3) Why did you choose that course?; (4) Why did you choose to study in this university? and (5) During your leisure time, what do you love doing?

The picture-cued narration, also known as picture story, was adopted from Heaton (1988). It presented six pictures in a series. The first picture shows two painters wearing caps and appropriate outfit for painting. They had just painted a wooden chair in a park. One of them is holding a can of paint and the other one is putting a note/sign on the chair which reads "WET PAINT". In the second picture, the note is blown away. In the third picture, a man holding a newspaper approaches a chair. He is wearing a coat and a tie and a cap on his head. The fourth picture shows a man sitting on the newly painted chair and reading his newspaper. In the fifth picture, a man stands up and notices that his coat is wet with paint. The last picture shows a man holding his coat and he is going to a dry cleaner.

To create a story, the respondents were asked to describe and narrate the events that take place in each picture.

Procedure

The procedure consisted of preparing the needed instruments: interview guide, information sheet, and tally sheets for the oral interview, picture-cued narration, and compensatory strategies. The participants were scheduled by course for the oral tasks. To capture the transactions, a handy video camera was used. As the oral activities were conducted, the researcher and the language teacher who assisted her counted every compensatory strategy employed by each participant. To illustrate, if the participant code-switched and at the same time used another term in place of a more appropriate term, the strategy was counted and categorized as code-switching and synonym. For purposes of verification, the videotapes were viewed several times. The frequency of the compensatory strategies used in

the actual task and in the video was carefully recounted and compared. It must be noted that there was not a case of differences in the coding and counting of the researcher and the language teacher who helped in the gathering and analysis of the data.

Because the study also focused on the use of mime as a compensatory strategy, gestures or nonverbal actions were assigned interpretations. The compensatory strategies that were used by the respondents during the interview and the picture-cued narration were clarified during the post conference. The post conference was made informal to ease the respondents' tension, and thereby draw their genuine responses regarding their performance.

Data Analysis

To determine the relationship among compensatory strategies and variables namely college enrolled in, type of high school graduated from, first language, and grade in English 1a, Pearson coefficient of correlation (r) was used. The significance level was tested at .05. Test statistics whose observed significance levels were less than or equal to .05 were taken to indicate significant relationship.

Results and Discussion

Respondents' Compensatory Strategies

Table 1 presents the compensatory strategies most and least frequently employed by the respondents in the oral interview and picture-cued tasks.

The data in Table 1 indicate that code-switching was the most often used compensatory strategy in the respondent's attempt to repair communication breakdown. During the researcher-respondents conference, the participants disclosed their reasons for code-switching. Out of 41 respondents, 25 shifted to the use of L1 when their lack of vocabulary blocked them in their communication. Some switched completely to their mother tongue, but some used their L1 simply to replace an unknown vocabulary or utterance. Further analysis of the data also shows that more participants were inclined to switch to their L1 during the interview than in the picture-

cued narration. Thus, it seems that the use of this compensatory strategy depends upon the kind of oral tasks the learners performed.

Table 1

Frequency of the Respondents' Oral Compensatory Strategies in Oral Interview and Picture-cued Tasks (N=41)

| Compensatory Strategies | Number of Students Who Used the Strategy | Frequency | | Total |
|-----------------------------------|--|----------------|------------------------|-------|
| | | Oral Interview | Picture-Cued Narration | |
| 1. Switching to the Mother Tongue | 25 | 59 | 39 | 98 |
| 2. Getting help | 6 | 1 | 8 | 9 |
| 3. Using mime | 8 | 3 | 7 | 10 |
| 4. Avoiding communication | 17 | 26 | 3 | 29 |
| 5. Selecting the topic | 5 | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| 6. Adjusting/Approximating | 29 | 9 | 43 | 52 |
| 7. Coining words | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| 8. Circumlocution Synonyms | 25 | 5 | 26 | 31 |
| Total | | 106 | 129 | 235 |

Table 1 also shows that *adjusting or approximating the message* was the second most frequently used oral compensatory strategy. Perhaps the respondents also considered this as an efficient strategy like how Flyman (1997) sees it. Thus, among the 41 respondents 29 used this signifying that the respondents were more inclined to use approximating or adjusting the message in their oral production. Further, between the two oral tasks, this compensatory strategy was more frequently used in the picture-cued narration than in the oral interview.

The same table indicates that the third most frequently used compensatory strategy was the use of *circumlocution or synonym* in oral production. This means "getting the meaning across by describing the concept or using a word that means the same thing" (Oxford, 1990, p. 51). The figures show that using circumlocution or synonym was more prevalent in the picture-cued narration than in the oral interview task.

The results also indicate that the fourth most often used strategy was *avoiding communication partially or totally*. Further, the data show that it was more frequently used in the oral interview task than it was in the picture-cued narration. Though the respondents had the tendency to falter, there was not much avoidance of communication in the picture-cued narration.

The *use of mime* was also evident in the data. Oxford (1990) describes this as “using physical motion, such as mime or gesture, in place of an expression to indicate the meaning” (p. 50). To Cohen and Apek (1981) (as cited in McDonough, 1995), this type of compensatory strategy is a neutral strategy. There were eight participants who used mime during the oral tasks. Mime or gestures were more frequent in the picture-cued narration than in the oral interview. This is supported by Flyman’s (1997) findings when she investigated the compensatory strategies of Swedish students using three tasks: translation task, picture narration task, and discussion task. In her study, it was found that the Swedish students used mime or gesture more frequently in picture-cued than in the other two tasks.

Getting help seems to be one of the least popular compensatory strategies. Cohen and Apek (1981) (as cited in McDonough, 1995) also considered this as a neutral strategy. Oxford (1990) describes this strategy as “asking someone for help by hesitating or explicitly asking the person to provide the missing expression in the target language” (p. 50). It is possible that the respondents are not comfortable in seeking help or assistance from others in attempting to cope with their limitations in oral discourses.

Selecting the topic was also one of the least frequently used compensatory strategies in both tasks. It means “choosing the topic of conversation in order to direct the communication to one’s own interests” (Oxford, 1990, p.50). The data show that this strategy had a total frequency of only five – two in oral interview and three in picture-cued narration. Like in other cases, this strategy was utilized more in the picture-cued narration than in the oral interview. In the picture-cued narration, the five participants who utilized *selecting the topic* had the tendency to start their narration not in the first picture but in the second picture. More so, they opted to narrate the events in the picture they thought they had enough vocabulary or grammar to

use in their oral production. Some selected only the pictures that they understood.

Table 1 also shows that the least frequently used compensatory strategy was *coining words* or making up new words to communicate desired ideas. Cohen and Aphek (1981) (as cited in McDonough, 1995) argue that this is also a neutral strategy. The data show that only one respondent used this strategy in the oral interview task.

Analysis of Extracts

The following sample extracts illustrate the oral compensatory strategies utilized by the respondents in the two oral tasks:

Switching to Mother Tongue

Analysis of Extract E shows that the participant switched to his mother tongue because he could not think of the English term for *nagbubulakbol* (gallivant). The switch involved just one utterance in the whole sentence.

Extract E: Student no. 13, School of Business

L1: Tagalog

T: What do you love doing during your leisure time?

S: I stay in our store to help my mother sell our goods. Sometimes I...I... uh I go with my friends and... **nagbubulakbol** (gallivant).

In Extract F, the speaker switched to her L1 by saying the whole answer in Filipino. The use of second language in this situation did not materialize because the respondent could not translate what she actually intended to convey in English.

Extract F: Student no. 12, School of Business

L1: Tagalog

T: How do you describe yourself?

S: I am simple ma'am.

T: Why do say you are simple?

S: **Uh... Hindi ako nagme-makeup ma'am at hindi ako mapili sa baro.**

A total use of the mother tongue was observed in the following example. The extract was a verbatim transcription of the picture-cued narration of one of the respondents. Prior to the picture narration, the respondent hesitated and he could hardly start. He was then urged to begin by asking this question in Filipino, “Ano ang nangyari sa unang picture?” [*What happened in the first picture?*] Then he started narrating the story in his L1. It was observed that he did not start the narration from the first picture; rather he began narrating the incident in the second. It can be observed from the transcription that even when the story was narrated in L1, still there were some missing details such as the two painters painting the chair and the sign placed on the chair to warn people about the newly painted chair. During the post-conference, he expressed his difficulty in using English. He claimed that he understood the contexts shown in the series of pictures but he could not narrate the events in English. When asked why he did not use Filipino, he again said that he could only say a little if he used Filipino and that he could say many when he would use *Iloco*. This is one extreme situation where the participant used pure *Iloco* to narrate the story. It appears that he could understand what was in the picture but the problem was he could not express what he wanted to say in the English language.

Extract G: Student no.26, School of Engineering and Architecture

L1: Iloco

Inkabil da nga madi pay lang ti agtugaw ta nabasa. Kapinpintur pay lang diay tugaw. Idi inkabil da ket kwa... idi kwan ke nagangin ket naitayab. Adda maysa nga lalaki nga napan idiay nagtugaw ngem madi na met ammo nga kapinpintor. Idi nalpas nga nagbasa, nakita na diay bado na nga napinturan. Idi kwan napan diay shop impalaba na diay bado na ma'am.

[They placed that it is prohibited yet to sit because it is wet. The chair is newly-painted. When they placed it and uh... and then the wind blew and it was blown. There was a man who went to sit but he did not know that it was newly-painted. When he finished reading, he saw his dress was painted. And then he went to the shop to have his dress washed ma'am.]

Adjusting or Approximating the Message

In Extract H, the word *recognized* as it was used in the context was an example of adjusting or approximating the message. The more appropriate word to replace this is *noticed*. Another word that was adjusted or approximated in its meaning is the word *clothes*. *Clothes* is a general term used to refer to any kind of clothing used in any particular occasion. The respondent used this word in place of *coat* which was considered more appropriate in the context.

Extract H: Student no. 28, College of Information

Technology

L1: Iloco

The man **recognized** that the chair was wet with paint and his **clothes** was stained. So he went to the dry cleaner to remove the stain.

The word *bench* in Extract I was used by the respondent in place of *chair*. This shows another example of adjusting or approximating the message. *Bench* is a term referring to a long seat for two or more people, usually made without a back or arms. The word was used by the participant to approximate the meaning of *chair*.

Extract I: Student no. 11, School of Business

L1: Tagalog

One day, two painters painted uh... uh... a **bench** and after painting it uh they placed a notice that it was newly painted.

In Extract J, the meaning conveyed was adjusted or approximated by the speaker through her use of the words *boys* for carpenters or painters and *wet paint* to mean the warning sign or notice placed on the chair and again the word *bench* for chair.

Extract J: Student no. 14, School of Business

L1: Tagalog

There are two **boys** who painted the **bench**. Then they placed a wet paint. The next day the **wet paint** was blown.

The clause *the money abroad are expensive* in Extract K was considered an approximation of the real message the respondent wanted to convey. When asked about what she meant by this during the post-conference, the respondent said *the salary abroad is high*.

Extract K: Student no. 34, AHSE

L1: Tuwali

T: What are your plans after graduation?

S: I will go abroad first because that's what my parents and my relatives like. Another reason is **the money abroad are expensive**.

Circumlocution or Synonym

The answer of the participant in Extract M was an example of circumlocution. Instead of directly saying the adjective *sociable*, she used clauses *I can go with others easily* and *I am always pleasant to them* to express her intended meaning.

Extract M: Student no.4, College of Accountancy

L1: Iloco

T: How do you describe yourself?

S: I am friendly. **I can go with others easily and I am always pleasant to them**.

In Extract N, perhaps the speaker wanted to say that she loves reminiscing the past during her leisure time. It is possible that due to limited vocabulary, she used other phrases to convey similar meaning.

Extract N: Student no. 20, School of Engineering and Architecture

L1: Tagalog

T: During your leisure time, what do you love doing?

S: I usually go back to the past by looking at some stuff in my box that remind me of my friends in high school.

In Extract O, the word *jacket* was used as a synonym of *coat*. The respondent hesitated to use the word as she groped for the desired term.

Extract O: Student no. 22, School of Engineering and Architecture

L1: Tagalog

The man holding a newspaper sat on the chair. After a while, he noticed that his... his...**jacket** was wet with paint.

Avoiding Communication Partially or Totally

Extract P shows a partial avoidance of communication because the speaker started saying something then he paused as indicated by the series of dots. Eventually, he did not continue what he wanted to express rather he started another sentence.

Extract P: Student no.32, AHSE

L1: Iloco

T: What are your plans after graduation?

S: Well, uh yeah I want to practice my course... then... ..

Some want to go abroad but me it's OK if I stay here because I want to help those who are in need.

Extract Q illustrates the strategy of avoiding communication both partially and totally. In the first question, his answer was fragmentary. In the second and third questions the speaker was not able to answer the given interview questions. When asked about it, he said that he could not say his reason in English. According to him, he opted to totally avoid the communication rather than to speak in Filipino.

Extract Q: Student no. 31, College of Information Technology
L1: Tagalog

- T: Why do you love reading? What can you gain from reading
 S: knowledge.
 T: What else?
 S: (no answer)
 T: Why do you prefer to work here in the Philippines
 S: Uh... Uh...(shakes head)
-

Use of Mime

In the sample extracts below, without saying the right words, the participants used hand gestures and body language to express what they meant. Though mimes were used, the listener understood the intended meanings of the speakers. This explains the importance of gestures or non-verbal communication in oral production. Another observation noted was the use of gestures simultaneous with the use of words to emphasize what they wanted to convey. The participants claimed that using mimes or gestures somehow helped them express the meaning and intention they wished to convey.

Extract R: Student no. 19, School of Education
L1: Iloco

When the man noticed that his coat is painted, he go to the dry cleaner to... (performed the act of washing) his coat.

Extract S: Student no. 3, College of Accountancy
L1: Iloco

The man placed a ... (made a gesture using her hand illustrating a square to refer to the sign placed on the chair).

Extract T: Student no. 5, College of Accountancy
L1: Iloco

- T: Why did you take up accountancy?
 S: Shrugged her shoulders meaning she doesn't know the answer.
-

Getting Help

In extract U, the participant used *getting help* by explicitly asking herself in Filipino the question, “*Ano na ang tawag dun?*” (What is it?) However, in Extract V, the nonverbal expression of the respondent, that is looking at the interviewer after hesitating to continue speaking was considered a getting help strategy. Flyman (1997) supports the idea that getting help or appeal for assistance is a compensatory strategy because the speaker employs it to achieve his intended meaning.

Extract U: Student no. 6, School of Arts and Sciences

L1: Iloco

The painter put a... ano na ang tawag dun? (What is it?)... uh a card. The man put a sign that the bench is painted.

Extract V: Student no: 15, School of Business

L1: Iloco

The carpenter put a... a... a... (she looked at the researcher).

Selecting the Topic

Extract W shows that the student's response was categorized as *selecting the topic* because he chose to start narrating the story with picture 2 used in the picture-cued task. In her narration, some details in picture 2 and in the succeeding pictures were given. Thus, this cannot be categorized as partially avoiding communication because the participant did not evade speaking even he did not include describing picture 1. The participant chose to begin his narration in the second picture because he thought he knew what happened in this picture more than he knew about picture 1.

Extract W: Student no. 9, School of Arts and Sciences

L1: Tuwali

Then the sign was blown.

Coining Words

In Extract X, the word the participant coined to express her idea was *balanced-headed*. She coined the words *balanced* and *head* to create a description about herself which she thought was appropriate for the meaning she wanted to express. During the post-conference, she explained that *balanced-headed* referred to her ability to maintain balance such as balancing her time to suit her activities and balancing her heart and mind. Apparently, the words she coined to describe herself seemed inappropriate. Perhaps she meant *level-headed*.

Extract X: Student no. 1, College of Accountancy

L1: Iloco

T: How do you describe yourself?

S: I'm a **balanced-headed** person ma'am.

Correlation between Oral Compensatory Strategies and College, Type of High School Graduated From, First Language and Grade in English 1a

Table 2 shows the relationship of compensatory strategies and course, type of high school graduated from, first language and grade in English 1a.

Among the correlations made, the result between compensatory strategies and grade in English 1a produced a moderate negative significant relationship. The association between compensatory strategies and grade in English 1a implies that the respondents who most likely used more compensatory strategies most particularly switching to the mother tongue and avoiding communication partially or totally earned low grade in English 1a. This inverse relationship between compensatory strategies and grade in English 1a does not, however, imply the irrelevance of effective strategies since there was no sufficient data to support such claim. Aside from this, the study did not exhaust the use of *efficient compensatory strategies* referring to the compensatory strategies that enable the listener or evaluator to understand the intended message in contrast to *inefficient compensatory strategies* referring to the compensatory strategies that lead to non-comprehension and the need to employ clarification or another strategy (Flyman, 1997).

Table 2

Correlation of Compensatory Strategies and College, Type of High School Graduated from, First Language, and Grade in English 1a

| Variables | Pearson r | P value | Decision |
|---|-----------|---------|-----------------|
| Compensatory Strategies and course | .052 | .746 | Not significant |
| Compensatory Strategies and first Language | .024 | .881 | Not significant |
| Compensatory Strategies and Type of High School | -.016 | .922 | Not significant |
| Compensatory strategies and Grade in English 1a | -.040** | .009 | Significant |

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The present study has shown that language learners employ oral compensatory strategies in their attempt to recompense their limitations in oral communication. Several studies such that of Cohen & Apeh (1981), Rost & Ross (1991), Huang & Van Naerssen (1987), as cited in Brown (1994), have proven that the use of strategies help learners become more successful in learning a language. Hence, teachers are encouraged to make the language classroom an avenue for students to learn how to learn with the use of language strategies.

Findings of the present study may also prompt language teachers to examine the compensatory strategies frequently employed by their students. In this paper, code-switching was found to be the most popular. In formal classrooms, however, code-switching may be disfavored and may be considered an inefficient strategy (Flyman, 1997) most especially when students are strictly evaluated in terms of oral communication skills in English. However, Baker (2006) posits that code-switching may be valuable tool because "There is usually purpose and logic in changing languages. It is using the full language resources that are available to a bilingual usually knowing that the listener fully understands the code-switches" (p.109). Also, Tupas (2004) believes that code-switching "enables the students to cope with the communicative complexity of language use in society" (p. 338). Hence, the practice of code-switching should not be considered as wrong or illegitimate because it somehow helps the learners become communicatively competent bilingual members in the society. Tupas adds that such a practice "helps them cope with the

multilingual and multicultural intricacy of second language acquisition" (p. 338). Bautista (1999) also points out that code-switching among Filipinos happens for the purpose of communicative efficiency which she means "the fastest, easiest, most effective way of saying something" (p. 26). Considering the social implication of code-switching, Mondada (2007) states that code-switching is used by participants in order to organize multiple activities and their participation frameworks in distinct and orderly ways. Hence, these different perspectives should propel teachers to raise further questions as regards the effectiveness or inefficiency of code-switching as a language learning strategy.

Since language classrooms are a milieu for learners' interactions, communications, discussions, and other communicative functions using a target language, explicit teaching of oral compensatory strategies remains well advised. As students are made aware of these compensatory strategies specifically the efficient ones, they can compensate their limitations in oral communication. As they utilize these strategies, they become more confident to speak and to express whatever it is that they have in mind during class activities. Moreover, the language teachers' awareness that these strategies can be utilized by learners in oral communication can help in establishing a more conducive language classroom where students are not at all afraid or intimidated to talk. As Krashen (1981) puts it, learners with low affective filter learn better than those with high affective filter.

The result of the present study may also motivate language teachers to use functional techniques to lead the learners in capitalizing on their preferred strategies. In doing so, learners are empowered to "learn how to learn" and to become autonomous learners. The present study may also propel language instructors to promote strategies-based instruction (SBI) or learner strategy training (Mc Donough, 1999). Through this, one of the most important goals of language teaching - learners' autonomy, would be better facilitated since they will be taught the technical know-how of acquiring a language and sensitized to the significance of taking charge of their own learning (Brown, 2000). Lastly, it may be necessary to note what Bernardo & Gonzales (2009) suggest that language teachers must "start with knowing what their students *do*, *can do*, *do not do*, and cannot *do* in line with language learning strategy use" (p.26). This can only be done if teachers have adequate understanding of the kind of

strategies students employ and if they themselves can strategically and flexibly model and teach the different strategies.

Conclusion

The present study affirms that learners employ compensatory strategies in oral communication. It reasserts that these strategies can help learners to overcome limitations in speaking. It also reaffirms the findings of previous studies that the type of compensatory strategies used is greatly influenced by the kind of oral tasks learners participate in. Further studies using a bigger population and other authentic oral communication tasks, however, are needed to provide additional solid support to the findings of the present investigation. It is also necessary to conduct studies correlating compensatory strategies and other oral language proficiency variables.

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