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A STUDY OF ENGLISH ORAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES USED AMONG THAI EFL STUDENTS OF DIFFERENT ENGLISH PROFICIENCY LEVELS: A CASE STUDY OF FIRST YEAR ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS, SRINAKHARINWIROT UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

Being able to communicate effectively is the highest goal of all language learners. Most of people preferred to communicate orally, however, it is not easy for ESL/ EFL students to communicate proficiently (Surbhi, 2015). Therefore, Communication Strategies (CSs) are brought up to cope with the difficulties. This research aims to investigate CSs used in oral communication among Thai EFL students of different English proficiency levels: beginning, intermediate and advanced level, when speaking English in real context. The findings attempted to answer what CSs Thai EFL students of different levels utilize, and are there any significant differences of CSs used among the three levels students, and also between the students in Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) and Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.). The subjects were 89 first year English major students of Srinakharinwirot University which consisted of 70 B.A. students and 19 B.Ed. students. The obtained data were analyzed based on the framework of

Communication Strategies proposed by Tarone (1977). The finding indicated that there were significant differences of CSs used among the different level students. However, the students of different programs did not have differences in the use of the CSs. It also showed the strategies that are least used by each level of students: Approximation by beginning, Language switch by intermediate and Topic avoidance by advanced. The finding in this study corresponded to the research of Chuanchaisit and Prapphal (2009) which reported that the advanced level students preferred risk taking strategies such as Circumlocution and Clarification request, whereas the beginning level tended to employ Topic avoidance and Body language. The results from this study will provide recommendations for English teaching and learning for communicative competence of EFL/ ESL students.

Keywords

EFL Students, English Proficiency, Oral Communication, Communication Strategies

1. Introduction

As the world keeps on moving and globalization occurs, English language plays an important role in many global sectors (Chopra, 2015). From all English speakers in the world which are approximately over 1.5 billion people, Asia has approximately 800 million people who speak English (Herscovitch, 2016). Moreover, English was announced to be the working language of Association of South East Asia Nations or ASEAN (“Charter,” 2007, p.29). Therefore, it cannot be denied that English language proficiency is an important factor for Thai people, as Thailand is one of the ASEAN’s countries member, to communicate effectively among the countries in ASEAN. In the other words, it is necessary to prepare Thai people, especially students, to be able to use English effectively before entering into the labor market or undertaking higher studies.

However, the general level of English proficiency of Thai people, especially communication skills, is still ranked very low when compared internationally, even though Thai students have been studying English for many years since the pre-elementary school (Clark, 2014). Moreover, the Education First English Proficiency Index (2017) reported that although English is a mutual working language, Thai people are still rated at very low level of English proficiency, 16th out of 21 countries in Asia.



Figure 1: *The Ranking of English Proficiency of People in Asia Countries, Year 2017*

The communication strategies (CSs) seem to be an important factor to help people who learn English as a second or foreign language to accomplish their English communication goal. According to Bialystok (1990), in order to solve communicative problems, students are required to develop CSs to overcome target language deficiencies and eventually develop communicative competence. Moreover, Canale (1983) stated that CSs are helpful tools for both native speakers and foreign language learners to compensate for insufficient competence. Therefore, it came to the thought of studying in the CSs used on oral communication of Thai EFL students.

There are some studies on CSs that have focused on the relation between CSs and other variables, such as interaction with native speakers or frequency of using communication strategies. However, there are few studies that have investigated students with different levels of English proficiency and their utilization of oral communication strategies, particularly in the Thai educational context, specifically undergraduate students.

In this study, the researcher aimed to investigate and compare CSs used in oral communication among Thai EFL students of different English proficiency levels: beginning, intermediate and advanced level, when speaking English in real context, and to compare the use of CSs between English major students in Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) and Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.). In particular, the study attempts to answer the following questions.

- What communication strategies that Thai EFL students at the beginning, intermediate, and advanced level of English proficiency utilize when communicating in oral communication?
- Are there any significant differences in the use of communication strategies among students who are at the beginning, intermediate, and advanced level of English proficiency?
- Are there any significant differences in the use of communication strategies between English major students in Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Education?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Background of Thai EFL students

Background of Thai EFL students Learning English as a foreign language or EFL is used for non-native English speakers learning English in a country where English is not commonly spoken (Wright, 2010). In other words, EFL is mainly used to talk about students, whose first language is not English, learning English while living in the own country. For example, Thai students learning English in Thailand.

In a country that has its own language such as Thailand, English is considered a foreign language (Suetae, 2010). English was first brought and taught to the royal family and the Thai government officials during the reign of King Mongkut (year 1804-1868). The main purpose was for the country's benefit in using English to negotiate with international traders, particularly from European countries (Aksornkul, 1980).

In 1996, the government supported the study of the English language in primary schools as a compulsory subject for all primary school children from Grade 1 (Foley, 2005). Foley (2005) also stated that the main goal was to develop the language proficiency of students in order to fulfill a number of purposes: communication, acquisition of knowledge, use of English in tertiary level studies, career advancement and so on. The Ministry of Education Thailand declared English within the school curriculum to be a core subject and therefore compulsory for all Thai students. They provide 12 years of free basic education for the teaching and learning of English, compulsory from Grade 1 (Prathom 1) to Grade 9 (Mattayom 3) and English is optional from Grade 10 (Mattayom 4) to Grade 12 (Mattayom 6) (Wongsothorn, 2000, as cited in Foley, 2005).

Additionally, nowadays most universities in Thailand provide many English courses for their students (Clark, 2014). In private Thai universities, there were 77 undergraduates, 30 graduates and five Ph.D curricula using English as the language of instruction. In governmental higher education institutions, there were 143 undergraduate, 205 graduates and 77 doctoral international programs in English which have been established either independently by Thai institutes or have links with overseas institutes (Wiriyachitra, 2002). The students who study English language in Thailand are considered as Thai EFL students. In this present study, Thai EFL students refer to the first year students in English major of Srinakharinwirot University.

2.2 Communication Strategies

A Communication Strategy (CS) is defined as "a systematic technique used by a speaker to express his or her meaning when faced with some difficulty" (Corder, 1981, as

cited in Dornyei, 1995, p. 56). Similarly, Tarone (1981) defined CSs as a way a learner tries to fix his linguistic problems by using his own knowledge to transmit messages without necessarily considering situational appropriateness. Additionally, Faerch and Kasper (1983) stated that a CS occurs when an individual faces problems in reaching a particular communicative goal and he tries to use a potentially conscious plan to solve those linguistic problems. These plans are CSs. The CSs help the learners to keep on using the language in communicating with others. In the same way, Oral Communication Strategies (CSs) are techniques used to deal with problems when speaking. In this research, CSs signify techniques employed by Thai undergraduate first year EFL students of Srinakharinwirot to solve their problems in speaking communication.

Tarone was the first researcher who proposed a classification of CSs used by second language learners. He categorized the CSs into five broad areas which are Avoidance, Paraphrasing, Borrowing, Appealing for assistance and Mime (Tarone, 1977, as cited in Cheng, 2007). The details are shown in the table below.

Table 1: *The Classification of Communication Strategies*

1. Avoidance strategies	Topic avoidance: a second language listener tends to avoid topics that he is not familiar with which are raised by a speaker.
	Message abandonment: refers to a speaker starts to talk about the topic but he might not complete a sentence and stop mid-sentence because he has nothing to complete it.
2. Paraphrasing strategies	Approximation: a second language speaker may use a similar word to the target word although the speaker knows that it doesn't have exactly the same meaning.
	Word coinage: means that a speaker may create non-existent words or develop a new vocabulary which becomes easily accepted by the person but which is really not a valid word.
	Circumlocution: the second language speaker describes or explains characteristics, behaviors or thoughts about an object or action such as its color, size, shape, and function instead of using the appropriate target language structure or a definition of terms.
3. Borrowing strategies	Language switch: is the way a speaker uses his mother tongue while speaking second language (English).
	Literal translation: is a translation that follows closely the form of the source language or first language here. It is word by word translation.
4. Appealing for assistance	Comprehension check: means that a speaker asks to check if the interlocutor understands what he has said or not.

strategies	Clarification request: means that a listener asks for the explanation about what he does not understands.
	Confirmation check: is the way a listener repeats the word or sentence that the interlocutor has said in order to confirm if what he heard is correct or not.
5. Mime or non-verbal strategies	Body language: occurs when the learners utilize actions to elaborate on their sentence or message when they do not know the words to say.
	Facial expression: such as smiling or frowning can convey a person's mood or how he feels or reacts to certain information.
	Eye contact: occurs when two people look at each other's eyes at the same time. An example of eye contact as non-verbal communication strategy is when an individual is rolling his eyes to show that he is bored or have no interest in the conversation.

2.3 Related Research

For the past decades, there have been several studies conducted to examine the various aspects of communication strategies, including use of communication strategies and instruction of communication strategies.

Tarone and Yule (1989) investigated the use of CSs employed by South America and Asian speakers of English as a second language (non-native speaker) in particular task. The result showed that most of the participants used circumlocution, approximation, avoidance, message abandonment, mime and literature translation. Especial, circumlocution and approximation occurred with high frequency.

Binhayearong (2009) studied on the communication strategies used of students with high and low English proficiency in the grade 9 (M.3) English Program at Attarkiah Islamiah School. The participants were 20 students whose average grades of four English subjects over two years from grade 7-9 (M.1 - M.2) were used as a criterion to divide them into high and low proficiency groups. The researcher used role play and definition formulation tasks to elicit communication strategies employed by each student. The findings showed that there were significant differences between the use of communication strategies by the high and low proficiency students and between the students' use of communication strategies in the role play and definition formulation tasks. The high proficiency students used significantly fewer avoidance strategies and used both intra-actional strategies and inter-actional strategies significantly more frequently than the low proficiency students.

Chuanchaisit and Prapphal (2009) studied on the effects of English language ability and types of communication strategy on oral communication ability of Thai university students. The 100 third year English majored students of Thai Chamber of Commerce University were categorized into high and low ability group, and asked to completed the Oral

Communication test and Speaking Test Inventory. It was found that language ability levels and types of CSs used had the significant effects on the students' oral communication ability. The findings also reported that the high level students preferred risk taking strategies such as Circumlocution strategy and Clarification request strategy, whereas the low level tended to employ Body language strategy and Topic avoidance strategy.

Preedatawat (2010) explored which strategies international undergraduate students in Bangkok used when speaking English in real situations. The researcher also needed to know if there were any differences in CSs used by students from different countries, faculties and genders. The 400 undergraduate students in four universities in Bangkok were asked to complete the questionnaires and attend the semi-structured interviews. The results showed that most of the students usually used Circumlocution (at the most), Self-repair, Approximation, Smurfing and Appealing for help, respectively. The students who were from different countries, faculties and genders did not have differences in the use of the Communication Strategies.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

All the 89 first year English major students of Srinakarinwirot University were the participants of this study. The English major students were the main participant in this study because they are considered as EFL students that is suitable for the study. The English major of the university consists of two programs which are Bachelor of Arts program (B.A.) and Bachelor of Education program (B.Ed.). Therefore, the participants were all 70 students from B.A. and all 19 students from B.Ed. They were selected via purposive sampling. The participants have similar age, ranging from 20 to 21 years old at the time of conducting the study. They are all homogeneous regarding to age, ethnicity, mother tongue, exposure to English and educational and cultural background.

The participants were divided into three groups which are beginning, intermediate and advanced level based on the TOEIC score.

Generally, all the students of first year English major of Srinakharinwirot University are required to take English proficiency test of The Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), as a result, all the students had their TOEIC score in hand. Therefore, the students were divided into three groups which are beginning, intermediate and advanced level based on the TOEIC criteria as follows: 0-400 points is beginning level group, 405-780 points is intermediate level group, and 785-990 points is advanced level group ("Interpret your Toeic score", n.d.).

3.2 Instruments

Self-Evaluation Questionnaire on Oral Communication Strategies Used

The questionnaire that was used in this study was written both in English and Thai to avoid the problem of questions being misunderstood, and it was divided into two parts. In the first part, it sought to find out participants' demographic data, and in the later part, it consists of the 13 self-evaluation sentences about CSs used in oral communication adapted from the taxonomy of CSs composed by Tarone (1977) which is cited in Cheng (2007). The 13 sentences were as follow:

1. Topic avoidance ("I avoid talking about unknown words or unfamiliar topics that are raised by the speaker.")

2. Message abandonment ("I leave a conversation incomplete when facing a communication problem.")

3. Approximation ("When I cannot think of an English word, I use another word phrase, or sentence that meaning the same to express idea. For example, I use the word 'pity' instead of the word 'empathy' which has the same meaning.")

4. Word coinage ("I try to create a new word for some terms I do not know, for example "airball" instead of "balloon".)

5. Circumlocution (item 4 "I try to explain characteristics of the object or action instead of using an English word I do not know. For example, you say that 'It's a weapon that has long and straight shape with sharp-edged on one or both sides' instead of saying 'sword'.")

6. Language switch ("When I cannot think of an appropriate word, phrase or sentence, I use the Thai word" For example, "I went to ตลาดนัด yesterday" instead of "I went to the floating market yesterday.")

7. Literal translation ("I translate directly from my mother tongue when I have difficulties expressing certain meaning in English")

8. Comprehension check ("When I said something in English and I am not sure whether the listener understands, I ask him to check." For example, "Do you know what I mean?")

9. Clarification request ("If I am not sure about what the speaker says, I ask the speaker for help" For example, Could you say it again please? or Could you explain it please?")

10. Confirmation check ("if I am not sure whether what I heard is correct, I repeat the word or sentence that said by the speaker in order to confirm the correction")

11. Body language ("I use hand gestures to communicate when I do not know English words. For example, When I want to praise someone but I do not know how to say it in English, I make a thumb up instead.")

12. Facial expression (“I use facial expressions to communicate instead of English words or sentences when I do not know English. For example, When I do not agree with what the speaker says but I do not know how to tell him in English, I frown to let him know.”)

13. Eye contact (“I use eyes contact to communicate when I do not know English. For example, When I start to do not understand and do not want to continue the thing that the speaker is saying, I roll my eyes to let him know instead of speaking English.”)

3.3. Data Collection

The questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were carried out after the end of each class of B.A. students and B.Ed. students. After the participants were introduced and explained the terms and characteristics of CSs briefly, they were asked to complete the questionnaires. For the oral interview, 12 participants joined in this session. Each participant was required to respond to the two predetermined question within the defined time of 60 minutes. Only five minutes per interview are allocated.

3.4 Data Analysis

In response to the research questions, the data were analyzed quantitatively. The quantitative analysis involving frequency count of CSs by the participants used a questionnaire. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS/PC) program was used to analyze this quantitative data.

The data from the questionnaire on CSs used by the participants were analyzed according to Tarone’s taxonomy of communication strategies (Tarone, 1977). The frequency of use for each type of CS by the participants in each group was tallied and tabulated. The answers to the self-evaluation questionnaire were compared and analyzed.

4. Results

The results are discussed in accordance to the three research questions.

4.1 Research Question 1

What communication strategies that Thai EFL students at the beginning, intermediate, and advanced level of English proficiency utilize when communicating in oral communication?

The CSs employed by the students of each English proficiency level are illustrated in terms of mean (\bar{x}), standard deviation (S.D.) and degree of use presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive analysis for CSs preferences of the students in each level of English proficiency

Oral Communication Strategies	Beginning Level			Intermediate Level			Advanced Level		
	\bar{X}	S.D.	Degree of use	\bar{X}	S.D.	Degree of use	\bar{X}	S.D.	Degree of use
1. Topic avoidance	4.18	0.75	Usually	2.72	0.82	Occasionally	1.33	0.50	Never
2. Message abandonment	3.64	0.67	Usually	3.35	0.68	Occasionally	2.33	0.70	Seldom
3. Approximation	2.36	0.50	Seldom	3.97	0.76	Usually	4.56	0.72	Always
4. Word coinage	3.45	0.68	Usually	3.86	0.75	Usually	2.89	1.05	Occasionally
5. Circumlocution	3.18	0.75	Occasionally	3.20	0.77	Occasionally	4.78	0.44	Always
6. Language switch	3.09	0.83	Occasionally	1.83	0.68	Seldom	1.89	1.53	Seldom
7. Literal translation	3.55	1.03	Usually	3.74	0.83	Usually	2.89	0.60	Occasionally
8. Comprehension check	2.91	0.70	Occasionally	3.70	0.67	Usually	3.11	0.60	Occasionally
9. Clarification request	4.45	0.68	Always	4.51	0.53	Always	4.67	0.50	Always
10. Confirmation check	3.45	0.52	Usually	3.36	0.72	Occasionally	4.00	1.00	Usually
11. Body language	4.45	0.52	Always	4.03	0.72	Usually	4.44	0.52	Always
12. Facial expression	4.36	0.80	Always	3.81	0.79	Usually	2.44	0.88	Seldom
13. Eye contact	4.45	0.52	Always	2.28	0.82	Seldom	2.00	0.70	Seldom
Overall CSs	3.66	0.18	Usually	3.41	0.24	Usually	3.18	0.13	Occasionally

From table 2, the results show that the majority of the beginning level and intermediate level students usually use CSs. The beginning level students use Clarification request (\bar{x} =4.45), Body language (\bar{x} =4.45), and Eye contact (\bar{x} =4.45), at the most. The intermediate level students use Clarification request (\bar{x} =4.51), at the most. While the majority of the students in advanced level occasionally use CSs, and they use Circumlocution (\bar{x} =4.78), at the most. The results also show the strategies that are least used by each level of student: Approximation (\bar{x} =2.36) by beginning level, Language switch (\bar{x} =1.89) by intermediate level and Topic avoidance (\bar{x} =1.33) by advanced level.

4.2 Research Question 2

Are there any significant differences in the use of communication strategies among students who are at the beginning, intermediate, and advanced level of English proficiency?

Table 3 presents the comparison of the use of each CS by the beginning, intermediate, and advanced level students in order to see if there are any statistical significant differences which are illustrated in term of P- value.

Table 3: Comparison among three groups of English proficiency level students using CSs

Oral Communication Strategies	Beginning Level		Intermediate Level		Advanced Level		P-value
	\bar{x}	S.D.	\bar{x}	S.D.	\bar{x}	S.D.	
1. Topic avoidance	4.18	0.75	2.72	0.82	1.33	0.50	.000*
2. Message abandonment	3.64	0.67	3.35	0.68	2.33	0.70	.000*
3. Approximation	2.36	0.50	3.97	0.76	4.56	0.72	.000*
4. Word coinage	3.45	0.68	3.86	0.75	2.89	1.05	.005*
5. Circumlocution	3.18	0.75	3.20	0.77	4.78	0.44	.000*
6. Language switch	3.09	0.83	1.83	0.68	1.89	1.53	.000*
7. Literal translation	3.55	1.03	3.74	0.83	2.89	0.60	.019*

Oral Communication Strategies	Beginning Level		Intermediate Level		Advanced Level		P-value
	\bar{X}	S.D.	\bar{X}	S.D.	\bar{X}	S.D.	
8. Comprehension check	2.91	0.70	3.70	0.67	3.11	0.60	.000*
9. Clarification request	4.45	0.68	4.51	0.53	4.67	0.50	.661
10. Confirmation check	3.45	0.52	3.36	0.72	4.00	1.00	.056
11. Body language	4.45	0.52	4.03	0.72	4.44	0.52	.061
12. Facial expression	4.36	0.80	3.81	0.79	2.44	0.88	.000*
13. Eye contact	4.45	0.52	2.28	0.82	2.00	0.70	.000*
Overall CSs	3.66	.186	3.41	.240	3.18	.133	.000*

From table 3, when One Way ANOVA is used to test for the research question 2, the overall result shows that the statistically significant difference is found among the three groups of English proficiency level students using CSs ($p < 0.05$). However no statistically significant difference are found among the groups of student with three CSs which are Clarification request ($p > 0.05$), Confirmation check ($p > 0.05$) and Body language ($p > 0.05$).

4.3 Research Question 3

Are there any significant differences in the use of communication strategies between English major students in Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Education?

Table 4 presents the comparison of CSs used by the students in B.A. and B.Ed. in order to see if there are any statistically significant differences between the two groups which are illustrated in term of t-test and P- value.

Table 4: Comparison of CSs used among B.A. students and B.Ed. students

Oral Communication Strategies	B.A. students (n=70)		B.Ed. students (n=19)		t	P-value
	\bar{X}	S.D.	\bar{X}	S.D.		
1. Topic avoidance	2.67	0.98	3.42	0.60	.045	.833
2. Message abandonment	3.73	0.90	3.89	0.87	8.241	.005*
3. Approximation	3.24	0.73	2.95	0.91	1.298	.258
4. Word coinage	3.83	0.78	4.05	0.78	4.606	.035*
5. Circumlocution	3.29	0.90	3.63	0.76	14.714	.000*
6. Language switch	1.81	0.80	2.63	1.01	.004	.952
7. Literal translation	3.53	0.71	4.00	0.94	.768	.383
8. Comprehension check	3.51	0.67	3.63	0.89	.642	.425
9. Clarification request	3.53	0.71	3.11	0.80	.636	.427
10. Confirmation check	4.51	0.53	4.53	0.61	2.304	.133
11. Body language	4.14	0.70	4.05	0.70	.948	.333
12. Facial expression	3.79	0.88	3.58	1.07	6.919	.010*
13. Eye contact	2.30	1.08	3.00	1.05	1.686	.198
Overall CSs	3.43	0.25	3.37	0.25	.802	.373

From table 4, when t-test is used to test research question 3, the overall mean scores are not significantly different between the two programs (B.A. and B.Ed.) using CSs ($p>0.05$). Therefore, the students who study in different programs do not use CSs differently.

However, the results also show that there are significantly different between the two programs using Message abandonment ($p < 0.05$), Word coinage ($p < 0.05$), Circumlocution ($p < 0.05$) and Facial expression strategy ($p < 0.05$).

5. Conclusion and Discussion

5.1 Conclusion

The result in this study indicated that the English major students of beginning and intermediate level usually used CSs, while advanced level student occasionally used CSs. The results also showed that there was a statistically significant difference of CSs used among the students of different level of English proficiency. It means that the student of different levels used CSs differently. However, the statistically significant difference was not found in the use of CSs between B.A. and B.Ed. students. This indicates that the students of B.A. and B.Ed. did not use CSs differently.

5.2 Discussion

There are some interesting points in the finding that need further discussion. Firstly, it was noticed that students from the beginning level of English proficiency used CSs in oral communication more frequently ($\bar{x} = 3.66$) compared to students at the advanced level ($\bar{x} = 3.18$). It could be said that the advanced level students used fewer strategies than beginning level students because they have more competency in English, so that they do not need much CSs to help in their communication. In contrary, the beginning level students used more often CSs because they lack of the knowledge of English, or do not know much about English vocabularies, therefore, when it comes to oral communication, the CSs are often brought to use in action by the beginning level students in order to help in their English oral communication. The study of Binhayearong (2009) support the findings of this present study. It indicated that the less able group employed CSs more frequently than the more able one.

Secondly, even though the statistically significant difference was found in the overall mean score of CSs used among the students of different level proficiency, no statistically significant difference was found among the groups of the student using three CSs which are Clarification request ($p > 0.05$), Confirmation check ($p > 0.05$) and Body language strategy ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, the students who come from different levels of English proficiency mostly use CSs differently, but similarly used the three strategies mentioned earlier. This finding confirmed the findings of others previous studies (Binhayearong, 2009 and Chuanchaisit and Prapphal, 2009) which reported that the different levels students using CSs on oral communication significantly different.

Thirdly, in the comparison of CSs used between the Students in B.A. and B.Ed., it was found that the overall mean scores was not significantly different. This finding was consistent with the study of Preedatawat (2009) which was said that the students who are with different faculties did not have differences in the use of the CSs. However, in the present study, the statistically significant differences were found in the mean scores of Message abandonment ($p < 0.05$), Word coinage ($p < 0.05$), Circumlocution ($p < 0.05$) and Facial expression strategy ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the students who come from different programs did not use CSs differently, except the Message abandonment, Word coinage, Circumlocution and Facial expression strategy that they used differently.

Finally, the last point to discuss here is about the CSs that are most and least used by the students in each level. The beginning students used Clarification request, Body language and Eye contact strategy at the most. The majority of the students in intermediate level used Clarification request at the most while the advanced level students used Circumlocution and Clarification request at the most. This result corresponded to the research of Chuanchaisit and Prapphal (2009) which reported that the advanced level students preferred risk taking strategies such as Circumlocution strategy and Clarification request strategy, whereas the beginning level tended to employ Body language strategy and Topic avoidance strategy. However, the finding of Chuanchaisit and Prapphal (2009) also showed that the beginning students rarely used Literal translation and Comprehension check strategy while the advanced student rarely used Topic avoidance and Literal translation strategy. This finding contradict to the results of the present study. In this present study, the beginning students rarely used Approximation and Comprehension check strategy while the intermediate students rarely used Language switch and Nonverbal strategy (eye contact), and the advanced students rarely used Topic avoidance and Language switch strategy. Even though, there is a point in which the advanced students in both of the two studies rarely used Topic avoidance strategy, the overall result about CSs lowest used in this study contradict the result of Chuanchaisit and Prapphal (2009) study. This might be because of the different participants. The participants in Chuanchaisit and Prapphal (2009) study were the 3rd year students while in this study the participants were the 1st year English Major students. The students who participate in each study have the uniqueness, therefore, the result could be different.

5.3 Implications and Recommendation

The results of this study might be beneficial for foreign language teaching and learning. Since the English language proficiency of the students influences the use of CSs, it is necessary that teachers provide strategy instruction which is suitable to the students' level of proficiency so that the students can use the strategies effectively according to their

language ability. The students might be taught and encouraged to use more and wider range of the strategies in order to keep their conversation going smoothly and effectively. Moreover, it is recommended that teachers provide students with opportunities to communicate in social context in which they are able to try to use appropriate strategies to solve their communication problems. For example, teachers apply role play activity and drama activity into classes. In this factor, the communication strategic competence which has rarely been included in language teaching might be considered to include in an ESL/EFL syllabus. When the students know more about CSs and know how to use them appropriately, they will be more confident to communicate. The more they use the CSs for communication, the more their proficiency level will be increased as some previous researchers (e.g., Dornyei, 1997; Nakatani, 2005; Cheng, 2007) have confirmed that CS training in the classroom could literally help students to communicate more effectively, and enhance students' confidence in speaking English.

For further research, researchers may take a larger number of participants or a various students from various universities into account. Moreover, it would be interesting if the further researchers conduct a comparative study on the use of CSs on oral communication in the second language learners between Thai students and those coming from other countries who are not English speakers.

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