ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Speaking Strategies Employed by Second Year Students at Mettu College of Teachers Education

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Abstract

Communicative language teaching should not just aim to teach learners the language they need in communication, but also the communication strategies or speaking strategies to manage interaction in English. This study was conducted to investigate and describe the speaking strategies employed by second year English major students at Mettu College of Teachers Education. It also aimed to identify how well the instructors are aware of the importance of speaking strategy instructions and play their roles in terms of the provision speaking activities and strategy training in teaching learning process of speaking skills. The targeted populations for this study were 46 students who were learning English as a major subject and one English language teacher who was teaching the spoken English course in 2006 E.C academic year. In this descriptive research design, both quantitative and qualitative data gathering instruments were used. The result of the analysis revealed that the students employed a variety of speaking strategies. However, regarding individual speaking strategies under the different categories of direct and indirect strategies, some known speaking strategies appeared to be employed less frequently and were less developed. Furthermore, findings of this research showed that although the teacher is aware of the importance of speaking strategy training and provides a variety of speaking activities, the activities provided were more of fluency oriented and strategy training was rarely provided. Therefore, this study recommends that the students should be provided with adequate courses on speaking skills and more strategy training should be given in using wide varieties of speaking strategies.

Key terms: Speaking strategies, strategy training, categories of strategies

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INTRODUCTION

Research in language learning strategies began in the 1970s. Within the field of education, over the last few decades gradual but a significant shift has taken place resulting in less emphasis on teachers and teaching and greater emphasis on learners and learning (Nunan, 1991; Carter and Nunan, 2001). This general shift has paved a way to researchers and language teachers to the study of various strategies of second/ foreign language in use to meet the need of communication. As a result of this, despite the little attention given to the spoken language, the dynamic shift and development in methods of language teaching throughout history reflect recognition of changes in the kind of proficiency learners' need, such as a move towards oral proficiency rather than reading comprehension as the only goal of language study (Richards and Rodgers, 1986) and a general shift towards an integrated skills approach to the teaching learning of language at all levels has emerged with speaking as one of the most important components in the integration (Brown et al., 1984).

Furthermore, as stated by Hedge (2000), the main goal of teaching English as a foreign language is to enable students to communicate in English and to offer them a window to the world. Similarly, in the Ethiopian context, the purpose of English language instruction is to prepare the learners for effective and efficient communication in the language.

Although language teachers and curriculum designers have made a concerted effort to help students develop their speaking skill, many of the students are not in a position to use English for real communication. After many years of learning English and taking addition training course, many of the college and university graduate English

teachers including Mettu college graduates are neither accurate nor fluent speakers of English language and the majority of students who are now learning English as a major subject in the said college also have serious difficulties is using the language for real communication.

The main reason why many learners are not able to communicate effectively and efficiently might be due to ineffective use of communication strategies. Therefore, to overcome such problems the learners must develop specific communication strategies that enable them to compensate for their target language deficiencies, enhance interaction in the target language, and eventually develop communicative competence (Williams, 1987). Moreover, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) state that speaking strategies are crucial because they help foreign language learners "in negotiating meaning where either linguistic structures or sociolinguistic rules are not shared between a second language learner and a speaker of the target language" (p.43). Hedge (2000) stated that competent speakers know how to make use of speaking strategies; particularly these strategies come into play when learners are unable to express what they want to say because they lack the resources to do so successfully.

Similarly, Nunan (1991, p. 1) stressed that ''… it is important to have a clear understanding and firm grasp of the wide range of techniques and procedures through which speaking ability can be developed.'' In addition to this, speaking also requires a variety of activities, adequate training, and opportunities to interact with the target language so that learners can make themselves understood using their current proficiency to the fullest. Thus, providing language learners with strategy training will make them more critical, efficient and ultimately more autonomous in their

attempt to develop competence in their second or foreign language (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990). Moreover, Dornyei (1995) encourages providing training in speaking strategies explaining the possibility of developing learners speaking strategy use through focused instruction because L2 learners might benefit from instructions on how to cope with performance problem as L2 communication is problematic.

In general, based on such backgrounds, this study was designed to investigate the speaking strategies second year English major students employ at Mettu College of Teachers' Education and to assess the role of teachers in the process of the teaching and learning speaking skill and in providing strategy training.

Statement of the Problem
According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990), speaking strategies instructions need to be given due emphasis since they provide foreign language learners with valuable tools to communicate in the target language in diverse situations. Findings of various studies which attempted to identify effective strategies for L2 learning have shown that meta-cognitive, cognitive and compensatory strategies are the most important strategies used to develop speaking (Chamot, 2004; Griffiths, 2008).

Moreover, in language classes where students are trying to develop basic interpersonal communication skills in order to interact with speakers of the target language many social, communication, compensatory and affective learning strategies would be helpful (Cummins, as cited in Chamot, 2004) or if students are learning a second language in academic context, a repertoire of cognitive learning strategies (perhaps combined with affective strategies to develop self-efficacy) will be helpful, and meta cognitive strategies are important for learners to monitor their

comprehension, production or recall so that they can identify difficulties and select problem solving strategies to address the difficulties (Chamot, as cited in Chamot, 2004).

As far as the researchers' experience is concerned, in the study area the majority of the trainees' English language proficiency is poor, for they are unable to use the language for real communication after learning it for many years.

Although there might be several causes for their lack of proficiency in the English language among trainees and first degree holder language teachers, one possible cause might be their in ability to employ effective speaking strategies which might result from ineffective strategy training given to them during their attempt to learn English as a major subject. In this regard, the role of language instructors in developing their learners' language skills in general and speaking skill in particular is crucial and thus, teachers training colleges or universities have double tasks of improving the proficiency of their trainees in the language and equipping them with the method of teaching it. The assumption is that if trainees employ a variety of speaking strategies and/or learn how to use the new ones, they do not only develop their speaking skill but also implement the strategies when they are supposed to teach in their actual classrooms.

 As stated above, the trainees in the study area seem to have serious problems in using the English language for real communication, so in order to curve their difficulties, it might be useful to know how learners go about learning speaking and what types of speaking strategies they use frequently to develop their speaking skills.

The findings of this study, therefore, provide teachers with good pictures of speaking strategies second year English major students employ at Mettu College in

learning and facilitating their speaking proficiency. Moreover, the results of the study hopefully contribute a lot to familiarize learners with speaking strategies that they fail to employ so that they could benefit not only in becoming more efficient in their speaking but also more autonomous in their learning from strategy training activities. Therefore, this research tried to answer the following research questions:-

- What types of speaking strategies do second year students employ to develop their speaking proficiency during speaking classes?
- What are the most and least frequently used speaking strategies employed by the students?
- What kind of speaking activities are provided for learners to practice and use a variety of speaking strategies?
- Are the instructors aware of the importance of speaking strategy training?

METHODOLOGY

This section describes the methodological steps and procedures used to carry out this study. Thus, the research design, study population, sampling techniques, data collection instruments and procedures and, techniques of data analysis used are discussed in detail.

Research Design
A mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative research methods) design was employed to conduct this study. Thus, the necessary data were collected from the participants by using various instruments such as questionnaire, interview and observation. The analysis was done both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Study population
The study sample population of this research was second year students at Mettu Teachers College who were learning English as a major subject in 2013/14 academic year. There were 46 students who were learning English as their major subject and one English teacher who was teaching them. These participants were selected for the fact that the spoken English course was given for them in second semester which was found to be appropriate to conduct this study while they were taking the course.

Sampling Techniques
The sampling techniques used to conduct this study were comprehensive and systematic sampling. That is for administering students' questionnaire, as there were only 46 students, comprehensive sampling was used and for students' interview, as involving all of them to participate in this study was difficult due to certain constraints, such as time and budget, only 25% of the study populations (about 12 students) were taken as the representative sample by systematic sampling technique based on their previous grades obtained from their teacher (four from each level of achievements: high, medium and low achievers). Each student was interviewed for 30 minutes. In order to divide the students into three ability groups, they were listed according to their grades in a descending order, and they were divided into three ability groups (high achievers= 15, medium achievers =16 and low achievers=15). In case of teacher's interview, as there was only one teacher who was teaching spoken English course, and the interview was conducted with him for two hours.

Data Collection Instruments
For the successful completion of this study, three data collection instruments:

questionnaire, semi-structured interview and classroom observation were used.

Students' Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part consisted of 30 items which the participants responded using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Never true of me) to 5 (Always true of me). The questionnaire was adapted from Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning. However, when adapting the students' questionnaire, only the items that were relevant for speaking strategies were exclusively selected and included in the questionnaire with certain modifications to assess the speaking strategies employed by the students. For example, an item such as 'I use rhyming to revise new materials in the language which is useful for speaking' is replaced by 'I link the new word with familiar word or sound I know to help me remember the word when I speak'.

In the second part of the students' questionnaire (which is also Likert- scale type), the students were asked eight questions to assess what the speaking activities and teacher's role looked like. All the items were checked for their validity by experts. Moreover, pilot testing was conducted among fifteen students of similar level and Cronbach's Alpha was calculated to measure the reliability of the questionnaire and it was found to be reliable with Cronbach's Alpha result of .90.

Students' and Teacher's Interview

Another instrument used to collect data in this study was semi-structured students' and teacher's interview. This data collecting instrument was preferred to make free discussion so as to get adequate information that cannot be obtained through other data collection instruments (Best & Kahn, 2007). Thus, to gather the necessary data from the students in relation to the objective of the study, the researchers prepared eight interview questions which were used to gather information about the type of strategies students used in facilitating their speaking skill. In addition to this, it was administered as a follow up (for triangulation) to the students' questionnaire and teacher's interview. Similarly, to gather the necessary data from the teacher, the researchers set eight interview questions which were used to gather information about teacher's awareness on the importance of strategy training and roles in the process of teaching learning in relation to the provision of wide variety of activities and strategy training.

Classroom Observation

The third instrument which was used to gather data was classroom observation. Seeing and listening are a key to observation. Thus, a field note, checklist and video recording were used as data gathering tools. The field note was used to document speaking strategies used by the students. Regarding the teachers' roles on the practice of strategy training and provision of speaking activities, a checklist was prepared and used to conduct classroom observations. In addition to this, video recording was used as a data gathering tool.

Data Collection Procedures

After the data collection instruments were commented by other experts and piloted, the students' questionnaire was administered. Before administering the questionnaire, the target groups were given adequate orientation on the objectives of the study and the way they respond to the questions; the questionnaire was distributed at the same time to 46 of the students and collected immediately after they completed it. Regarding students interview, they were

asked individually to avoid bias and influence of one another so that every interviewee can speak of his/her own experience. But regarding teacher's interview, it was made with the teacher a day after the completion of students' interview. Finally, for the observations, the researchers made the necessary arrangement with the agreement of the English teacher and conducted for six sessions.

Data Analysis
As already mentioned, both qualitative and quantitative techniques of data analyses were employed in this study. With this regard, data obtained from the questionnaire were made ready for analysis and interpretation after they were tallied and tabulated based on the respondents' responses. Then, they were analyzed quantitatively in terms of percentage, means and frequency distribution in tables using Statistical Package for Social Science program (version 16). In case of the qualitative data, the data obtained from the teacher's and the students' interview and classroom observation were transcribed into a written form and summarized and analyzed qualitatively and interpreted in relation to the analysis and interpretation of the quantitative data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The result and discussion sections present the major findings of the study and their interpretations respectively. The data obtained from the questionnaire, interview and observation are presented and discussed below.

RESULTS

The purpose of this study is to investigate how much the students make use of the speaking strategies and the kind of speaking strategies employed by second year English major students in facilitating their speaking proficiency. The frequency and the percentage of all students who responded to each speaking strategy use are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Speaking Strategies Employed by the Students with Frequency, Mean Scores and Rank Order of Usage

Never		Usually		Sometimes		Usually		Always		Mean	Rank
	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
8	17.39	3	6.52	10	21.73	16	34.78	9	19.56	3.32	8
3	6.52	4	8.69	13	28.26	14	30.43	12	26.08	3.68	3
5	10.86	13	28.26	9	19.56	13	28.26	6	13.04	3.04	13
2	4.34	3	6.52	19	41.30	12	26.08	10	21.73	3.54	5
14	30.43	17	36.95	10	21.73	3	6.52	2	4.34	2.17	30
6	13.04	14	30.43	12	26.08	8	17.39	6	13.04	2.6	15
2	4.34	8	17.39	11	23.91	12	26.08	13	28.26	3.56	4
12	26.08	15	32.60	6	13.04	11	23.91	2	4.34	2.47	23
7	15.21	5	10.86	10	21.73	14	30.43	10	21.73	3.32	8
10	21.73	12	26.08	11	23.91	9	19.56	4	8.69	2.67	19
4	8.69	6	13.04	11	23.91	13	28.26	12	26.08	3.5	6
8	17.39	7	15.21	8	17.39	15	32.60	8	17.39	3.17	11
2	4.34	4	8.69	9	19.56	14	30.43	17	36.95	3.86	1
2	4.34	4	8.69	11	23.91	15	32.60	14	30.43	3.76	2
2	4.34	17	36.95	16	34.78	9	19.56	2	4.34	2.82	16
11	23.91	7	15.21	17	36.95	8	17.39	3	6.52	2.67	19
16	34.78	14	30.43	7	15.21	6	13.04	3	6.52	2.26	29
12	26.08	9	19.56	12	26.08	6	13.04	7	15.21	2.71	18
9	19.56	5	10.86	9	19.56	16	34.78	7	15.21	3.15	12
12	26.08	4	8.69	19	41.30	6	13.04	5	10.86	2.73	17
13	28.26	15	32.60	8	17.39	5	10.86	5	10.86	2.43	25
15	32.60	14	30.43	7	15.21	5	10.86	5	10.86	2.36	26
4	8.69	6	13.04	11	23.91	15	32.60	10	21.73	3.45	7
13	28.26	14	30.43	9	19.56	5	10.86	5	10.86	2.45	24
10	21.73	5	10.86	15	32.60	11	23.91	5	10.86	2.89	14
8	17.39	7	15.21	7	15.21	14	30.43	10	21.73	3.23	10
9	19.56	16	34.78	11	23.91	6	13.04	4	8.69	2.56	21
15	32.60	16	34.78	5	10.86	5	10.86	5	10.86	2.32	27
12	26.08	13	28.26	11	23.91	6	13.04	4	8.69	2.5	22
16	**34.78**	**14**	**30.43**	**6**	**13.04**	**6**	**13.04**	**4**	**8.69**	**2.30**	**28**

As shown in Table 1, six items were found to be employed usually or always by 54 % or more of the students and these are items *13, 14, 2, 7, 4, and 11* with the mean values ranging from 3.5 to 3.86. Furthermore, 16 items were reported to be employed usually or always by 21.73% to 52.16% of the respondents and these items have mean values that range from 2.5 to 3.45. The remaining eight items were reported to be employed usually by 10.86% to 28.24% of the respondents. These items are items

5,17,30,28,22,21,24, and 8 and their mean values range from 2.17 to 2.47.

Students' speaking strategy category use
All participants' responses to thirty items were categorized into six classifications of strategies: memory, cognitive, compensation, meta-cognitive, affective and social. These classifications are the ones proposed by Oxford (1990). Based on the mean scores of participants' responses to items in each category of strategies, all categories are ranked accordingly. As shown in Table 2, relatively the most frequently employed speaking strategy category for all students was *memory strategies* (M=3.4), which was defined as medium strategy use. The next frequently employed category of writing strategies was *cognitive strategies* (M=3.1). This category was followed by *compensation strategies* (M=3.0), *meta-cognitive strategies (M=2.8) and affective* (M=2.6).

Relatively, the least frequently employed category of speaking strategies for all students was the category of *social* with the mean value of 2.5. However, all of the six categories of speaking strategies exhibit medium means and they were described as medium strategy use.

In Table 2 also, the responses to individual strategy use on the 5-point Likert scale were combined into fewer categories and three levels of strategy use were set based on Green and Oxford's (1995) suggestion. That is, the values of the responses of 4 and 5 were changed into 3, which represents a category of high strategy use, the value of the response of 3 was changed into 2, which is labeled as a category of medium strategy use and the values of the responses of 1 and 2 were combined into one category, represented by 1, which stands for a category of low strategy use.

Table 2: Students' Speaking Category of Strategy Use Levels (N=46)

Speaking Strategy	level	Value	N	%	Mean
Memory	Low	mean of ≤ 2.4	10	21.7	3.4
	Medium	mean b/n 2.5-3.4	12	26.1	
	High	mean ≥ 3.5	24*	52.2*	
	Total		**46**	**100**	
Cognitive	Low	mean of ≤ 2.4	16	34.8	3.1
	Medium	mean b/n 2.5-3.4	11	23.9	
	High	mean ≥ 3.5	19*	41.3*	
	Total		**46**	**100**	
Compensation	Low	mean of ≤ 2.4	16	34.8	3.0
	Medium	mean b/n 2.5-3.4	13	28.3	
	High	mean ≥ 3.5	17*	36.9*	
	Total		**46**	**100**	
Meta cognitive	Low	mean of ≤ 2.4	23*	50.0*	2.8
	Medium	mean b/n 2.5-3.4	11	23.9	
	High	mean ≥ 3.5	12	26.1	
	Total		**46**	**100**	
Affective	Low	mean of ≤ 2.4	22*	47.9*	2.6
	Medium	mean b/n 2.5-3.4	12	26.1	
	High	mean ≥ 3.5	12	26.1	
	Total		**46**	**100**	**2.5**
Social	Low	mean of ≤ 2.4	25*	54.3*	
	Medium	mean b/n 2.5-3.4	9	19.6	
	High	mean ≥ 3.5	12	26.1	
	Total		**46**	**100**	

When we see individual student's memory strategy use based on the three level reporting scales as shown in Table 2, 24(52.2%) of the respondents reported that they make use of a variety of speaking strategies grouped under memory strategy frequently in learning spoken English. The analysis also revealed that speaking strategy use of 12(26.1%) of the students in the target group is moderate. On the other hand, 10(21.7%) of the students indicated that their application of speaking strategies grouped under memory strategy is low.

In the follow up interview, a question was asked to confirm the students' use of memory strategy and their responses revealed that they used various memory subs strategies such as practicing before class room presentation by speaking in mind (rehearsal) in order to refresh their memory, using language item in context and speaking slowly in order to get time to remember language items. It is clear that memory strategies are mental activities rather than overt and observable activities and they are very difficult for an observer to be sure. However, during the classroom observation, the students were seen employing certain speaking strategies that seem memory strategies.

Cognitive strategies

Based on the three level reporting scales as can be seen from Table 2, 19(41.3%) of the total participants made use of cognitive speaking strategies effectively; their overall strategy use is rated 'high'. The analysis also revealed that the cognitive strategy use of 11(23.9%) of the respondents is moderate. On the other hand, the responses of the remaining group of respondents (16, 34.8%) indicated that their application of cognitive speaking strategy is low.

Similarly, during the follow up interview on cognitive strategy use, the responses tended to show significant use of strategy.

Among these, practicing the language in the classroom by participating in classroom activities, using dictionaries and speaking naturally were the main sub strategies used by students in their efforts to become proficient English speakers. In a similar way, in the classroom observation made, students were observed practicing English by delivering prepared and impromptu speech to the class, providing reasons and participating in the whole class discussion to develop their speaking skills.

Compensation Strategies

As Table 2 shows, 17(36.9%) of the respondents replied that they make use of a variety of compensation strategies frequently in learning spoken English. The analysis also revealed that compensation speaking strategy use of 13(28.3%) of the students in the target group is 'moderate'. On the other hand, 16(34.8.7%) of the students indicated that their application of speaking strategies grouped under compensation strategy is 'low'.

In the follow up interview, a question was asked to confirm the students' use of communication strategy and the students responses revealed that they make use of various compensation strategies despite certain gaps of knowledge. Some of the compensation strategies the students reported using, during the interview, were using gesture, using equivalent words or expression and switching to mother tongue. Furthermore, the data obtained during the classroom observation appeared to correlate with the results obtained from the questionnaire and interview.

Meta-cognitive strategies

In Table 2**,** 23(50.0%) of the respondents' application of meta- cognitive speaking strategy is found to be 'low'. The analysis also revealed that the meta-cognitive strategy use of 11(23.9%) of the total population is moderate. On the other hand,

12(26.1%) of the total respondents make use of meta- cognitive speaking strategies effectively; their overall strategy use is rated 'high'. As for the total sample, the analysis revealed that meta-cognitive strategies category constitutes57.4% percentage and its mean value indicates a medium use (M=2.8).

In the follow up interview on meta-cognitive strategy, the interviewees revealed that they use a variety of meta-cognitive sub strategies such as preparing oneself by focusing on important points for presentation, organizing ideas, practicing with friends before the actual presentation and trying to minimize errors as much as possible. In the successive observations, some of the sub strategies indicated and reported in the questionnaire and during the interview were observed.

Affective strategies
As can be seen from Table 2, 12(26.1%) of the respondents' affective speaking strategy use is 'high'. The analysis also revealed that speaking strategy use of 12(26.1%) of the students in the target group is moderate. On the other hand, 22(47.9%) of the students' application of speaking strategies grouped under affective strategy is 'low'.

The results of the interview also support the responses given by the students in the questionnaire. During the interview, the students indicated that they used various affective sub strategies in order to reduce tension and manage emotion while speaking. Moving from one side to the other side of the class when delivering speech, encouraging oneself, concentrating on the topic by preparing well were among the strategies reported by the students. During the successive classroom observations most of the students were seen speaking with confidence despite making mistakes particularly in classroom

presentation. The prominent strategy identified during the classroom observation was taking risk despite committing mistakes /errors/ both in individual presentation and group discussions.

Social strategies
As can be seen from Table 2, when we see individual student's strategy use based on the three level reporting scales, 25(54.3%) of the respondents' application of social speaking strategy is 'low' while the social speaking strategies use of 9(19.6%) of the students is found to be moderate. On the other hand, 12(26.1%) of students' utilization of social category strategies is found to be 'high'.

The result of the interview also appeared to support the responses given by the students in the questionnaire. Most of the interviewees reported that cooperating with friends to practice and share information was the strategy they predominantly use inside the classroom. A few interviewees also informed that they used strategies such as practicing the language with their friends outside the class particularly in the English day. The classroom observation also revealed that the students most frequently cooperated in learning the language through discussion in the classroom. Although not used by most of the students, asking for confirmation and clarification were also observed during classroom observation.

Activities for developing speaking skills
Classroom activities help learners practice using a variety of speaking strategies. At the same, time they can help learners develop their oral communicative competence. In relation to this, the students' responses to seven items are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Students' Responses to Speaking Activities and Teacher's Role

Items	Never (1)		Rarely (2)		Sometimes (3)		Usually (4)		Always (5)		Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
The activities encouraged me to practice the language to develop my speaking skills	-	-	-	-	16	34.8	18	39.1	12	26.1	3.7
The activities can be practiced in a given time	19	41.3	15	32.6	9	19.5	3	6.5	-	-	1.9
The activities enable me to employ variety of speaking strategies	-	-	29	63.1	13	28.3	4	8.7	-	-	2.5
The activities enable me to interact/negotiate with the other students	-	-	13	28.3	27	58.7	6	13.0	-	-	2.8
The teacher encourages learners by creating conducive speaking environment	-	-	-	-	25	54.3	7	15.2	14	30.4	3.8
The teacher assesses learner' speaking strategy use by providing wide variety of oral activities	-	-	-	-	17	37.0	18	39.1	11	23.9	3.7
The teacher provides specific strategy training for the speaking strategies learners failed to employ	22	47.8	14	30.4	10	21.7	-	-	-	-	1.7

As shown in Table 3, students' responses to items *1, 5 and 6* with the mean values of 3.7, 3.8 and 3.7 respectively are positive. That is they are satisfied with the teacher's effort for helping them learn speaking strategies effectively. However, the responses to items 2 and 7 with the mean values of 1.9 and 1.7 respectively indicate the students' dissatisfaction with the instruction given to them on learning some strategies.

DISCUSION

This study showed that the second year English major students taking the spoken English course at Mettu College were found to employ a variety of speaking strategies. As shown in Table 1, 6 items (*13, 14, 2, 7, 4, and 11* with the mean values ranging from 3.5 to 3.86) were found to be employed usually or always by 54% or more of the students and these items were categorized as frequently employed ones. Furthermore, sixteen items were reported to be employed usually or always by 21.73% to 52.16% of the respondents and they were defined as moderately used ones. Of the remaining 8 items (*5, 17, 30, 28, 22, 21, 24, and 8* and their mean values range from 2.17 to 2.47), which were reported to be employed usually by 10.86% to 28.24% of the respondents are described as infrequently used ones.

Regarding the category of strategy use, the most widely utilized category of strategies by the students in this study were memory strategies. Although Oxford, (1990) had found that university students report using memory strategies infrequently, this finding seems to agree with the findings of some other researchers such as Cohen and Apex; Nikos (as cited in Oxford 1990). Their findings generally showed that memory strategies were widely used among university students. In addition to this, a further examination of the literature revealed that students who learn English as a foreign language had strong preferences

for memory strategies rather than communicative strategies such as working with others, asking for help and cooperating with peers (Wharton, 2000), which were also found to be in line with the findings of this study. The similarity between this study and that of Cohen and Apex; Nikos (as cited in Oxford 1990) is that both studies are conducted on foreign language learners where the students learn English as a major subjects. The possible reason for learners' strong preferences for memory strategies could be the nature of the course as individuals have to prepare for oral presentation or the individuals students perhaps for fear of failing the course.

Another important and interesting finding was that the students were able to employ different sub- strategies when compensating for missing knowledge while speaking. As to Oxford (1990), compensation strategies enable students to make up for missing knowledge in the process of comprehending or producing the target language; for instance, students use gestures when they have difficulty producing the language, or they would use a word or phrase that has equivalent meaning as an English word they cannot think of. Similarly, in compensating for the missing knowledge, gestures, word coinage and circumlocution were among the prominent compensation sub strategies utilized by the students. Thornberry (cited in Griffiths, 2008) states that when students are learning a second or foreign language, most of the time they lack confidence, so, in order to avoid embarrassment they might tend to use body language to express what they want to say.

When we look at the meta-cognitive strategies, they appeared to be moderately utilized by the students. This finding to some extent seems to have similarity with the findings of Chamot et al. (as cited in

Oxford, 1990) that meta-cognitive strategy increases somewhat as learners' progress to higher learning. However, a further examination of the literature revealed that students in a foreign environment had strong preferences for meta-cognitive strategies, for meta-cognitive strategy use allows good language learners to integrate the use of various strategies in a positive way. Moreover, it has been found that successful language learners have reported to use more and wider range of learning strategies than less-successful students and high meta-cognitive strategy use is also related to high language proficiency (Griffiths, 2008; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990).

When we examine the sub strategies under meta-cognitive strategy, although not utilized by the majority, correcting mistakes while speaking and planning/ making arrangements before presenting speech were the most commonly used sub strategies. However, during the observation, it was seen that the majority of students appeared to focus on fluency oriented strategies without trying to correct their errors which is directly related to 'low' meta-cognitive speaking strategy use. Moreover, as taking time to prepare for learning and plan what needs to be accomplished, meta-cognitive strategies were rarely or infrequently used by the majority of the participants of the current study.

On emphasizing the importance of using of meta- cognition, O'Malley and Chamot (1990, p. 8) stated that ''students without meta-cognitive approaches are essentially learners without direction or opportunity to plan their learning for future learning''. Moreover, meta-cognitive strategies are essential for successful language learning since they provide a way for learners to coordinate their own learning process and help them to seek practical opportunities

(Oxford, 1990) and enable learners to monitor their comprehension, production or recall so that they can identify difficulties and select problem solving strategies to address the difficulties (Chamot, as cited in Chamot, 2004). Therefore, the meta-cognitive awareness of how students can control and positively impact their language learning must be supported until the crucial element of conditional knowledge is in place (Griffiths, 2008).

Furthermore, the affective strategies were found to be employed moderately by the subjects of this study as the mean value of individual strategy items use in this category showed a medium use. As discussed in the result section, the students used various affective sub strategies in reducing their anxiety and encouraging themselves particularly when presenting oral speech despite making errors. Thus, taking risk was the predominantly employed strategy. During the classroom observation, it was observed that the teacher creates conducive speaking classroom environment by providing activities and encouraging students. This was found to be similar with the result obtained from teacher's interview and students' questionnaire though it was done sometimes. From this point, we understand that the teacher is keeping learners on the right track in developing learners' affective strategy use. Regarding this, it is stated that one of the measures of creating conducive speaking classroom environment is the beliefs the ESL teachers have about affective filters because speaking as a productive skill is highly influenced by these variables (River, 1987).

Finally, social strategies were found to be employed moderately by the participants of this study as the mean value of individual strategy items in the category showed a medium-low use. However, except two items, all the speaking strategies grouped under social strategy indicated 'low' mean.

Moreover, as indicated in the result section, the majority of the respondents reported that they infrequently employed social speaking strategy. The factors that might have contributed to the participants' medium/low social strategy use, include the environment with no native English speakers, and students' culture may prohibit learners from employing social strategies particularly outside the classroom. However, the nature of speaking skill and the course strongly encourages and supports interactive learning for the sake of developing greater linguistic fluency. Overall, interaction helps language learning by providing opportunities to learn from others, often through negotiation, and by speakers having to adjust their output to communicate with others. Therefore, direct training of speaking strategies can have a positive effect on learners' development of speaking skills (Sayer, as cited in Griffiths, 2008; Dornyei, 1995).

Furthermore, the issues which this study tried to address were what the speaking activities and the teacher's role looked like in terms of facilitating strategy training for the development of students' speaking skill. The response to item 1, in Table 3, shows that 30(65.3%) of the students agreed that the provided activities frequently encourage them to practice speaking in English. The classroom observation results also indicate that the students tried to practice the language with very little use of L1. Moreover, the teacher was also observed attempting to monitor and support the students moving around while they were discussing the topics. As proponents of cooperative learning (Richards, 2006; Jones, 2009) advocated that while engaging students to work together, teachers need to persuade students to discuss in English and monitor and support them.

Moreover, the response of 34 (74.0%) participants to item 2 in Table 3 shows that the activities designed to teaching speaking could not be practiced in a given time. During the observation, the same problem was observed that the activities could not be practiced in a given time since some discussion time was seen over without letting some students express their ideas in group discussion. This indicates that the students need to get enough time to practice speaking skills. In relation to this, some scholars (i.e., Richard, 2006; Jones, 2009) stated that when students work together in English and if they get enough time to practice the language, they talk more, share their ideas more, learn more from each other, get involved more, feel more secure and less anxious, use English in meaningful as well as realistic way and enjoy using English to communicate by employing a variety of speaking strategies.

Moreover, in response to the question whether or not the activities enable students to employ a variety of speaking strategies, 63.1% of them responded 'Rarely'. This implies that there is a need for providing learners with more opportunities to use a wide variety of strategies carrying out appropriate learning activities that can raise their awareness of developing their strategic competence. In line with this, the opportunities for practice in strategy use should be incorporated into daily teaching, especially for learners who usually use the target language only in the classroom (Hedge, 2000; Dornyei, 1995).

In response to the question whether or not the activities are the ones that enable students to interact with each other, 58.7% of the participants responded that the activities 'sometimes' enabled them to interact with each others. On the other hand, 28.3% of them responded that the activities rarely encouraged them to interact. During the observation, it was seen that most of the activities provided were the ones that initiated interaction among students. In addition, it was observed that the students were given opportunities to select any topic that interested them for oral presentation in role play and large group discussions. This was found to be similar with the result obtained from the teacher's interview and students' questionnaires.

Although allowing the students to choose their own topics for presentation and discussion enables them to interact among each other; however, it was observed that the majority of the students could not get a chance to practice or to express their ideas particularly in group discussion. The possible reasons for this could be the presence of the dominance of a few students over the other members in a large group. What we can learn from these results is that it is not only the teachers' provision of an activity can create lively interaction in the learning process but also students should play a great role in enhancing their participation in the activities provided for them. Unless the students participated in different activities, the learning will not have its life by the teacher only.

Furthermore, to a further question asked to students on whether or not their teacher creates conducive speaking environment by providing a variety of oral tasks that can be done individually and in groups, the majority, 54.3%, of the students responded that their teacher sometimes does this. Moreover, 21(45.6%) of the respondents responded that their teacher creates conducive speaking environment frequently by providing a variety of oral tasks that can be done individually and in groups. What we can understand from the students' responses is that in general the teacher creates conducive speaking environment frequently (M=3.8). This was found to be supported by the result obtained from teacher's interview and

classroom observation. In relation to this, Nunan (2004) states that in addition to the right approach, speaking classes require a variety of facilities, adequate training, and opportunities to interact with the target language.

Moreover, it is important to create conducive speaking environment to get learners psychologically prepared. In other words, it is useful to keep the learners well aware of the strategy training they are undertaking so as to encourage their engagement and active participation (Hedge, 2000). In a similar manner, 63.0% of the students responded that their teacher frequently assesses their strategy use by providing a wide variety of speaking activities to help them practice a variety of speaking strategies (39.1% replied 'Usually' and 23.9% 'Always'). From these responses, we can infer that the teacher tried to identify/assess students' strategy use. Examining what strategies learners use leads to exploring how to help learners enhance strategy use by deciding which strategies to focus on in the instruction (Cohen, 2003) and also helps to maximize learners' strategy use through strategy training that learners fail to apply by providing specific tasks to the learners so that they can practice and learn how to employ the strategies for other similar tasks (Richards, 2008).

However, to a further question asked to participants whether or not their teacher gives them specific strategy training for the speaking strategies they failed to apply, the majority of the students, 36(78.2%), responded that their teacher rarely or infrequently did so. Similarly, the data analysis from the observation and teacher's interview revealed that the provision of explicit speaking strategy training was not given due attention. What we understand from this is that the students were not given strategy training for the strategies they failed to apply. In line with this, Cook

(2001) confirms that gaining more information about how language learners actually learn can help the teacher to make any teaching method more effective. Moreover, Cohen (2003) states that strategy training aims to provide learners with the tools to self-diagnose their strengths and weaknesses in language learning, become aware of what helps them to learn the target language most effectively, develop a broad range of problem-solving skills, make decisions about how to approach a language task, monitor and self-evaluate their performance and transfer successful strategies to new learning context.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This research was designed to investigate the speaking strategies second year students at Mettu Teachers College employ in their attempt to study English and also to assess the role of teachers in the teaching/learning process of spoken English classes in terms of the provision of speaking activities and strategy training. Thus, on the basis of the above findings of this study, the following conclusions and recommendations have been made.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The analysis of data obtained from the observations, students' interview and the first part of the questionnaire indicated that the students employed a wide variety of speaking strategies in their spoken language classes. According to Table 2, the results on speaking strategy use indicated a high and medium use of individual item grouped under memory strategies and, medium and low use of individual item grouped under

cognitive, compensatory, meta-cognitive, affective and social speaking strategies. However, the overall mean for each of the six strategies shows a medium use.

2. A further analysis of the first part of the questionnaire for individual students strategy use (Table 2) showed that the majority of students' utilization of memory, cognitive and compensation speaking strategies is 'high'. However, the analysis also showed that the majority of the students' application of meta-cognitive, affective and social speaking strategies is 'low'.

3. Moreover, in response to the second part of questionnaire, which is related to what the provision of speaking activities and teacher's role looked like, the students claimed that the activities encouraged them to practice the language, and to interact/negotiate with the other students. The students also confirmed that their teacher encourages them by creating conducive speaking environment and assesses learner' speaking strategy use by providing them a wide variety of oral activities. However, the students confirmed that the activities cannot be practiced in a given time and also do not enable them to employ variety of speaking strategies. The data analysis from observation also revealed that some discussion time was seen over without letting most students express their ideas particularly due to very less practice opportunities in group discussions and as a result most students were seen to be passive listeners.

4. Furthermore, regarding teacher's awareness on the importance of speaking strategy training, the data analysis from teacher's interview reveals that the teacher is well aware of the importance of speaking strategy training. However, what is practiced regarding strategy training is rated to 'low' level. The data analysis from observation and teacher's interview also revealed that the provision of explicit speaking strategy training has not been given due attention.

RECOMMENDATIONS

➢ Although the students appeared to employ a variety of speaking strategies, the overall result shows that the speaking strategies were employed at 'moderate' level. Therefore, in addition to memory, cognitive and compensation strategies, relatively the less frequently utilized speaking strategies (meta-cognitive, affective and social) need quite a lot of attention as they contribute a lot in enhancing communicative competence in general and speaking proficiency of learners in particular.

➢ As stated in Nunan (2004), in addition to the right approach, speaking classes require a variety of facilities, activities, adequate training, and more opportunities to interact with the target language. Therefore, students should be encouraged not only in classroom but also outside the classroom to create opportunities to discuss and work in pairs and small groups.

➢ Moreover, there is a need for strategy training through provision of wide variety of speaking activities to help learners maximize strategy use to their level best for the strategies that learners failed to employ. Thus, the teachers' role in strategy training is essential.

- Although delivering speech in the form of prepared classroom oral presentations were observed, students should also be given more opportunities to express their ideas in classroom discussions.
- Furthermore, as speaking activities normally take longer time to be undertaken and assessed, it is important to give additional credit hours so that the students can have longer time to practice accuracy oriented strategies, problem solving strategies and others activities that can develop their cognitive and meta-cognitive strategy use; instead of focusing only on fluency oriented activities although it gives learners greater confidence in developing the ability to use a variety of communication strategies with their peers and teachers in the classrooms.

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