

Using communication strategies in English as a Lingua Franca interactions

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Outline

Using communication strategies

- Defining “Communicative strategies”
- ELT & Strategy learning: pedagogical implications
- Defining “Mediation strategies” in the CEFR
- Defining “ELF accommodation strategies”

ACTIVITY 1

Before we begin, watch the video “**Communicative Strategy**” and think about **your teaching practices**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kh_EDOVSQOI

- To what extent do you **incorporate** communication strategies in **your own classroom(s)**?
- Do you think that **your learners** may benefit from strategy training in your classes? **Why?**
- Which of the 7 actions described in this video do you consider **more effective** to enhance the practice of **cross-cultural communication** with your learners?

Click the **link** under the video to share your views if you haven't done so yet

Introducing Strategies

Communication strategies (Mariani, 2010):

- Are applied to manage a **wide range** of linguistic (lexical, syntactical, phonological), sociolinguistic or pragmatic, and (inter)cultural interferences
- Show a **cooperative** attitude from speakers involved in the interaction
- Imply the use of both linguistic **resources** and paralinguistic and extra-linguistic means (i.e. intonation, non-verbal language like gestures, eye contact, facial expressions)
- Reveal the speaker's attempt to **manage** interactions by constantly **negotiating** meanings and intentionality

Introducing Strategies

A theoretical background

A long and complex way to communication strategies:

- Selinker (1972) first used the term “**communication strategy**” in the context of a discussion on interlanguage
- Savignon (1972) defined the terms *coping strategies* and *strategic competence*
- Tarone (1977) provided the first **taxonomy** of communication strategies

Introducing Strategies

Focus on oral interaction

Strategies can be defined in several complementary ways:

- **conversational** strategies
- **cooperative** strategies
- **discourse** strategies
- **compensation** strategies

The term ‘**communication strategies**’ is used as an “umbrella” term to cover a wide range of strategies

Introducing Strategies

Focus on oral interaction

- **Written interactions**, e.g. *offline*—correspondence by letter, fax, e-mail
- **Written interactions**, e.g. *online*—chats, blogs, social media

Unprecedented forms of **written real-time interaction**
→ a new range of **computer-mediated strategies**
according to new contexts of language learning and use

Communication Strategies (I)

- **Meaning-expression strategies:** attempt to express a meaning when the term is not (yet) available → **synonyms, approximations, paraphrase**
⇒ *It's the person who sells meat in a shop* instead of *the butcher*
- **Meaning-negotiation strategies:** attempt to establish meaning from both sides in the interaction → forms of **asking for** and **giving help, assistance, negotiation**
⇒ *Can you say that again, please?*

Adapted from Mariani (2010)

Communication Strategies (II)

- **Conversation-management strategies:** handling difficult aspects of conversation → **opening** and **closing** conversations, “**taking the floor**”, **replying** and “**gaining time**”
⇒ *Sorry to interrupt, but I would like to ask you...*
- **Para- and extra-linguistic strategies:** complementing the verbal communication strategies → **non-verbal cues** e.g. intonation, volume, gestures, eye contact

Adapted from Mariani (2010)

Communication Strategies (III)

- **(Intercultural) interaction-monitoring strategies:** interpersonal and intercultural focus and forms of **metalinguistic** strategies → asking for corrections or comments, checking the reactions, repairing communication breakdown, correcting or avoiding lingua-cultural misunderstandings
⇒ *I'm sorry if I asked you a personal question*

Adapted from Mariani (2010)

Communication Strategies (IV)

Other strategies:

- **Message abandonment, message reduction, message replacement**
- **Literal translation**
- **Foreignizing**, using an L1 word with an L2 pronunciation
- **Code-switching**, using L1 words, phrases, sentences or complete turns in the L2
- **Omission**, leaving a gap in one's speech

ACTIVITY 2

Click the **link** under the video to complete this Activity

Can you match each **strategy** with the corresponding **action**?

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. meaning-expression strategies | a. smiling |
| 2. conversation-management strategies | b. interrupting |
| 3. meaning-negotiation strategies | c. paraphrasing |
| 4. para- and extra-linguistic strategies | d. checking if your interpretation is correct |
| 5. (intercultural) interaction-monitoring strategies | e. checking that your interlocutor has understood |

Pedagogical implications

Teaching and learning communication strategies

- Promote learners' **self-control** and flexibility on their use of language
- Help to bridge the gap between the **in- and out-of-classroom experience**
- Contribute to develop learners' **interlanguage** skills
- Lead to successful outcome and positive impact on learning **performance**
- Enhance linguistic and cognitive **autonomy** promoting learners' active role and responsibility for what and how they communicate

Mediation strategies & CEFR

Strategies to explain a new concept

- **Linking to previous knowledge** (posing questions to encourage prior knowledge; making comparisons and/or links between new and prior knowledge; providing examples and definitions)
- **Adapting language** (paraphrasing; adapting speech / delivery; explaining technical terminology)
- **Breaking down complicated information** (breaking a process into a series of steps)

Strategies to simplify a text

- **Amplifying a dense text** (using repetition and redundancy, for example by paraphrasing in different ways; modifying style to explain things more explicitly; giving examples)
- **Streamlining a text** (highlighting key information)
- **Eliminating repetition and digressions**
- **Excluding what is not relevant for the audience**

Mediation strategies

In the CEFR (2018) perspective **mediation** occurs when:

“the user/learner acts as a **social agent** who creates bridges and helps to construct or convey meaning, sometimes within the same language, sometimes from one language to another (cross-linguistic mediation)”

Mediation strategies aim at:

- creating the **space & conditions** for **communicating** and/or **learning**
- encouraging speakers to **construct** or **understand new meaning**
- passing on **new information** in an **appropriate** form

Mediation activities in the CEFR

Mediating a text (in speech & writing)

- Relaying specific information
- Explaining data (e.g. in graphs, diagrams)
- Processing text
- Translating a written text
- Note-taking (e.g. lectures, seminars)
- Expressing a personal response to creative texts (including literature)
- Analysis and criticism of creative texts (including literature)

Mediating concepts

- Collaborating in a group
- Facilitating collaborative

interaction with peers

- Collaborating to construct meaning
- Leading group work
- Managing interaction
- Encouraging conceptual talk

Mediating communication

- Facilitating pluricultural space
- Acting as intermediary in informal situations (with friends and colleagues)
- Facilitating communication in delicate situations and disagreements

ACTIVITY 3

Click the **link** under the video to complete this Activity

Can you match each **activity** with the corresponding **mediation scale** in the CEFR?

a. **Mediating a text**

b. **Mediating concepts**

c. **Mediating communication**

- 1. Situation:** Your school is organising an international youth meeting. You are attending the first briefing with two representatives of the organising team. One is from Germany, the other one from Russia. React to their questions and comments.
- 2. Situation:** Read the article about climate change. Summarize the text, then present the issue to the class and express your opinion.
- 3. Situation:** In groups, discuss, prepare in two L2s and report to the whole class a plurilingual plan on a day in Paris on a restricted budget, explaining your ideas and viewpoint.

ELF spoken interactions: accommodation strategies

- In English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) interactions users exploit **accommodation strategies** showing their pragmatic ability towards **mutual intelligibility** more than their language proficiency
- **Meaning negotiation** and **communicative breakdown** → **repetition, L1 interferences, simultaneous speech, backchannels** (e.g. "yeah", "uh-huh", "hmm"), **norm-deviations, utterance completion** and **creative use of language**

ELF spoken interactions: accommodation strategies

According to Dewey (2011: 206): “**accommodation** theory” has provided a framework to analyze the way speakers **modify and adapt** their speech when engaged in interaction, how they draw on a **range of linguistic and extra-linguistic resources** by “accentuating, modifying, downplaying” linguistic features

The importance of accommodation processes in multilingual and multicultural contexts in the ELF research → the collaborative nature of ELF **negotiation strategies** to achieve **mutual understanding**

ACTIVITY 4

Read a **brief dialogue** between a Legal Advisor and a person seeking asylum in that country – the dialogue illustrates the use of various communication strategies

- Which **communication strategies** can you identify?
- Would you ever **use** such written (or spoken) authentic materials showing **real-life ELF interactions** in **your own classroom(s)**? Would that **benefit** your own learners? **Why** or **why not**?

Click the **link** under the video to read this dialogue and share your views at the **Forum** of this section

ACTIVITY 4 - Excerpt

Legal Advisor: Ok... so I want to this... have you speak with the commission or not?

Asylum-Seeker: Commission?

LA: Commission is an organ who decide about your asylum request then make you ehm a lot of question about the reason why you decide to left your country ehm

AS: Yes... before... before

LA: Have you spoke with them?

AS: Yes I spoke, I spoke with them... the time before.

(Authentic data from Sperti, forth.)

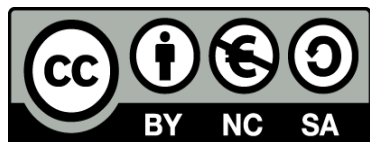
What we have discussed



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