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## Incorporating Communication Strategy Training into an EFL Curriculum

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communication strategies      communicative competence      strategic  
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We have considered the issue of whether there is value in instructing foreign language students in the use of communication strategies, defined by Tarone (1977) as strategies which are "used by an individual to overcome the crisis which occurs when language structures are inadequate to convey the individual's thought" (p. 195). We have concluded, based on our observations of Japanese university students in non-major English classes, that it can be beneficial to teach students how to employ certain strategies which make use of the target language, if the students in question are shown to avoid such strategies.

In this presentation, we discuss the designing of an EFL curriculum in which communication strategy training may take place. With general principles of task-based language teaching as our background, we base our curriculum idea upon specific principles of communication strategy instruction offered by Faerch and Kasper (1986). These principles include: whether strategy use itself is to be discussed ("metacommunicative awareness"); whether language structures are provided or not; whether the class participates as a whole or in small groups or pairs; whether tasks are open or closed; whether or not there is an information gap; whether or not there is visual contact; and whether or not there is visual aid. We argue that certain factors are to be emphasized at different times during the curriculum. Metacommunicative awareness, provision of language structures, whole class participation, open tasks, and visual contact are factors present at the introduction of training, while group and pair work, closed tasks, information gap, no visual contact, and visual aid are present

at the conclusion. A concluding activity is to be designed so that students must use the strategies recommended in the course of instruction, or else they will not be able to perform the activity.

With our framework in mind, we examine several exercises from popular language texts (Ellis & Sinclair, 1989, Redman & Ellis, 1989, Richards, Hull & Proctor, 1991). While we find all of the exercises to be of value, we argue that they may best be used in accordance with the teaching framework we have set up.

Finally, we consider some of the issues involved in the testing of communication strategy use. We present a prototype test, requiring students to ask other students for objects for which they do not know the English terms. We discuss the problem of reliability that occurs when students perform the test tasks with single partners; the score of a poorly performing partner inevitably weakens that of an ably performing one. We offer a system of partner rotation intended to avoid the problem.

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