

## The Use of Communication Strategies by Thai Students Liaising with International Students

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify the types of communication strategies (CSs) used by Thai undergraduate students. The subjects were five Thai students representing as Thai buddies in the International Affairs in the second semester of the academic year 2016, at King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (KMUTT). A video recording was used as an observation instrument to record interactions between the participants and foreign students in natural social settings. Based on the taxonomy of CSs, adapted from Dornyei and Scott (1997), the data were transcribed and analyzed to find the frequency of CSs used and successful CSs in overcoming the communication difficulties.

The findings reveal that each participant employed different CSs. The three most frequently used CSs were Use of Fillers, Self- Repetition, and Mime. Also nine CSs were identified as successful CSs in overcoming the communication difficulties.

**Keywords:** Communication strategies/ Communication difficulties/ Natural Settings

## Introduction

The term “communication strategies” was coined by Selinker (1972) in his account of the processes responsible for interlanguage. He discussed strategies of second-language communication as one of the five central processes related to second language learning. Tarone and Yule (1989) see communication strategies as the learner’s contribution to the international work required to overcome a communication problem. Similarly, Nakatani (2010) regarded CSs as any attempts by learners to overcome their difficulties to achieve communicative goals in actual interaction when they do not share linguistic, discoursal, and sociolinguistic information with their interlocutors. According to Ellis (1985), two key concepts in most discussions of communication strategies are that they are conscious and that they are problem oriented. However, as learners may not always be aware of their use of communication strategies, it is suggested that a better definition is to refer to them as ‘potentially conscious’. Additionally, communication strategies are problem oriented. They are employed by the learner because of the lack of access to linguistic resources required to express an intended meaning. It can be concluded that communication strategies are psycholinguistic plans which exist as part of the language user’s communicative competence (Ellis. 1985).

Since CSs have been defined differently based on the researchers’ views, different CSs taxonomies have been developed. The extended taxonomy by Dornyei and Scott (1997) was adapted and used in this study as this conceptualization covers all the different types of communication problem-management mechanisms. Dornyei and Scott’s extended taxonomy (1997) which integrated several CSs taxonomies from several scholars and proposed with 23 communication strategies under three categories: direct, indirect, and interactional strategies based on how CSs contribute to solving communication problems and achieving communication goals. First, direct strategies provide an alternative, manageable, and self-contained means of getting the meaning across (Dornyei and Scott. 1997). The direct strategies consist of message abandonment, message reduction, message replacement, circumlocution, approximation, use of all-purpose words, word coinage, restructuring, literal translation, foreignizing, code-switching, mumbling, omission, and mime. Indirect strategies, on the other hand, are not strictly problem-solving and meaning-related. They facilitate

and support learning without directly involving the target language. Generally speaking, the indirect strategies included are the use of fillers and self-repetition. Finally, interactional strategies consist of direct appeal for help, indirect appeal for help, asking for repetition, asking for clarification, asking for confirmation, interpretive ummary, and comprehension check. Interactional strategies are used to carry out trouble-shooting exchanges cooperatively (Dornyei and Scott. 1997). They are used to manipulate the conversation and to negotiate shared meaning (Littellmore. 2003). It is obviously seen from the aforementioned related literature that communication strategies have been widely investigated in a wide range of educational contexts as they are considered beneficial for facilitating students' communication ability, and there are several types of communication strategies employed when second or foreign language speakers face any communication difficulties.

In recent years, there have been many research studies dealing with the use of CSs in classroom context. Abunawas (2012) investigated the use of CSs by Jordanian EFL learners. The study revealed that Jordanian EFL tended to use different kinds of CSs in their communication. They heavily depended on approximation and circumlocution, especially for the advanced level and intermediate level participants. This indicated that the participants were eager to communicate in English and they did not resort much to avoidance strategies. Another study was carried out by Nguyen and Nguyen (2016) to investigate the use of CSs by Vietnamese non-English majored students. The data proved that those students used CSs in a very unconscious nature and it is partly due to the occurrence of such strategies in their mother tongue.

Apart from the aforementioned studies investigated the use of CS in second or foreign language communication settings, there have been many research studies on the use of CSs conducted in Thailand. Charoenchang (1991) investigated the CSs which Thai learners and native-speakers teachers of English use in classroom interaction. In addition, Chawana (2009) investigated the types of CSs used by nursing students when interacting with foreign patients in nursing simulation. Both studies were conducted when the learners were interacting with foreigners. In contrast, in the study of Pornpibul (2005), the use of CSs was investigated when Thai undergraduate students communicated in English via different tasks. The findings revealed that the lower achievement group was likely to use CSs that were less dependent on the

knowledge of English while the high achievement group used circumlocution more frequently than the lower achievement group. Similarly, Malasit and Sorobol (2013) investigated the use of CSs by Thai secondary school English program students. The results showed that the students tended to use CSs in two-way tasks more frequently than in one-way tasks. It can be seen that by using different types of CSs, the learners could achieve their communication goals despite their communication difficulties. Moreover, the factors that affected the use of CSs are related to the learners' proficiency and their L1. Therefore, to help developing students' communication skills, students should be encouraged to employ CSs in the speaking tasks to overcome any communication difficulties they might face to get the message across. Teaching CSs is pedagogically effective, and CSs are conducive to language learning (Maleki. 2007). So far, we have seen that in Thailand, many studies were conducted in a classroom context while the studies conducted outside classroom or in a natural setting are limited. However, the basic theoretical ideas about CSs discussed are essential in exploring the CSs used by the participants of this study in a different context (natural social setting).

### **Objective of the Study**

This study aimed at finding out the communication strategies that the KMUTT buddies have used in their communication in natural social settings such as when going out to have some meals or when working on their projects with their foreign buddies. Based on some established models of communication strategies, the purpose of the study is to identify the communication strategies that are commonly used. The findings of the study can be useful to English teaching and in liaison training as it reveals how students cope with the communication difficulties when liaising with foreign students.

### **Scope of Study**

#### **1. Population and Sample**

The study was conducted at University of Technology Thonburi and the sample of this study consisted of five Thai students working for the International Affairs (IA) as Thai Buddies in the second semester of the academic year 2016 at

KMUTT. There are four females and one male engineering students majoring in Environmental Engineering, Materials Engineering, and Electrical Engineering. Their English ability ranged from pre-intermediate to intermediate level. They were selected on the basis that they only joined this is their first semester to join the Buddies Program. The interactions between the samples and the foreign students in the natural social settings only one time. The conceptual framework used in this study was based on the taxonomy of CSs adapted from Dornyei and Scott (1997).

## **2. Variables**

2.1 The 3 natural setting: (1) Presentation preparation, (2) Brainstorming stage of discussion, and (3) consultation session

2.2 Communication strategies (CSs)

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research Instrument**

In order to arrive at answers to the research questions, a video recording was used as the observation instrument to collect the data i.e. the interactions between the participants and the KMUTT foreign students.

### **Data Collection**

To investigate the types of CSs commonly used and the successful CSs used to overcome the communication difficulties, the participants were informed briefly about the purposes of the study. Then, the appointment was made based on their availability to attend the events of the IA or the events arranged among themselves. The research selected three activities that would involve Thai Buddies and their foreign counterparts. As a result, three activities were selected. First setting: presentation preparation, three participants were video-recorded when helping the KMUTT foreign students to prepare their presentation on Thai culture. Second setting, the brainstorming session in Global Project Based Learning program (gPBL), one participant was video-recorded during this activity. And the third setting: consultation on problem-solving presentation with the foreign students, one participant was video recorded for this. After recording the videos, the researcher transcribed the both verbal and non-verbal communication that occurred in.

## Data Analysis

The data collected were five videos with the total of 1.42 hrs. in total the video recording is about 200 minutes. The data obtained from the video recordings were transcribed. The researcher counted the frequency of the use of CSs and identified the successful CSs used. The transcriptions were analyzed based on the taxonomy of CSs adapted from Dornyei & Scott (1997) to find out the types of CSs used by the participants. The types of CSs employed by the participants were analyzed and identified to gain insightful understanding of the successful CSs that the participants employed to overcome the communication difficulties.

## Findings

### 1. Types of communication strategies used by KMUTT Thai buddies

The types of communication strategies in this study are grouped based on CSs taxonomy by Dornyei and Scott (1997): direct, indirect, and interactional strategies. From three main strategies, 18 CSs used were listed. The types of CSs employed by KMUTT Thai buddies are illustrated in terms of frequency presented in Table 1.

**Table 1** The Frequency of CSs Used by KMUTT Thai Buddies

Types of CSs	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	Total	Total (%)
<b><u>A. Direct Strategies</u></b>							
1. Message abandonment	-	-	1	-	1	2	0.88
2. Message replacement	1	-	2	1	1	5	2.22
3. Circumlocution (paraphrase)	3	8	-	-	-	11	4.87
4. Approximation	1	1	1	-	5	8	3.54
5. Use of all-purpose words	2	2	-	-	1	5	2.22
6. Word-coinage	-	3	-	1	-	4	1.77

**Table 1 (Cont.)**

Types of CSs	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	Total	Total (%)
7. Literal translation (transfer)	4	-	3	-	-	7	3.10
8. Code-switching	3	7	-	2	-	12	5.31
9. Mumbling	-	-	1	-	-	1	0.44
10. Omission	-	1	-	-	1	2	0.88
11. Mime (non-linguistic/ paralinguistic strategies)	2	-	4	1	9	16	7.08
<b>B. Indirect Strategies</b>							
12. Use of fillers	10	16	17	21	53	117	51.77
13. Self-repetition	2	4	1	6	5	18	7.96
<b>C. Interactional strategies</b>							
14. Direct appeal for help	-	5	2	-	1	8	3.54
15. Indirect appeal for help	-	1	-	-	-	1	0.44
16. Asking for confirmation	-	-	-	1	-	1	0.44
17. Interpretive summary	-	-	-	-	7	7	3.10
18. Comprehension check	-	-	-	1	-	1	0.44
<b>Total used</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 showed the result of the types of CSs employed by the participants when interacting with the KMUTT foreign students. According to the result, the CSs occurred with the total of 226 times, in which only 18 CSs out of 23 CSs were identified. The total length of time during the conversations of six different topics: Macbook, Thai food, Thai noodles dishes and types of noodles, transportation in Thailand, and robot design, was 1.42 hours. Some types of CSs were employed frequently, while the others were never used.

The types of CSs that were most frequently used were indirect strategies – use of fillers and self-repetition and direct strategies – mime. Use of fillers was most

frequently employed by every participant and occurred 117 times (51.77%). The second most frequently used - self-repetition, was also used by every participant and appeared 18 times (7.96%). The third frequently used was mime. It was used 16 times (7.08%) by four participants. Moreover, it can be seen that despite being the top three most frequent CSs used, the frequency of the use of the first CS used (Use of fillers) out-numbers the second and third CSs used. It might be because the participants were not fluent in English so they might have needed time to think of the messages or words to express themselves in English. Another reason was that the participants might have used the fillers to make their conversation natural and smooth. Furthermore, it should be noted that these strategies were used to assist one another. Fillers were used to gain time for finding words to fill their conversation and to keep the conversation smooth. Self-repetition was used for the same purposes. Additionally, it was found that self-repetition was employed to explain a particular object that they were not able to think of in other words. Thus, they used the same words repeatedly. Self-repetition was also used to self-correct their mistakes. Mime was often used to describe the target object or action nonverbally when lacking the linguistic knowledge. Some of the participants used mime to accompany a verbal strategy with a visual illustration.

## **2. The successful CSs used to overcome the communication difficulties**

The study showed that not all types of the CSs employed by the participants could be successfully used to overcome communication difficulties. Since the data was collected in the natural social settings where the participants communicated with the foreign students with no control and disturbance from the researcher, the CSs employed by the participants was considered successful based on the following reactions of the foreign students:

- 1) Answers to the questions: The foreign students were able to respond to the questions asked correctly.
- 2) Gestures: The foreign students responded to the explanation or utterances from the participants, such as yes, ah-huh, I see with a gesture, for example, nodding to show their understanding and attention.
- 3) Content of conversation/ explanation: The foreign students responded to the conversation/ explanation with the relevant content. In other words, they



did not talk about the things irrelevant to the current topic being discussed. The successful strategies employed are presented accompanying with the excerpts from the video transcriptions.

The researcher asked an experience English teacher to verify the judgment on the successful communication strategies as aforementioned three criteria.

## 2.1 Message replacement

Message replacement is a means of substituting the original message with a new one. The example of the use of message replacement is when P1 was trying to ask the foreign student about his favorite singer.

P1: Eh (...) (Look at a picture shown on F1's mobile phone.)

F1: Uh (...) my favor (...) no my favorite artist.

P1: Which band?

F1: Huh?

P1: Which band?

F1: band?

P1: band.

F1: What?

P1: You know, is she in any girl group?

F1: Ah (...), yes.

P1: Which group?

F1: Onisaka (said the Japanese name)

P1: I think this group didn't promote overseas only in Japan.

F1: Yes.

(Excerpt 1: a conversation between P1 and F1)

From excerpt 1, F1 did not understand P1's question because the message was not clear or F1 might not know the word "band". To help F1 understand, P1 formed a new question "Is she in any girl group?" to substitute the original message "Which band?" As a result, P1 got the answer to her question at the end. The data shows that it assisted all of the four participants to convey their messages to the foreign students successfully.

## 2.2 Circumlocation

circumlocation is a paraphrasing strategy. It was used by two participants to describe Thai food as well as the ingredients of the food. While giving information about Thai food to the foreign students, it was found that the participants had the difficulties providing explanations about the food. However, they solved the problem by describing the characteristics of the food or the ingredients. An example of how the participants used circumlocation in their communication is shown in Excerpt 2.

F2: What's it?

P1: "Kaeng Kua" It's a southern Thai food. The seasoning they usually use in southern Thai food is called Ka Min. It will give the yellow color to the food.

F2: Ah. (point at the picture) Kaeng Kua.

(Excerpt 2: a conversation between P1 and F2 about Thai food "Kaeng Kua")

From Excerpt 2, P1 described the characteristics of "Kaeng Kua", such as its origin and its main ingredient in order to help F2 understand about Kaeng Kua. She also described "Ka Min" (turmeric) by telling its color which makes the food yellow. It can be seen that the communication difficulties in this situation were not only P1's linguistic knowledge but also the different background knowledge of food. Therefore, the use of circumlocation strategy could help P1 to overcome the communication difficulties.

## 2.3 Approximation

Approximation is a way of using an alternative lexical item to talk about a target object or action. It was used by every participant. They tended to use approximation when they did not know the exact word for the target object, but they knew the related word that could be used in the same context.

P5: Ah okay. I understand. Because I understand that robot can (...) read or understand.

F5: Read moving and

P5: No no. Read your moving.

F5: Yeah yeah. We want to know moving.

P5: Of robot?

F5: Yeah.

P5: So the robot can give the moving.

F5: Robot can also moving.

P5: And can read your moving?

F5: Yeah yeah. You think it's okay?

P5: Yeah yeah. It's okay. But (...) maybe it can be in the future.

(Excerpt 3: a conversation between P5 and F5 about a robot)

From Excerpt 3, P5 used “moving” to refer to body languages. It seemed that P5 had no communication problem although they did not employ the specific words for the target objects. They understood each other's messages and continued the conversation until the end with no irrelevant content.

## 2.4 Use of all-purpose words

Use of all-purpose words is extending general empty lexical items, such as things and stuff, to context where specific words are lacking. For example, in this study, “photo things” was used to refer to activities concerning editing or adjusting photos.

P1: Why don't you use OS?

F1: Uh (...) useful. Window is useful.

P1: Ah it's more useful.

F1: Apple is not good.

P1: You have OS in your Macbook?

F1: Yes.

P1: I only use my Macbook for like Photoshop (...) because it's more beautiful to do like (...) **photo things** on Macbook. The screen is beautiful.

F1: Ah ah (nodding to show his agreement)

(Excerpt 4: a conversation between P1 and F1 about Macbook)

The examples above showed that the use of all-purpose words helped P1 to convey the message to F1 successfully.

## 2.5 Literal Translation

Literal Translation is a way of literally translating a lexical item, a compound word or structure from L1/ L3 to L2 as shown in the example below.

P1: Ah Khao Rad Kaeng. Kaeng means uh (...) er Kare (use a Japanese word).  
Khao is rice. Rad is pour. It means pouring the Kare onto the rice.

F2: Ahh Khao Rad Kaeng.

(Excerpt 5: P1 explained Khao Rad Kaeng or Curry and rice to F2)

From Excerpt 5, P1 translated “Khao Rad Kaeng” literally from Thai to English. Additionally, she translated “Kaeng” (curry) from Thai to Japanese. As a result, F2 had a clear idea of Khao Rad Kaeng. It might be because Khao Rad Kaeng was literally called according to its characteristics. When it was literally translated into L2 or L3, its concept was still clear. Therefore, literal translation was a helpful strategy since it helped P1 to communicate successfully.

## 2.6 Mime (non-linguistic/ paralinguistic strategies)

Mime is a situation when a speaker describes the concepts or target objects nonverbally or accompanies a verbal strategy with a visual illustration. For example, P3 talked to F4 about the rules for taking a sky train or subway in Thailand.

P3: Food. You cannot bring food inside. Yes?

F4: Um (...) sometimes some people, some passengers eat but some passengers don't.

P3: Normally you cannot take it inside.

F4: Do? Do or don't?

P3: Don't.

F4: Don't?

P3: Yeah.

F4: Must not?

P3: Do not. (She made a cross using her left and right index fingers.)

F4: Law?

P3: Yes.

F4: Law?

P3: Not a law. It's a rule.

(Excerpt 6: P3 talked about sky train and subway rules in Thailand)

Excerpt 6 showed that P3 had a problem while talking about “do/ don't”. F4 was not clear about P3's message so he asked P3 repeatedly. To solve the

problem, P3 accompanied her message “do not” with the gesture – making a cross using her left and right index fingers. After using the gesture, it seemed that F4 understood P3’s message then he moved on to the next question. Apparently, mime was a successful strategy since it could help clarify the message delivered by P3.

## 2.7 Use of fillers and self-repetition

Self-repetition was used to gain time to think. It was also used for self-correction as well as explanation of aobject that the participant lacked the ability to explain. Thus, the same word was said repeatedly as shown in the example below.

P4: But ar (...) but people in Thailand don’t like it because he afraid of po  
pollution. I think in my opinion nuclear nuclear er (...) nuclear energy  
is a good way (...). This is interesting for me.

(Excerpt 8: P4 shared an idea about nuclear energy in Thailand)

Excerpt 8 showed that P5 tried to express her idea, but it did not seem to be easy. Due to the lack of vocabulary and the idea organization problem, P5 paused and said “I mean, like, and er” to gain time to think of the vocabulary and expression she intended to convey. Additionally, Excerpt 8 revealed that self-repetition and use of fillers were employed to support each other. Therefore, use of fillers and self-repetition were successful strategies that helped overcome the communication difficulties.

## 2.8 Interpretive summary

Interpretive summary is the way of extending the paraphrasing of interlocutor’s message to check that the speaker has understood correctly. During the discussion about a robot design, F5 tried to share his ideas about the features of his robot. Because of an unclear explanation, P5 interpreted F5’s utterance according to what P5 understood and checked with F6 that she understood correctly.

F5: This is (...) we want we need because (...) ar (...) how to speak er (...)  
how to speak English fluently but we want to communicate. Yes.  
Communicate in English fluently. This is a problem ar (...) no not speak.  
We want to communicate.

P5: Yes. Communicate.

F5: And moving have understanding English.

P5: But moving natural so different people, different gestures. So you want to like a (...) move moving can (...) can use instead of sentence right?

F5: Ah yes.

(Excerpt 9: P5 extended paraphrase of F5's message)

The use of interpretive summary seemed to be successful as P5 understood correctly about F6's robot designing ideas. Moreover, it could prevent the occurrence of a misunderstanding about the message being conveyed.

## Conclusion

1. The study revealed that CSs played an important role in English communication. The study identified 18 CSs used and the three most frequently used are: use of fillers, self-repetition, and mime were the most frequently used strategies.

2. Message replacement, circumlocution, approximation, use of all purpose words, literal translation, mine, use of fillers and self-repetition, interpretive summary were strategies that were identified as the communication strategies that were used to overcome communication strategies.

## Discussion

The study showed that when the participants experienced communication difficulties particularly related to their linguistic competence, for example, the lack of vocabulary for a target object or action, the lack of grammatical structure knowledge, as well as the lack of shared knowledge which was less related to the linguistic competence, they tended to employ CSs to help overcome the difficulties. This obviously indicated that the CSs played an important role in solving communication problems.

According to Malasit and Sarobol (2013), the students' oral performances on one-way and two-way speaking tasks revealed that the use of fillers was the highest used CSs, as the use of this strategy allowed the students to process their cognitive demands as well as helped them speak smoothly and naturally. The other strategies found several times in the study were self-repetition, code-switching, and literal translation. It was indicated that the students attempted to keep the conversation

flowing and maintain their interaction with the interlocutor. Similar to Nguyen and Nguyen (2016), their study revealed that the use of fillers and hesitation was the most frequently used strategy by Vietnamese students because the students needed to control the conversation and they needed time to think about what to say next. The two CSs were closely followed by literal translation. Consistent with the present study, the participants employed CSs when facing the communication difficulties. The two most frequently used CSs by the participants were the use of fillers and self-repetition. Code-switching was found many times during the study, especially when not recalling the English terms, while the frequency of the use of literal translation was not very different from that of code-switching. This is because the participants were not fluent in English so they needed time to think and organize the message or vocabulary before conveying them to the foreign students as well as needed a device to fill pauses to keep the conversation channel open (Nguyen and Nguyen. 2016; Chawana. 2009). Moreover, the strategies helped the participants to maintain the conversation and avoid communication breakdowns when getting stuck due to the participants' lack of appropriate target language knowledge (Nakatani and Goh. 2007).

However, even though many CSs are observed, only nine are considered successful. The use of fillers and self-repetition were two of the nine successful CSs. Although the use of fillers was the highest used strategy and was considered a successful strategy, it was not successful every time it was used. It may be because the unsuccessful communication was influenced not only by the lack of L2 vocabulary, but it was also influenced by the knowledge of L2 sentence structure. Occasionally, although the participants came up with the vocabulary after using fillers, they could not express their ideas. Those factors obstructed the participants to produce the utterances to communicate with the foreign students. The other successful strategies were mime, circumlocution, and approximation. As can be seen that many times the participants wanted to express their ideas about a particular thing but they lacked the exact word in L2. Thus, they tended to replace the lacking word with a related term, for example, "moving" was used to represent "gestures/body languages", and "sentence" was used instead of "speech". At the same time, mime was naturally used to accompany a verbal strategy when the participants found difficulties

in speaking. Despite the lack of linguistic knowledge, the participants could achieve their communicative goals with the support from circumlocution, approximation and mime. The result was in line with Pornpibul's study (2005) which revealed that when lacking English vocabulary, the students would turn to simple English words to exemplify the target meaning which reflected the use of circumlocution. Similarly, Abunawas (2012) found that advanced level and intermediate level students depend more than the low-level students on approximation and circumlocution strategies in breaking through communication difficulties. They try their best to communicate using similar words and phrases instead of using precise words and forms rather than avoiding communication.

It was also found that message replacement, use of all-purpose words, literal translation, and interpretive summary seemed to be helpful in overcoming the communication breakdowns despite being less frequently used. This might be because message replacement and interpretive summary were related to conveying a target message in a different way without any changes in meaning. The participants required a higher linguistic knowledge, such as a variety of vocabulary and sentence structures, in order to substitute the target message with a new message in the same meaning. In addition, the use of all-purpose words seemed to be an easy-to-use strategy but it was not used a lot. The reason for this phenomenon might be because the participants had knowledge of general English words used in a daily communication since they passed three English compulsory courses and they had opportunities to communicate with foreign students due to the Thai buddy program activities. Thus, all of them were exposed to daily-life English communication. When the difficulties regarding the lack of specific vocabulary occurred, they inclined to use general words which shared the similar meaning to the target words instead of using all-purpose words.

Interestingly, the researcher found that not only CSs regarding the taxonomy in the literature but also the other strategies excluded in the taxonomy were used to overcome communication breakdowns. Regarding the CSs taxonomy in the literature, literal translation was once found to be used when translating from L1 to L3 instead of translating L1 to L2. It seemed to work well when the interlocutors were not native English speakers. Sometimes they faced a problem when expressing their ideas



in L2 so translating an L1 to L3 literally could be helpful in this case. Additionally, spelling the vocabulary was also found in the current study. The communication problem which led to the use of spelling the vocabulary was a pronunciation problem. Due to the unclear pronunciation of “coal” as “co”, the communication breakdowns occurred. At the beginning, circumlocution and mime were used by another participant but she failed. To achieve the communication goal, the participant looked up the word in online dictionary and spelled “c-o-a-l” to the foreign student. Similarly, in Pornpibul’s study (2005), it was shown that the wrong pronunciation interfered with the participant’s ability to use circumlocution to achieve the communication goal. Therefore, the lack of the ability could interfere with the communication. However, the use of other CSs can help the participants to overcome their communication difficulties if they are trained how to use CSs in their communication.

### **Recommendation for Future Training Program and Studies**

1. For any schools or organizations willing to open a training program to develop English communication skills of students or staff, to help them to be able to deal with any problems that might occur while being with foreigners, CSs should be included in the training program apart from team work, problem solving, and cultural awareness. Similar to classroom contexts, for the short training program, CSs should be introduced along with examples of how and when to use those CSs. The role play can be employed after introduction session for practicing using the CSs. The situations for doing the role play may be selected from the real communication difficulties usually found when communicating with the foreigners. Training students or staff before having them face the real situations can raise awareness of the use of CSs in English communication. It can also prepare them to cope with the communication difficulties that might occur in their real-life communication.

2. As can be seen that, language proficiency may affect the use of communication strategies, future research may be focus of how different level of proficiency affect the use of communication strategies especially in natural settings i.e. there is no teacher to facilitate the conversant.

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