EXPLORING THE USE OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN ORAL COMMUNICATION

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Abstract:
There are many types of oral communicant, and they serve different functions. In the classroom settings, one-to-one communication between students and instructors or even between students and their peers are important interactions. For effective communication to take place, the speakers need to use communication strategies. What are some aspects that hinder or encourage effective communication? This study is done to explore the communication strategies used by learners in the classroom context. In the context of this study, two views of communication strategies are investigated, and they are (a) Interactional view, which is used to avoid disruptions in communication, and (b) Psycholinguistic view which is used to solve the communicator's problem to fill in the gaps in communication. The instrument used in this study is a survey with two main sections: interactional view and psycholinguistic view. The interactional view is

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measured by 12 items while the psycholinguistic view is measured by 14 items. Findings revealed interesting discoveries about the interactional and psycholinguistic views when it comes to the use of communication strategies to help language learners reduce their fear of learning the language. The findings bear interesting implications in the teaching of language to provide learners with a positive learning experience.

Keywords: classroom, oral communication, communication strategies, interactional view, psycholinguistic view

1. Introduction

There are many types of oral communicant and they serve different functions. The common types are discussions at work or study places. Personal discussion and telephone calls are also some types of oral communication. In the classroom settings, one-to-one communication between students and instructors or even between students and their peers are important interactions. For effective communication to take place, the speakers need to use communication strategies. According to Rastegar & Gohari (2016), communication strategies comprise language learning strategies specially focused to convey meaningful information to the recipients. They presented two perspectives on the classification of communication strategies: the interactional view and the psycholinguistic view. From the interactional perspective, communication strategies are seen as problem-solving strategies to compensate for communication distractions as well as the using pragmatic functions to enhance messages. Next, the psycholinguistic view looks at communication as a problem-solving strategy on the part of the communicators to reduce/ get rid of the gaps in their lexical knowledge.

Why does communication sometimes fail? Communication fails because the message sent by the sender is not received the way the sender had wanted it to be sent. For some communicators, when oral communication fails, the problems may snowball to affect other performance in other language-related areas, thus creating a cycle of fear for the communicator (Rahmat, 2020). What are some aspects that hinder or encourage effective communication? This study is done to explore the communication strategies used by learners in the classroom context. Specifically, this study is done to answer the following questions;

- How does the interactional view influence the use of communication strategies?
- How does the psycholinguistic view influence the use of communication strategies?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Strategies in Language Use and Fear of Communication
Language learning strategies are behaviours used by learners to enhance the acquisition and transfer of knowledge. With reference to Figure 1, the strategies language users use

will influence his/her learning process of the language. The whole process is influenced by the environment that the language user is in.
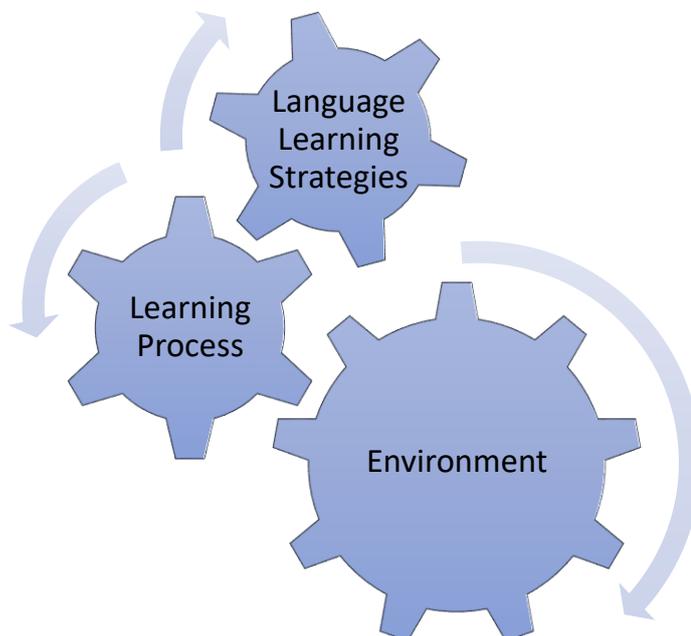

Figure 1: Language Strategies and the Environment (source: Rahmat (2018))

Besides the environment, the language user is also influenced by other factors. Some language users are better at conveying messages than others. According to Rahmat (2019), how well messages are communicated is influenced by the user trait or state of anxiety. Some users have internal traits that hinder them from communicating well. This could be their personal dispositions like self-esteem in the use of the language. At other times, some users cannot communicate well because they do not have a conducive environment for them to use the language well.

2.2 Past Studies

This section reports several studies on the use of oral communication strategies. The study by Nakatani (2006) investigated learners' perception of communication strategies uses during used by students learning English as a foreign language when they performed communication tasks. The instrument used is a set of open-ended questionnaires. 80 respondents were chosen for this study and they identified their perceptions of strategies used for their oral interaction. Results indicated that learners used 8 categories for coping with speaking problems and 7 categories for coping with listening problems during oral communication. The findings also suggested that students with high oral proficiency tend to use specific strategies, such as social affective strategies, fluency oriented and negotiation of meaning.

Next, the Sivadjati (2016) conducted a case study to investigate the strategies used by the members of a study group in the English Language Education Program (ELEP) in dealing with their difficulties during an oral presentation. The participants of this qualitative study are 5 students of English Language Education majors. The result of this

study shows that the participants have challenges such as: grammatical problems, having problems in understanding the topic and organizing the idea, difficulties in the audience's interest, speaking speed, memorizing problems, anxiety, teacher expectation, and time problem. They also have anxiety becomes during oral presentations. To overcome the problems, the participants gave several suggestions. They proposed to study more about the grammar, look for the information on the internet, master the topic, and also adjust their speed of speaking.

Somsai & Intaraprasetrt (2011) conducted an exploratory study to investigate how university students majoring in English for International Communication (EIC) cope with their face-to-face oral communication problems. The participants were 48 students studying at three different Rajamangala Universities of Technology in Thailand. A semi-structured interview was used for data collection. Findings revealed two main categories of strategies for coping with face-to-face oral communication problems. The two groups of strategies employed for conveying a message to the interlocutor as the message sender: continuous interaction and discontinuous interaction subcategories and one group of strategies for understanding the message as the message receiver was reported.

Another study done to investigate the different learning strategies used by polytechnic students in Malaysia was done by Gan (2017). The study identified the types of oral communication strategies used by students and examined to what degree are metacognition strategies and oral communication strategies explicitly taught to enhance oral communication abilities and confidence. This study was also done to raise learners' awareness of strategies that might be used to solve communication problems through the use of a strategy embedded module. The study also investigated how communicative strategy training affected students speaking proficiency. The study also explored how learners perceive and use their strategies in class. This quasi-experimental study used multiple methods of data collection. The findings show positive results of communication strategies used by learners such as fillers, asking for repetition, confirmation checks, fluency-oriented, negotiation for meaning and accuracy-oriented strategies. In addition to that, the strategy training had helped the learners to be more strategic and competent and improve their performance in learning and communicating in English. This study indicated that communication strategy could be used to help learners to solve communication difficulties and enhance their confidence during interactions with others. The study by Rastegar and Gohari (2016) investigated the relationship between EFL learners' speaking strategies use, attitude, and English language oral output. The data from 150 EFL language institute students were collected using a questionnaire. The results showed that there was a significant relationship between different subscales of communication strategies use and attitude of the intermediate Iranian EFL learners. Moreover, it was also found that the relationship between the communication strategy use of EFL learners and their English language oral output was statistically significant.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

The framework of this study is improvised from Rastegar & Gohari's (2016) two views of oral communication strategies, and they are (a) Interactional view, which is used to avoid disruptions in communication, and also (b) Psycholinguistic view which is used to solves oral communicator's problem to fill in the gaps in oral communication. The sub-categories by Rastegar & Gohari's (2016) are supported by Yaman, & Kavasoğlu's (2013) communication strategies shown in Figure 2 below.
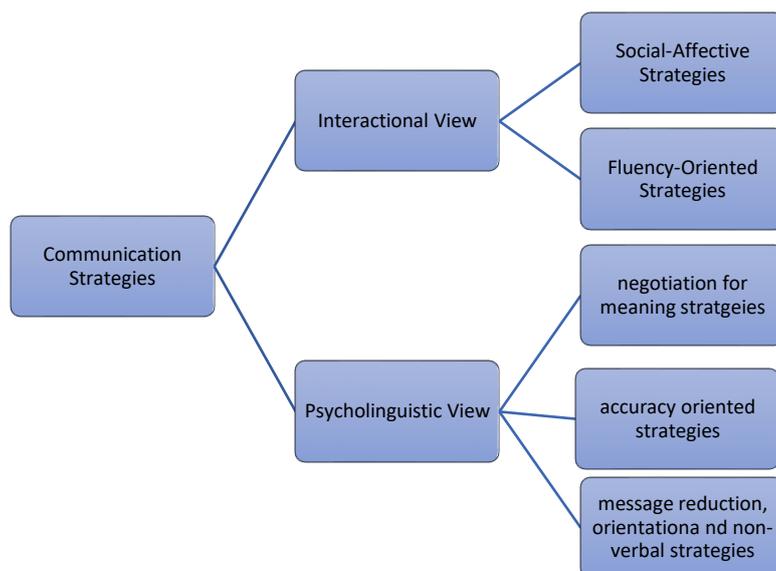

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework of the Study-Interactional
and Psycholinguistic View of Communication Strategies

3. Methodology

This quantitative research is done to investigate how learners use oral communication strategies in language learning. The instrument used is a survey adapted from Yaman, & Kavasoğlu, (2013). 56 respondents were purposively chosen to answer the survey. The survey has 4 main sections. With reference to Table 1, section A has items on the demographic profile. Section B has 12 items on the interactional view and section C has 14 items on the psycholinguistic view.

Table 1: Distribution of Items in Survey

Section	View	Sub-strategy		
C	Interactional	Social-affective strategies	6	12
		Fluency oriented strategies	6	
D	Psycholinguistic	Negotiation for meaning strategies	4	
		Accuracy oriented strategies	5	14
		Message reduction, orientation, and non-verbal strategies	5	
		Total		26

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.921	26

Table 2 presents the reliability statistics for the instrument. SPSS analysis revealed a Cronbach alpha of .921 thus showing high internal reliability of the instrument used. Data is collected online via a Google form. Data is then analysed using SPSS version 26. Analysed data is presented in the form of percentages and mean scores to answer the 2 research questions.

4. Findings

4.1 Findings for Demographic Profile
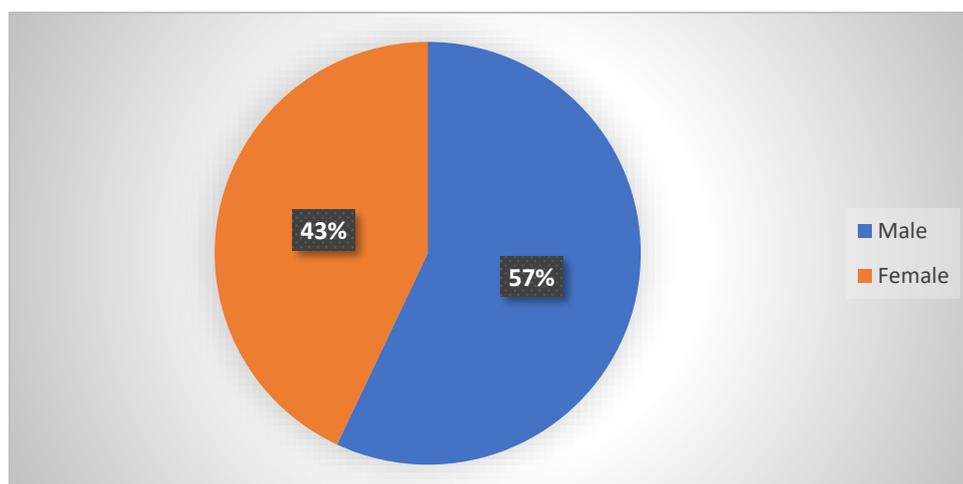
Figure 3: Percentage for Gender

Figure 3 shows the percentage for gender. 57% are male and 43% are female.
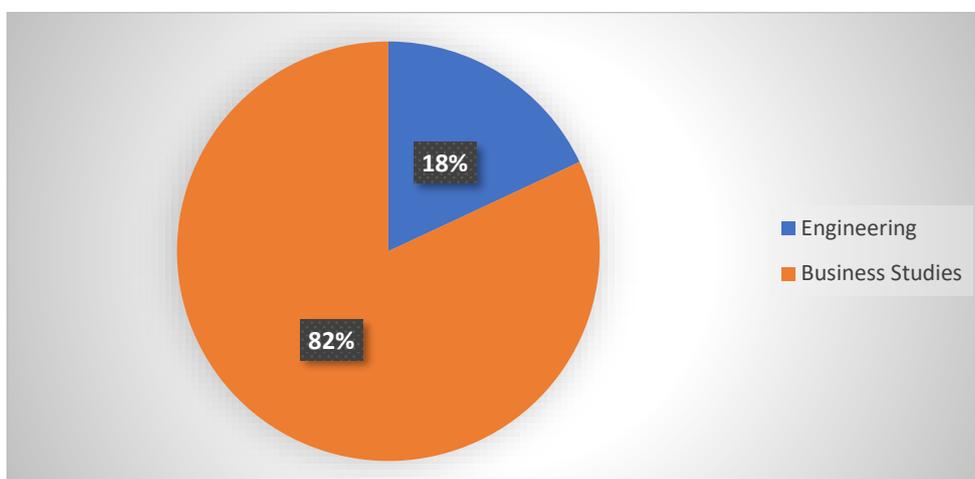
Figure 4: Percentage for Course

Figure 4 shows the percentage for course. 18% of the respondents are from engineering course while 82 % are taking business studies.

4.2 Findings for Interactional View

This section presents data to answer research question 1: How does the interactional view influence the use of communication strategies? In the context of this study, an interactional view is shown through the use of (a) social-affective strategies and (b) fluency-oriented strategies.

(a) Social-Affective Strategies
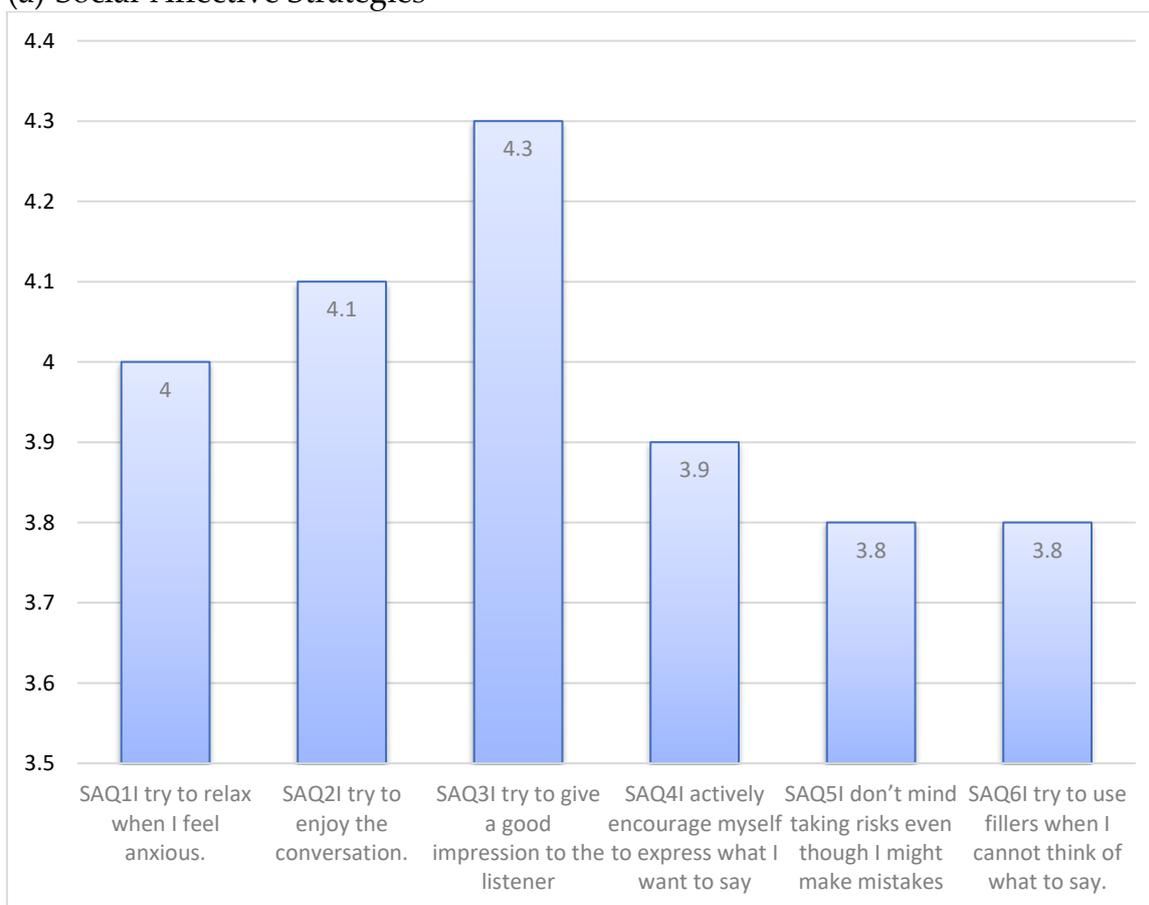
Figure 5: Mean for Social Affective Strategies

The findings for social affective strategies are presented in figure 5. The highest mean of 4.3 is for "try to give a good impression to the listener". This is followed by a mean of 4.1 is for "try to enjoy the conversation" and a mean of 4 for "try to relax when I feel anxious".

(b) Fluency Oriented Strategies
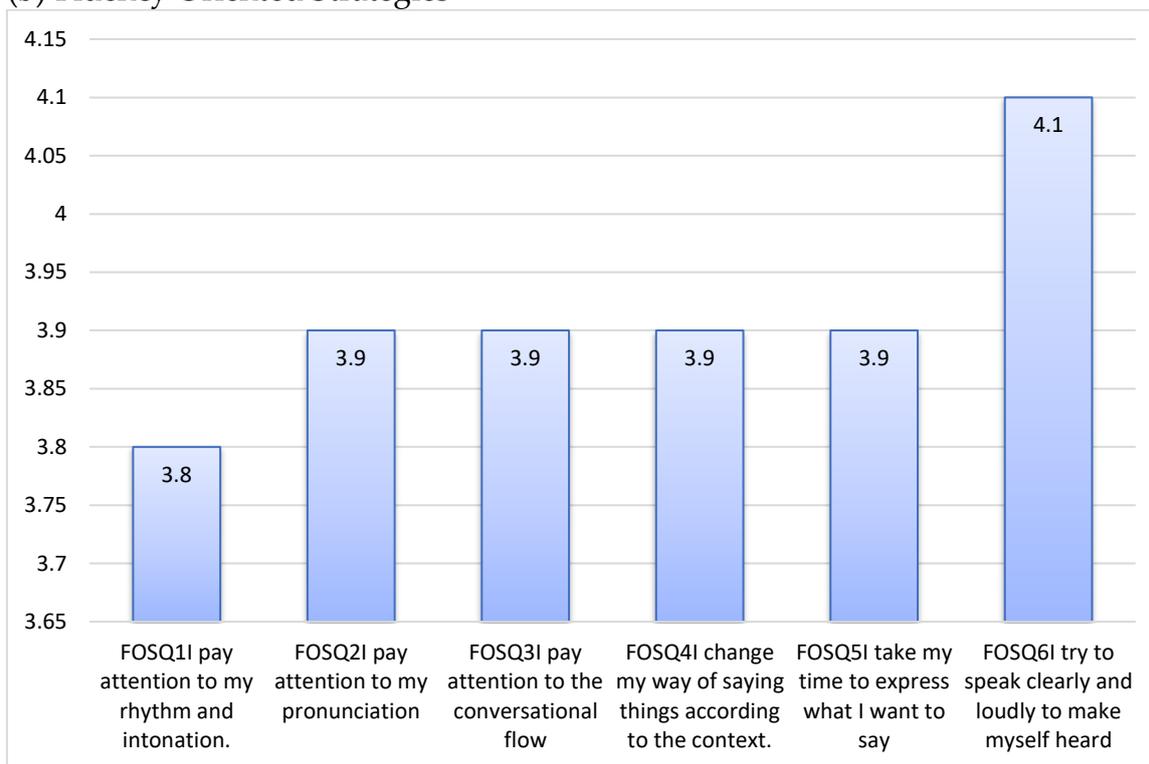
Figure 6: Mean for Fluency-Oriented Strategies

The mean for fluency-oriented strategies is presented in figure 6 above. The highest mean is 4.1 for "try to speak clearly and loudly to make myself heard". This is followed for mean of 3.9 for "pay attention to my pronunciation", "pay attention to the conversational flow", "change my way of saying things according to the context.", and "take my time to express what I want to say".

4.3 Findings for Psycholinguistic View

This section presents findings to answer the second research question: How does the psycholinguistic view influence the use of communication strategies? In the context of this study, the psycholinguistic view refers to (a0 negotiation for meaning strategies, (b) accuracy-oriented strategies and (c) message reduction, orientation and non-verbal strategies.

(a) Negotiation For Meaning Strategies
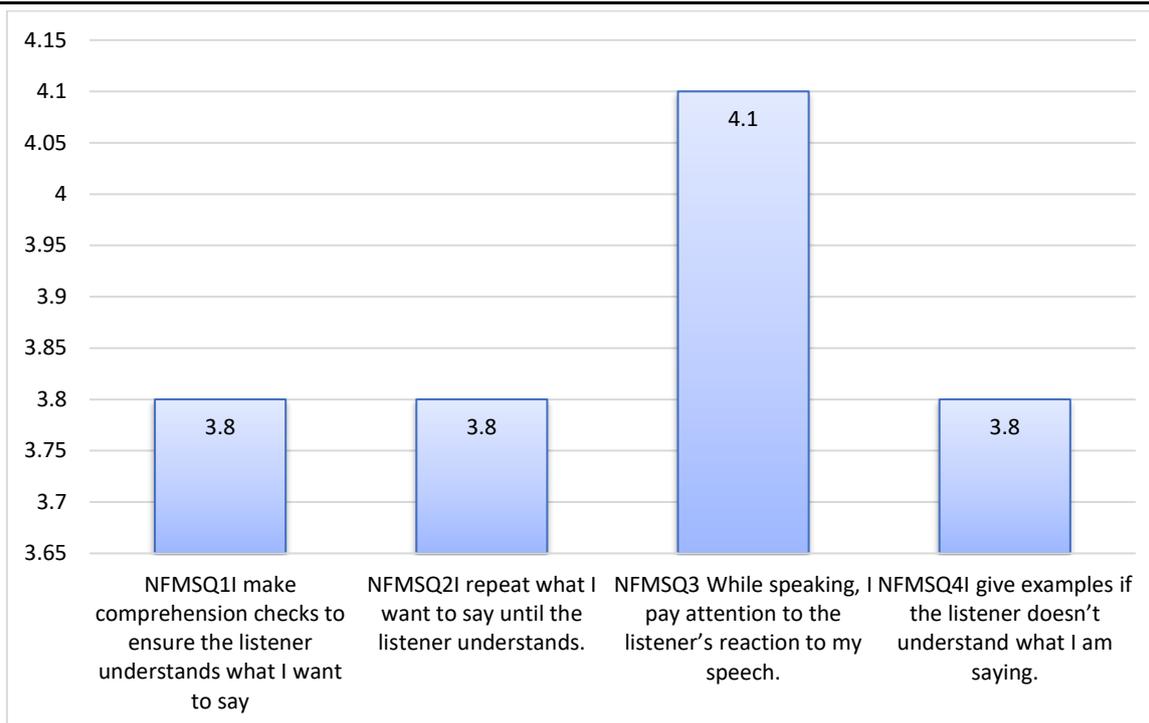
Figure 7: Mean for Negotiation for Meaning Strategies

Figure 7 presents the mean for negotiation for meaning strategies. The highest mean at 4.1 is for "While speaking, I pay attention to the listener's reaction to my speech".

(b) Accuracy Oriented Strategies
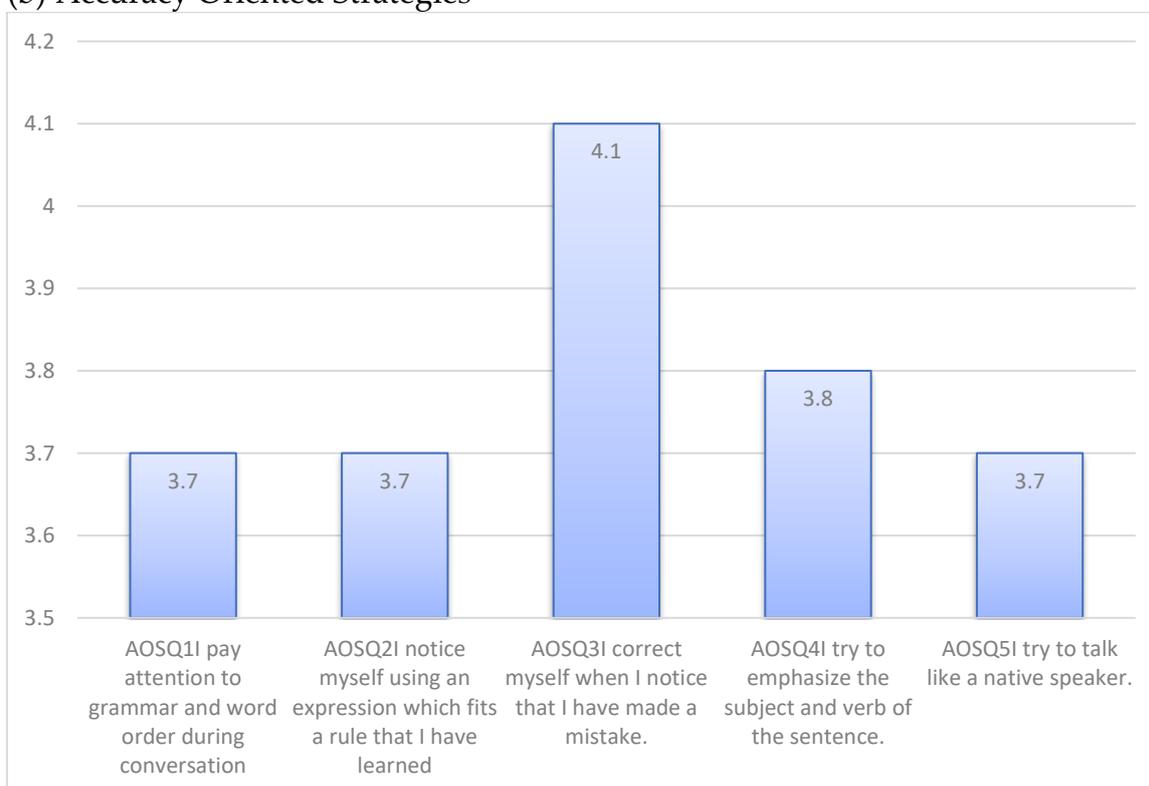
Figure 8: Mean for Accuracy Oriented Strategies

The findings for accuracy-oriented strategies are presented in figure 8. The highest mean at 4.1 is for "correct myself when I notice that I have made a mistake.". This is followed by a mean of 3.8 for "try to emphasize the subject and verb of the sentence.".

(c) Message Reduction, Orientation and Non-Verbal Strategies
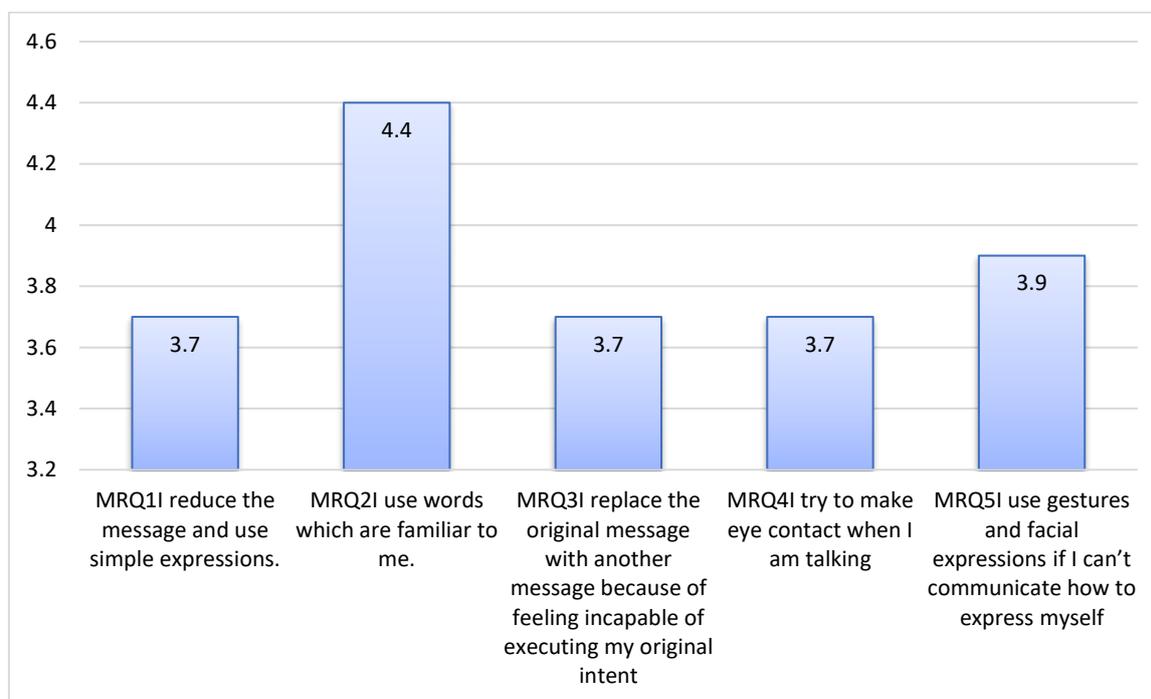
Figure 9: Mean for Message Reduction, Orientation, and Non-Verbal Strategies

Figure 9 shows the mean for message reduction, orientation, and non-verbal strategies. The highest mean is at 4.4 for "use words which are familiar to me". This is followed by a mean for 3.9 for "use gestures and facial expressions if I can't communicate how to express myself".

5. Conclusion

5.1 Summary of Findings and Discussion
5.1.1 Interactional
In summary, when it comes to social affective strategies, learners wanted to first make a good impression on the listener. At the same time, they also tried to enjoy the conversation. Trying to enjoy the conversation helped them to feel more relaxed. Next, when it comes to depending on fluency-oriented strategies, learners spoke clearly and loudly to make themselves heard. In addition to that, they also paid attention to their pronunciation.
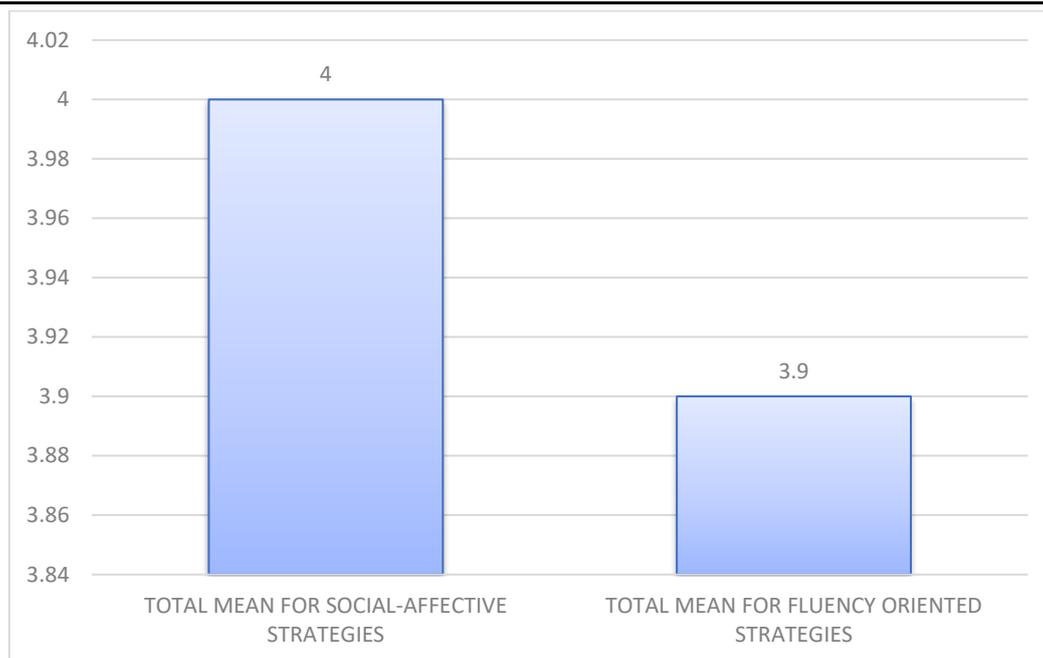
Figure 10: Total Mean for Interactional View

Figure 10 showed the comparison of the total mean for the interactional view. Learners depended more on social—affective strategies. The study by Nakatani (2006) also reported a positive use of the social-affective strategies.

5.1.2 Psycholinguistics
When it comes to using negotiation for meaning strategies, learners paid attention to the listener's reaction when they spoke. Next, for accuracy, learners preferred to correct themselves when they made mistakes. They also tried to be grammatically correct when they spoke. Next, as a message reduction strategy, learners used the word they were familiar with. They also depended on gestures and facial expressions if I could not communicate or needed to how to express themselves better. The findings are in accordance with the studies by Somsai & Intaraprasetrt (2011) and Gan (2017) who reported that in oral communication, learners needed to be accepted (understood) by their listeners.
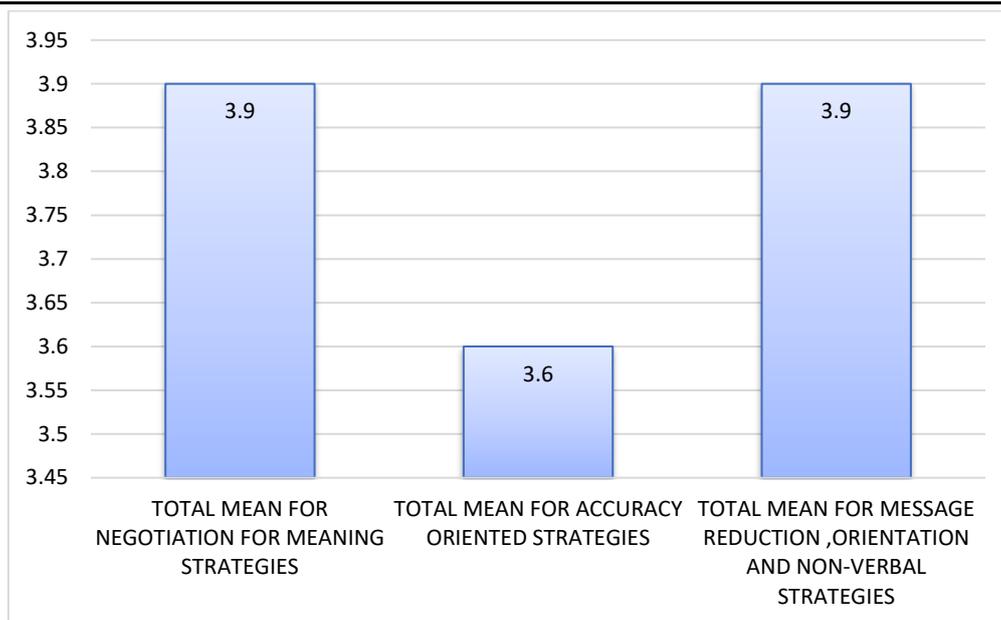
Figure 11: Total Mean for Psycholinguistic View

Figure 11 shows the total mean for the psycholinguistic view. In this study, learners depended on negotiation for meaning strategies and also, message reduction and non-verbal strategies.
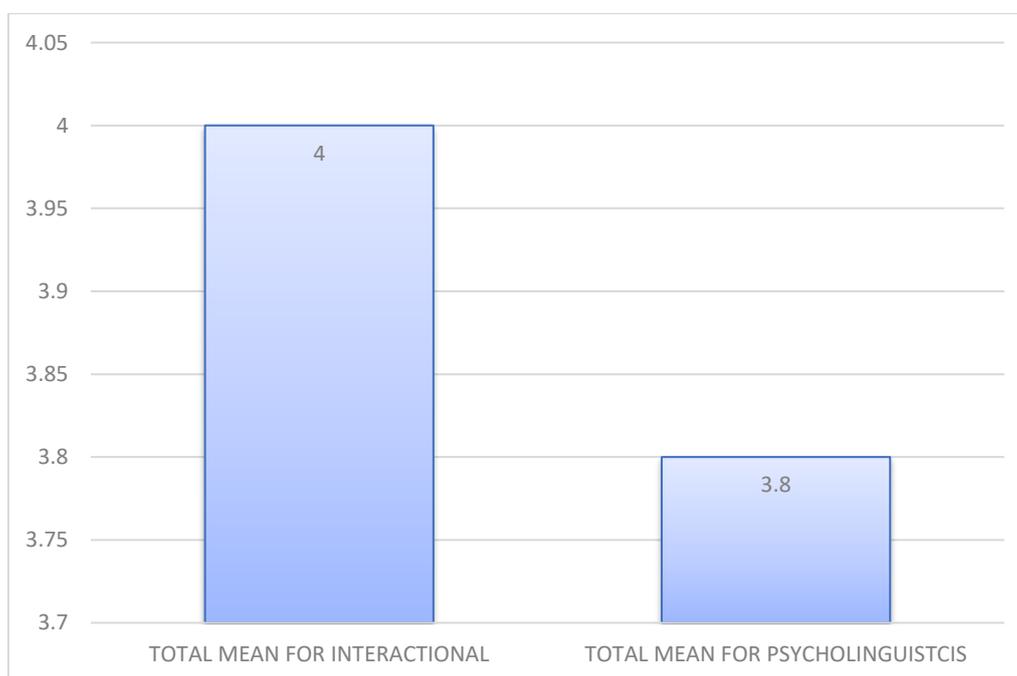

Figure 12: Interactional vs Psycholinguistic View

Finally, the total mean for the interactional and psycholinguistic views is compared. When it comes to oral communication, learners depended on the interaction view.

5.2 Pedagogical Implications & Suggestions for Future Research

When it comes to teaching oral communication, an instructor needs to include affective and emotional aspects. According to Rahmat, et al. (2022), instructors teaching language learning need to pay attention to learners' intrinsic motivation. Improving the factors that boost extrinsic motivation helped to improve learners' intrinsic motivation in the long run. Future research could focus on how to improve learners' motivation for oral communication in the hope to improve the teaching and learning of oral communication.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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